

OUR VIEW

Reserved free zone would protect speech

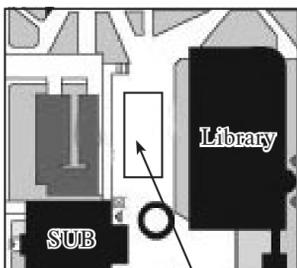
“That’s the whole schtick,” said Stephanie Howes, creator of a Facebook group called “Boycott the Quad on Nov. 12,” about the confrontational nature of Campus Ministry USA during its visits to Truman. We’d like to think that Howes is correct when she says that the preachers “could do it in a way that’s not so confrontational.” But really, they can’t — nor will they ever be able to do so. Nor will students ever ignore provocative preaching against premarital sex, homosexuality and other “sins.”

So are we, as a University community, prepared to accept that every few weeks an unruly crowd will develop on the Quad, and groups will shout polemics at each other with no real change of heart on either side? Especially considering the polemics often are laced with intolerance of beliefs?

During these exercises in free speech, our campus descends into a carnival of showboating and grandstanding. The current system of allowing public speeches and sermons is ineffective, obstructive and possibly dangerous. Three major problems arise: disruption of pedestrian traffic on campus, the potential for violence and the death of appropriate discourse about important issues. In any case, a special zone would eliminate these trouble spots.

In an official, enforced free speech zone, public speeches and sermons could be made without censorship. Many cities already have such free speech zones, some with storied histories, such as Speaker’s Corner of Hyde Park in London.

However, a better solution would be to restrict such speaking, proselytizing and unregistered pamphlet-giving to the Mall, between Pickler Memorial Library and the McClain Hall parking lot. By enforcing a free speech zone on the Mall, students would be able to avoid the area if they so desired (either by walking along the sidewalk by the parking lot or by going around the library), but the location is not so obscure



that there is no natural audience whatsoever.

Also, by enforcing a specific zone, the Department of Public Safety would have more specific procedures for regulating violations of the Student Conduct Code — currently, Section 7.1 (d) prohibits “disruption or obstruction of free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic on University premises” but provides little direction as to what constitutes obstruction. If a speaker began a tirade promoting the Flying Spaghetti Monster and was attracting scores of listeners in front of the doors to Baldwin Hall, he or she would be required to move to the official free speech zone. DPS also would have better access to the zone in case of an emergency — although we cringe to think of it, the possibility of violence at one of Smock’s speeches is all too real.

No method apart from absolute censorship could eliminate the baseness of discourse at some of the religious and philosophical debates we now often encounter on campus.

However, by promoting the free speech zone, students, faculty, staff and visitors alike would be invited to promote their views in an open, non-threatening environment.

Only by reserving space for speech can we save it for real expression. Otherwise, the vehicle for discussion and learning will be on a crash course toward argument, ignorance and violence.

CORRECTIONS

- A photograph caption for an article titled “Newman plans take shape” on page 1 of the Oct. 18 Index misidentified the people in the photograph. The caption should have read, “Father Pat Short reviews the proposed plans for a redesigned Newman Center with members of the Newman Center Board, including Mark Kruger, owner of Kelly Furniture, and Michael Bird, associate professor of exercise science.”
- An article titled “Container law ups campus arrests” on page 1 of the Oct. 18 Index omitted some information and was incorrect. The number of arrests on campus by the Department of Public Safety in 2005 totaled 32 and increased to 104 in 2006. Overall, arrests by DPS for liquor law violations in 2005 totaled 53 and increased to 115 in 2006. The story also should have read that the number of arrests for liquor law violations, not necessarily the number of students or persons arrested, more than doubled from 2005 to 2006.



Letters to the Editor

Americans should hold Bush responsible and end war in Iraq

President Bush declared on May 1, 2003, that the mission was accomplished in Iraq. He declared a new era had been delivered to Iraq by our military might. The President’s short-sighted policy has led to the decline of America’s reputation and military readiness and has usurped our constitutional rights in the name of “freedom.” 1,637 days ago Americans were misled to believe that our engagement in Iraq was ending. The time to end the war is now!

As Americans, we should hold our leaders accountable for misguided decisions, poor leadership in the face of adversity and a morally repugnant war. 3,834 American soldiers won’t see their families again, laugh at the dinner table or enjoy the company of friends. To add sorrow to pain, 27,753 American soldiers have come home with broken bodies and troubled minds. To add insult to injury, President Bush has done little to increase the quality of the VA health care system. The time to end this war is now.

As college students, we have a vested interest in the outcome of this war and the future of America. The College Democrats invite all interested students to attend an informational anti-war event tonight, 8 p.m., Oct. 25 in Violette Hall 1000. You have a voice. Our generation is strong. Now is the time to end the war.

Sam Hodge
College Democrats
Truman State University

Minimum wage preserves quality of life for most of working class

Instead of blaming the minimum wage for the quality of life of America’s working class people, Justin Logan should consider a far more influential and central facet of our society: capitalism. To live in a capitalist society means that money comes before human beings, that the majority of people will work their entire lives to allow a select few (who most likely will be white men) to live unnecessarily extravagant lives and that without a change in the system, justice never will be realized for the working poor.

Also, one of the most popular jokes in the nation is that “if you just work hard enough, life will improve.” If the Myth of Meritocracy were true, then most everyone would be in the top tier of society. However, capitalism cannot support an inverted pyramid where most people are wealthy and very few are poor. There would not be enough resources to go around. Because of this, a select few actually possess most of the wealth in the United States.

Next, Seymour Patterson was absolutely correct when he stated that more families would be worse off without the minimum wage. Basic common sense and grade-school knowledge can illustrate that without a minimum wage, workers would be

forced to work for effectively nothing, which means they would have to work long hours to make up for the lost money. So while we’re eliminating the minimum wage, why don’t we just do away with the 40-hour work week, weekends and child labor laws? These seem pretty inconvenient for business owners as well. We’ll also make unions illegal. Then we’ll eliminate welfare as we know it while simultaneously increasing corporate welfare. This way, everyone in the working-class family could work tirelessly Sunday through Sunday to put cheap and innutritious food on the table while the ruling class fills its pockets with money earned through someone else’s production.

The ruling class already does this today, but we don’t need to enslave workers to make it any easier for them. The minimum wage is not what needs to be reconsidered in the United States. It is our national worship of capital and our contempt for compassion.

Marie Weichold
Senior

Student Senate wastes money, should allocate funds to groups

After reading the most recent issue of the Index, I, for once, agree somewhat with the Editorial Board’s opinion of Student Senate.

In the four years during which I was a student, I watched as senate wasted our money every semester, even spending money to buy senators gavels and hosting a retreat in Edina, Mo. I also had the unfortunate experience of attending two meetings myself and was shocked at the division of the organization along party lines and the way the group was throwing money around for its own benefit.

As I stated before, I did not agree completely with the opinion of the Editorial Board. As a former chairman of the College Republicans and a member of other campus organizations, I believe that excess senate money should be allocated to organizations to ensure that as many students as possible receive benefits from the fee forced upon them. Maybe the opinion of the Editorial Board will affect greater scrutiny on the practices of senate.

Brandon Foster
Alumnus

Toppmeyer should know that accepting second is no “cop-out”

As a captain of last year’s women’s swim team, I am pretty disappointed with the column in the Oct. 18 issue of the Index titled “No cop-outs for women this year.” It seems unfair to me that a writer would tear down the most successful team at Truman (despite its second-place finish). However, I would like to address some of the points (accusations, rather) of the column.

The underfunding of the women’s swim team is not an excuse for our inability to win last year. The Truman swim team was completely aware

that the Drury women, regardless of nationality, were superior swimmers. However, our women’s swim team should be applauded for building a successful team, not buying it. This is an amazing feat that we achieved for six years, and it is clear we are not appreciated for that. We do not have the money to bring in already very talented swimmers, and that disadvantage can only take you so far.

However, it is not even necessary for our team to make excuses. Last year our team was runner-up at the Div. II national meet. This was a great accomplishment. I think it is unfortunate that Blake Toppmeyer would use the word “failed” to refer to second place. Obviously this viewpoint is in need of some perspective. Our women’s team is about a lot more than winning, and although we will continue to fight for first place, second place is nothing to “cop out” about.

Lija Kaleps-Clark
Alumna

Foreign policy of pre-emptive aggression leads to heartache

The war in Iraq must end now. We’ve all heard the number of casualties, not only American, but Iraqi as well: They are staggering. However, I won’t regurgitate statistic after statistic to make my argument. It isn’t my style. However, I choose to look at the raw details. Pulling out is the only option. There already is a civil war going on in Iraq that our soldiers are in the middle of. We need to stop buying into fear-mongering tactics and realize that America cannot keep doing this. Our foreign policy of aggression and intervention throughout the years does not work.

Politicians promise us security and peace, but whenever America does something like this, we don’t get either. Most of the time intervention totally fails, and the enemy simply is replaced by another tyrannical regime, this time to our liking. Then, given the right amount of time, surprise, we suddenly are at war with them. Young Americans need to realize that you can’t bring freedom to people by the barrel of a gun. Dead loved ones, lack of utilities and joblessness are the images Iraqis have of freedom. Is that your image of freedom? If it was, would you want it?

We need to stop labeling people terrorists and start taking real diplomatic steps to fix Iraq. A U.S. withdrawal is the only way to open up legitimate regional talks and stabilize Iraq. We should refocus our efforts in helping the humanitarian crisis that engulfs the area. We need to stop sending more troops and start sending more food, clothes and books to those people. Stopping this senseless violence and becoming more diplomatic is the only way to keep America safe.

In short, end the war now.
Saed D. Hill
Truman State University Coordinator
Students for Barack Obama

INDEX

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The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at index@truman.edu or on our Web site at www.trumanindex.com. Include the words “letter to the editor” in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

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WHAT WAS GOING ON IN

THE INDEX?

80 years ago ...

Vol. 13, Issue 13. June 15, 1927
“First Student Council meeting”
The Student Council had its first meeting last Thursday, and the first item of business was the apportionment of the surplus money in the activity fund. Other matters included money for equipping a women’s restroom.

70 years ago ...

Vol. 29, Issue 19. Oct. 14, 1937
“Students listen to their own voices on recording machine.”
Students in University speech classes attempt to improve their performance by listening to themselves on a recorder — many say they have extensive room for improvement.