



Jessica Rapp/Index

Senior Max Eisenbraun stands shoeless inside Violette Hall after walking there through the snow. He has not worn shoes for three years.

Sole-less seniors tread on campus in all weather

BY JESSICA RAPP
Features Editor

Seniors Max Eisenbraun, Ryan Littleton and John McGuire are sole-less.

With the exception of McGuire, these guys have paraded around most of the campus barefoot since their freshman year. They said they enjoy the air that rushes between their toes when they are free of leather binding.

"I don't wear shoes because it feels really nice not to," Eisenbraun said. "I like the feeling of the ground, and I like being able to feel what I'm stepping on."

Eisenbraun said his decision to stop wearing shoes was inspired by his pre-college years as a home-schooled student. His freedom to walk to classes barefoot at his house later extended into a no-shoe policy everywhere he walked, especially on campus where the ground is cleaner than in town, he said.

Of the three seniors, Eisenbraun has the most daring habits when it comes to his shoe policy.

"One of the best things that happened over Christmas break was playing football in the snow," he said. "And that's like getting into the snow as much as you possibly can. If you get enough adrenaline going, the temperature doesn't matter at all. My feet didn't feel cold at all, they felt amazing."

Eisenbraun sometimes can be seen walking to class without shoes in the snow and ice. He said people often recognize him as the "guy who doesn't wear shoes," and he gets knowing looks.

"I do get some recognizing glances, like, 'Oh, hey, there's that barefoot guy,'" he said. "They know my face, or at least my feet."

When he does put on shoes, it's usually for a good reason, like when he's in the dining halls or the Student Union Building where food is served, out on public roads or around people who have a fear of feet, he said. He said that when he does put on shoes, it's usually sandals or steel-toed boots.

"I've also been told by one person that they have a foot fetish, and so that was another reason for putting shoes on," he said. "It's just awkward."

Melissa Blagg Holcomb, assistant professor of nursing, said she thinks students who don't wear shoes do not face any immediate health risks except for the obvious factor of injury. She said students can lower this risk by staying current on their tetanus shots, which require a booster every 10 years.

"For what it's worth, if I see someone in bare feet, I'd tell them to please put on some shoes," she said. "I think it's more of a mom thing than me being a nurse."

Littleton said his former roommate also used to refrain from wearing shoes, but discontinued this practice after stepping on a screw in the ground behind Ophelia Parrish. Otherwise, Littleton said he thinks not wearing shoes has health benefits.

"I think it's better for your health in a lot of ways," he said. "Your body clearly is not made to have little pieces of rubber on top of [your feet]. My understanding is

that it's actually better for your back and for your ankles. You develop the muscles to support your feet if you're not wearing anything on them."

McGuire said he thinks not wearing shoes has its benefits, but not for his joints. He started wearing sandals after finishing an entire shoeless day with a sore back and knees, he said.

"My feet sweat a whole lot, and they get really hot in shoes, and it's kind of uncomfortable," he said. "I just decided not to [go barefoot] anymore because it wasn't good for my joints."

The only time McGuire occasionally puts on more footwear is when it's snowing outside, he said.

"Sophomore year, I had an incident where I didn't wear [shoes], and we had a snowball fight," he said. "I basically lost all feeling in my toes and snow got packed around my toes. I just walked inside, and I was like, 'Yeah, I'm not going to play anymore.'"

Because they spend so much time barefoot, the students develop extremely dry skin and calluses often form on their feet. Eisenbraun said that when the calluses become too bad, he carefully will remove them with a knife. He said he has no problem tending to his feet and bearing the weather and unexpected terrain because his feet enjoy the freedom.

"It's kind of a little weird, kind of a little wacky, kind of a little crazy," he said. "... I would definitely encourage other people to consider it, but I don't think anyone else should necessarily do it, though, because it's kind of a big step."

Phobias play fear factor role in student's lives

BY LAURA PRATHER
Staff Reporter

Its bright red hair and painted-on makeup are the first things one notices when it walks into a room. Its happy demeanor often seems artificial and bizarre. Its feet and height are larger than the average human's, yet somehow 10 of them can fit into one tiny car.

Freshman Maggie Faul has never cared for clowns. In fact, she is afraid of them. Ever since her four older siblings subjected her to Stephen King's "It" as a child, she has had a fear of clowns, also known as coulrophobia. A survey conducted by Penny Curtis of the University of Sheffield revealed that a majority of the 250 children between the ages of four and 16 who participated in the survey are more scared of images of clowns in hospitals than they are reassured by them.

"I just think they're really creepy with all their make-up, and I don't think they're funny," Faul said.

People's fears range from necrophobia, the fear of dying, to the fear of never finding a job or never seeing one's family members again. Depending on one's age, fears can be trivial or life-altering.

"Children's fears are usually unrealistic like mine — they're kind of pointless," Faul said. "But adult fears are usually about responsibilities and taking care of someone."

Faul's fear of clowns, like most other phobias, differs from more acute fears. According to helpguide.org, fears serve to protect people from dangerous people, objects or situations, but phobias are fears that have been heightened to a level that can interfere with one's daily routine and cause unnecessary anxiety to a person in a situation where the object the fear clearly isn't present.

Most people do experience at least one phobia, but also have more significant fears, such as the fear of being rejected. The latter type of fear often is regulated by people's insecurities, said Brian Krylowicz, director of University Counseling Services.

"Typically fears underlie a lot of what goes on," he said.

Krylowicz said he is more likely to treat someone for problems in which

fears are minor factors. He said it is hard for people to discuss their fears because they are so personal.

"Fear is a really good thing that we have," he said. "I have a fear of making a fool of myself. That's a good defense. When we over-interpret them and say, 'I'm not even going to come close to that,' that's where people have problems."

There are two things people have to do before they can begin to face their problems and overcome their fears, Krylowicz said. First, they have to realize what their fears actually are, then they can start the process of freeing themselves of their fears by breaking down the barriers, he said.

People also should be prepared for the possibility of "spontaneous recovery" of their fears even after they have overcome them, he said.

"Our bodies are really good at remembering things that are really dangerous to us," Krylowicz said. "Your body is designed for you to live. So it remembers things and goes, 'That could kill you.'"

Sophomore Amy Schnurbusch, a psychology major, said fears have a lot to do with conditioning. People can be conditioned to develop a fear and conditioned to overcome it.

Schnurbusch said a common example involves a little boy named Albert who was placed in a room with a white bunny. Every time this occurred, there also was loud clapping that scared him and eventually he became afraid of white objects.

"You can induce fear in somebody else by coupling it with something else," she said.

The reverse of this conditioning is a process called systematic desensitization, which involves slowly reintroducing people to whatever they are afraid of, Schnurbusch said.

"They'll start out showing them pictures of it, until they get comfortable with that and their heart rate is steady, and they can look at it," she said. "Then they'll actually have one in the room with them, like if it's a spider of something. And then they'll keep doing it until at every level they're comfortable with it, and then they'll move them to the next [level]. It will be traumatizing at first, but then they'll get used to it until eventu-



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The Library's third-floor catwalk might be a unnerving for those who have acrophobia, the fear of heights.

ally, they can touch it or be around it."

Schnurbusch said the most common way people deal with their fears is to either learn to adapt to them over time or to avoid them completely.

One fear that is common among college students is the fear of speaking in public. Schnurbusch said she thinks most Truman students deal with this fear fairly well because public speaking is a part of the general curriculum and many professors require presentations in their classes.

"We learn more about it, and we learn techniques of how to calm yourself down before you [speak]," she said. "... The more and more you're exposed to it, the easier it gets."

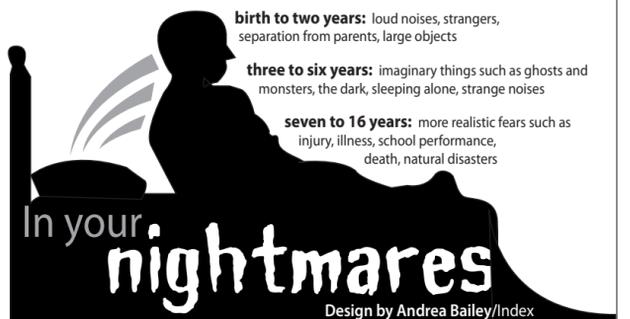
Schnurbusch said she thinks people can recover from any fear they might have if they truly want to.

"You may not want to overcome every fear or you may not want to try, but I do think that all fears can be overcome," she said. "But it kind of adds a little mystery to life if you choose not to."

- Top 10 fears:**
- Necrophobia: fear of **death**
 - Claustrophobia: fear of **confined spaces**
 - Cancerphobia: fear of **cancer**
 - Agrophobia: fear of **open spaces**
 - Acrophobia: fear of **heights**
 - Sociophobia: fear of **people or social situations**
 - Emetophobia: fear of **vomiting**
 - Arachnophobia: fear of **spiders**
 - Aerophobia: fear of **flying**
 - Brontophobia: fear of **thunder and lightning**

Top fears by age:

- birth to two years:** loud noises, strangers, separation from parents, large objects
- three to six years:** imaginary things such as ghosts and monsters, the dark, sleeping alone, strange noises
- seven to 16 years:** more realistic fears such as injury, illness, school performance, death, natural disasters



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Dr. Whitlock and Cindy have two children, Jeremy and Cassandra, and two grandchildren, Hannah and Emma.

Dr. Whitlock has been practicing in the area since 1997, and we rather expect that he and Cindy will be lifelong residents of the area.

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