

# Anti-abortion flag campaign falls on deaf ears



**Kelsey Landhuis**

"Smoking kills."  
If someone wrote this on a 3-by-5 index card and tacked it to the wall, would you suddenly be inspired to quit smoking? Probably not. In fact, there is a good chance that you wouldn't even notice it. For an advertising campaign to be effective, it first has to grab your attention. This is the flaw in the anti-abortion campaign that recently appeared in front of religious-minded buildings throughout Kirksville.

In case you missed this message, like I did until I was looking for it,

it appears in the form of dozens of small, pink and blue flags stuck into the ground, with an effect similar to that of a construction zone. If you are walking, biking or driving slower than my great-grandma, you might be able to make out the phrase "Abortion kills babies" on each flag, accompanied by a picture of an adorable infant. If you happen to blink as you pass one of the sites where the flags were planted, you miss them.

That's okay, though, because even if the flags did catch your eye, would they really change your mind? What pro-choice man-hating feminist would look at these displays and suddenly agree with their message? Would a pregnant woman on her way to the abortion clinic see the flags and suddenly decide not to go through with the procedure after all? I am not here to tell you whether abortion is right or wrong. Seeing a bunch of little flags won't change

**Would a pregnant woman on her way to the abortion clinic see the flags and suddenly decide not to go through with the procedure after all?**

your mind about that, and neither will reading this column. The flags could have been warning against global warming, littering or saying "pop" instead of "soda," and they still would have been ineffective in persuading people to support the cause.

Not only was the means of spreading the message ineffective, but it is naïve to think that something as simplistic as a slogan would have the power to change people's funda-

mental beliefs. Slogans are great for convincing people to obey their thirst and drink Sprite or to just do it and buy some Nike shoes, but no one is going to have a sudden dramatic shift in values because of a catchy phrase. "Abortion kills babies" could be printed on posters, emblazoned on a giant billboard, spray-painted across the front of Planned Parenthood or flown through the sky by an airplane, but the only difference would be in the number of people who saw it and got angry or offended.

The message the flags really send is that the people who put them there care more about making symbolic gestures in support of a cause than actually doing something to advance it. If they were passionate about spreading an anti-abortion message, they might adopt the strategy that Su-Chin used in the movie "Juno" and stand outside an abortion clinic chanting, "All babies want to get

borned!" Even that proved ineffective, which just goes to show that even the most emotional demonstration will not change someone's mind once it is made up.

The only way to make people understand and accept — although not necessarily agree with — your point of view is to talk to them. Genuine, honest conversation creates an atmosphere of openness and acceptance toward other people's ideas. Putting inflammatory slogans on little flags does not. Whether or not abortion kills babies is a matter of debate, but making an absolute claim like that definitely kills dialogue and any chance of gaining support for your cause.

*Kelsey Landhuis is a junior English and French major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

**AROUND THE QUAD**

Should police be allowed to use drug dogs to search residence hall corridors?

**"Maybe if they had suspicions, but not just by chance."**

*Regina Plummer Senior*

**"If there's reason to believe there are drugs in a room then it's OK."**

*Kim Slattery Sophomore*

**"It's OK as long as there's proof or it's warranted, but you can't just do it whenever you feel like it."**

*Chris Walters Freshman*

**"No, I think it's excessive if it's just for no reason."**

*Mark Woodcock Freshman*

## Hillary wows while campaigning but doesn't cement voter support



**Jackie Gonzalez**

Two weeks ago, I spoke with Hillary Clinton.

Well, maybe I should rephrase that. Last week, I spoke to Hillary Clinton and she spoke back. We didn't technically have a conversation, but we did communicate.

It was awesome.

I'm pretty positive we weren't supposed to go inside the private home she stopped at down my street, but a couple other people and I did anyway. Nobody questioned it. We waited a while and then there she was — the possible next president of the United States. Mrs. Hillary Clinton.

She did the standard campaign spiel, and then she took questions.

That's when she called on me.

I asked what her thoughts were on abstinence-only sex education. She rolled her eyes and laughed. We seemed to be in complete agreement about the obvious issues — the importance of sex ed in the classroom, the need to promote a more comprehensive plan and the changes she should make if elected. She said everything right. People cheered, and, with that being her last question, she took off and

**My experience with Hillary taught me two things: As a candidate, Hillary is strong. But as a campaigner, she is stronger.**

headed to some other city on the map.

After those few minutes, I was convinced she was the candidate for me. I jumped on that train as if it were life or death. I came out of that crowded house with full confidence. I even scoffed at the lingering Ron Paul supporters nearby. She was my candidate, and I was so proud. She spoke to me! She even referred to me as a "nice young lady"! What a gal.

Then I realized that something terrible had happened. I fell victim to the campaigning game. Of course this didn't occur immediately — it took hours for my Hillary high to tone down, but when it eventually did, boy, I felt silly.

Hillary Clinton, a candidate who was my least favorite Democratic nominee, successfully stole my heart and mind in one fell swoop through those two minutes of interaction. I got so swept up with the notoriety and super-stardom that her acknowledgement of my existence made me want to erase every flaw I saw in her previously.

The fact that she stopped by my little suburb of San Diego alone caused

my sister to give her the utmost praise. Which leads me to think: Is exposure all it takes to win this election?

I consider myself politically aware, yet my brief contact with Senator Clinton almost caused me to drop all my current assumptions and stand strong for Hillary. I think it's safe to say that everyone in that room left with the intention of helping her get elected.

It's a dangerous world out there when it comes to campaigning. Mike Huckabee is herding the religious masses, and Barack Obama has become BFF with the incredibly influential Oprah. Supporting certain candidates almost has become more of the trendy thing to do than an actual political statement.

Political campaigning is quite the art. It is a candidate's job to please the intended audience. Upon reflection, Hillary's visit to my street was incredibly rehearsed, yet that small visit alone probably secured her a multitude of votes.

My experience with Hillary taught me two things. As a presidential candidate, Hillary is strong. But as a campaigner, she is stronger.

All in all, I'm still undecided on which candidate to support. But as the race continues to heat up, I know I've got to keep my guard up, ignore the potentially misleading tactics and focus on the issues.

*Jackie Gonzalez is a junior history and communication major from San Diego, Calif.*

**Although I agree that America needs to seek renewable energy sources, I am frustrated by the pursuit of ethanol in spite of its failures.**



**Andrew Kindiger**

Recently, Missouri State Treasurer Sarah Steelman affirmed her commitment to her strict conflict of interest policy about lawmakers contributing to state projects. Show Me Ethanol, Missouri's newest ethanol plant, is in jeopardy of losing valuable investment initiatives at the behest of Steelman if certain lawmakers don't divest their interests in the project. Some of these lawmakers have already stated that they do not want the plant to lose money, and they are eager to withdraw, but the plant is still very much at risk with not all lawmaking participants pulling out.

Stelman argued her position on behalf of the taxpayers, explaining that she did not want lawmakers to benefit from such projects and assured citizens that their tax dollars were going into finding a source of renewable energy and not straight to the pockets of lawmakers. But why is this discussion of funds continuing when ethanol is not even going to be the best, or at that, a good source of alternative energy? On one hand it's good that politicians are concerned about corruption in the funding of public projects, but I would much rather they spend their time arguing about a fuel source that is going to create a sustainable source of renewable energy.

Although I completely agree that America and the rest of the world need to concentrate on seeking renewable energy sources, I am frustrated by the persistent pursuit of ethanol when so many statistics point to its failure.

While snappily dressed politicians are arguing about from where the money is coming and to whom it is going, people in suits are bidding up the price of oil, and even more people in suits are arranging the marketplace to be dependent on fossil fuels. Meanwhile, the world gets to continue pumping out petroleum and ignoring the damaging effects on the environment because everyone has a dream of ethanol or a hope that some sort of alternative fuel is soon to come.

Ethanol plants like Show Me Ethanol have been clouding a true focus on an attainable renewable resource that could not only replace gasoline but

also make fuel usage more efficient. Ethanol started out as an intriguing concept, but research has revealed that it is not going to be the touted success it was dreamed up to be.

For example, Brazil seemed to have success using sugarcane to harvest ethanol. However, Brazil simultaneously encouraged the exploration of offshore oil drilling for economic gain and implemented a strategic balance between fossil fuels and ethanol. Ethanol slowly was integrated into their society but at no time was going to serve as a replacement.

Unfortunately America does not need a Band-Aid like Brazil. It needs a solution.

On the homefront, however, the United States has been loathe to adopt a legitimate strategy to reduce oil dependence. We're trying to expand our energy palate while extending a hand to the American farmer by extracting ethanol through corn.

At the moment, growing more corn to fulfill the demand isn't a problem, but what about when more and more corn needs to be grown to facilitate the energy production of our nation? It takes 1.5 gallons of ethanol to equal one gallon of gasoline in terms of energy produced by its use; thus, if a switch were to occur, a mountain of corn would need to be grown. This leaves the U.S. with a tremendous Achilles' heel. This is, of course, that we would be left with the problem of higher prices for food as demand for ethanol increases. The price of food naturally would increase as the demand for corn increased with the demand for ethanol. The U.S. then is left open to a possible insufficient harvest that would be harder to account for if corn became more of a necessity then it already is.

The haze of inefficiency needs to be removed from the political scene with respect to alternative fuels so our nation can focus on new discoveries. More time needs to be allocated to discuss how to change the infrastructure of our industry to accommodate a different fuel source, as well as bracing the automotive industry for a switch.

It is entirely too soon to argue about the financial gain of ethanol production because so much more work needs to be done to find a suitable fuel. Politicians should be spending their time discussing reasonable solutions, as opposed to the benefits of a failing initiative.

*Andrew Kindiger is a freshman English major*

## Dope smoking in Dobson Hall shows reefer stupidity in action



**Brenna McDermott**

Reefer madness scares the bejeezus out of me. Yeah, right.

I've heard all the horror stories. I know the illegality of marijuana use, and I've heard from my parents, teachers and Uncle Sam that smoking weed will ruin my life, and basically everything around me will crash and burn. I've heard all of this, but what I've seen of marijuana use lately shouldn't be termed reefer madness because it doesn't lead to death and destruction.

It should be dubbed reefer stupidity.

Let me expand on that. Reefer stupidity is the mental state (or lack of mental state) that sometimes comes along with blazing up. It involves things like smoking at an unintelligent place, time or with the wrong company. Although some say that smoking grass brings paranoia, which in many cases is true, there always is the exception.

For some reason, whether it is the result of habitual visits to Pete's couch

**Smoking weed is illegal, so being discreet about it probably is a good idea, and doing it in Hall probably isn't.**

or simply a person's natural inclination to make bad choices, paranoia gives way to carelessness.

Reefer stupidity most recently struck some residents of Dobson Hall on Jan. 17, when police discovered marijuana in a resident's room. Three student arrests were made. Had there been an absence of giggle smoke in their room, the students might have realized a few things, which perhaps will be taken from me to you as helpful hints and tips to avoid reefer stupidity.

First, it probably isn't a good idea to keep weed in your room, especially with another person living with you. Second, the room is school property, so not only are there legal repercussions for getting caught, there are academic ones as well. And lastly, some would say most obviously, it isn't the world's best idea to smoke pot in your dorm room. This might come as a shock to some of you, but the weed will emit — how should I say it? — a bit of

an odor. With more than 500 people (mostly college-aged, mind you) living in close quarters, this odor isn't going to go unnoticed. The bottom line is that there is a realistic place for rolling and smoking blunts, and I'm pretty sure on-campus housing is not that place.

You wouldn't bring your math homework to your drug dealer's house would you?

I didn't think so.

Drug use inevitably is a part of the college experience, whether you observe, partake or just hear rumors.

These are the years for experimenting, and who am I to say that someone should not take full advantage of these years by smoking the doobie? Personally, I think there are far worse things a college student could get involved with, so if friends feel like hitting the hay I'm not going to get in their way. But the hay should be handled responsibly and with a dash of cleverness.

So put this in your pipe and smoke it: Smoking weed is illegal, so being discreet about it probably is a good idea, and doing it in Dobson probably isn't. Arrest your reefer stupidity before it arrests you.

*Brenna McDermott is a freshman undeclared major from St. Louis, Mo.*

**WEB POLL**

Do you believe in UFOs?

**I'm not 100% sure, but it's certainly likely.**  
(10% — 12 votes)

**Nah, people are just seeing things.**  
(5% — 6 votes)

**Of course — if by UFOs you mean craft piloted by little green men.**  
(85% — 106 votes)

**This week's question:**  
Should Truman install card-access systems on residence hall exterior doors?

**Vote online at [trumanindex.com](http://trumanindex.com)**