

Single-payer insurance would cure nation's ills



Phil Jarrett

From what I hear, the real world is a pretty nasty place. There are cubicles, idiotic bosses, bills to pay and mouths to feed. I am tempted to live forever in undergraduate idealism, but the real world swiftly approaches, and I have about seven months until I no longer have health insurance.

Being a college student soon to be uninsured, one might think my sniffing about health coverage would be silenced by Hillary Clinton's announcement of her plans for health care reform. After all, she was a pioneer of universal health care promotion in the early '90s with her Health Security Act. Also, the Washington Post recently reported her being the most

trusted among Democrats on her views of our nation's physical well-being. The Post certainly did not contact me in that poll.

In 2004, Clinton said, "If we were to start from scratch, none of us, from dyed-in-the-wool liberals to rock-solid conservatives, would fashion the kind of health care system America has inherited."

Preach it, sister. Missouri alone had 771,690 uninsured citizens in 2006. Yet it is somewhat peculiar that Clinton would want to construct her reform on this pre-existing system that none of us would fashion.

The new plan would increase federal funding for programs for children and lower-income adults. The most significant portion of this new plan would require employers either to insure their workers or pay a tax. Small businesses would be encouraged to participate but would not necessarily be penalized for opting out. Insurers will be required not to turn anyone away on account of pre-existing conditions. On a first read,

it sounds pretty good, but then my gut instinct kicks in, and I want to know why she is taking this route towards health care reform where we keep the same old insurers who have been mucking things up for years.

According to a recent study by the Institute for Health and Socio-Economic Policy, Hillary was the recipient of more health care industry donations than any Democrat or Republican presidential candidate. Although it might show the industry's faith in her ability to reform, it might show big insurance and pharmaceutical's faith in her ability to make superficial changes only. Although I am skeptical of her "insurance companies are people, too" response, I am not so paranoid as to think her a special-interest pawn. Rather, I think her plan is half-baked.

Clinton's new health strategy fails to tackle several key problems. First, employees of small businesses are still uninsured. Second, employers are going to have to bear the burden of insuring their employees. They might

be capable but are going to have to balance what is economical and what meets this plan's criteria with what is in the employee's best interest. The final problem is a byproduct of this balance. Health coverage will not be uniform. Many still will be underinsured, paying considerable amounts for care outside of their basic coverage. In a nation where health-related expenses are the leading cause of bankruptcy, this is unacceptable.

All these issues stem from the assumption that basic human health should be for-profit. Look where it has gotten us. I am neither anti-corporation nor anti-profit. An industry that looks to maximize the income that it takes in and minimize what it has to pay out is doing smart business. However, when this industry sucks up 14.9 percent of our nation's gross domestic product and wreaks havoc on our nation's health, smart business does not equal ethical business.

It is high time to wise up. A single-payer health system prioritizes

American health and not the wallets of stockholders. Critics of such a system cite Orwellian fears of tyranny and federal bureaucracy, but currently private bureaucracy looks to spend less on patients and earn more. High taxes are no fun, but neither is a chunk of my paycheck going to insurance companies that do not offer good coverage. I would feel much better knowing that less of my hard-earned money is being spent solely on doing a better job of keeping me and my fellow citizens well.

Presidential candidates such as Dennis Kucinich know this can be done well and are far more deserving of our attention than Clinton. Simply because she talks more about health care than the other candidates does not mean that she is the most qualified.

Phil Jarrett is a senior communications and philosophy and religion major from Chesterfield, Mo.

Around the Quad

This week's question: "What do you think about KTRM not being able to broadcast?"



"I'd say that it's not very good. They should be able to find someone on campus who could hook it up."

Ali Helmig
Sophomore



"I didn't know they weren't broadcasting because I don't listen very often here at school."

Sara Besserman
Sophomore



"I don't listen to it. Maybe it's good, but I've never listened."

Dylan Zini
Sophomore



"I don't think it's fair, and it added something to Truman that it doesn't have now."

Nick Perotta
Sophomore

Bike Co-Op deserves workshop space support from Truman



Jackie Gonzalez

I can remember fondly my enthusiasm for the bike sharing program during my freshman year. Being able to check out a bike whenever I needed one (and at no cost) was amazing — it was such a brilliant idea. Clearly, I told myself, this would become yet another thing I loved about campus life.

Yet, when fall came, those bikes were nowhere to be found, and the program had ground to a halt. I specifically remember asking around for when it would resume, and I never was able to get a straight answer. Months came and went, and soon enough I realized that the answer to my question was easy: never.

Two days ago I was fortunate to speak with Cassie Phillips, the primary spokeswoman behind the bike campaign. Not only did she inform me of the iniquitous treatment of the bikes and the program, but also she keyed me in as to why the program was at a standstill.

Embarrassingly enough, the program has plenty of support from faculty and students. What it lacks is backing from campus administrators.

So why doesn't the administration support a program that provides a complimentary service to students? Phillips said there were a few concerns that weigh heavy on the decision not to continue the program: equal treatment among organizations, funding and sustainability.

I'm sure if the bike program was granted space to host a few bike workshops, a majority of organizations wouldn't go hounding the administration. Since when do most organizations require that much storage space? A few file cabinets typically are sufficient enough. Besides, this program has the capability of benefiting every single student on campus if every student so desired. It's revolutionary, eco-friendly and cost-effective.

Which brings me to another point — funding. If the administration was willing to invest at all in the recovery of bikes that have been poorly maintained, there would be not only functioning bikes for public use, but also functioning bikes that would require less maintenance thereafter. Those additional costs could be taken care of by program participants and sponsors.

Every organization on campus has the risk of not being sustained the next semester, so why is the bike program a campus-wide concern? Well, if more than 200 people participated in the program when it was around, how is that

not evidence enough that people want to keep it going? There were more people served by the program than there are participants in most organizations on campus.

The bike sharing program and the Bike Co-Op deserve more than just talk. They need action. This program benefits students, faculty and community members at very little cost to the school.

Thank goodness Student Senate has acknowledged this injustice by agreeing to purchase tools and other necessities. However, the Bike Co-Op needs a sufficient workspace for Senate to follow through. Take a look at the vacant Kirk Building or the former Child Development Center. Surely on campus there exists a potential home for bike enthusiasts.

A legitimate request, but once again the program's fate rests on the administration. I only hope that they soon see the benefits of this program to not only our campus, but to the entire community.

The Student Activities Board is hosting a bike awareness concert Oct. 12 in an effort to salvage this program. I encourage everyone to grab their bikes, bring a friend and prove that this program is indeed worthwhile.

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

Opportunities for Kirksville fun merit comparisons with home



Andrew Kindiger

A common response to defending the location of Truman is "Well, at least it's a good school."

When my friends decided where they were going to college, many of them thought it very important to go to a school in a thriving and large community. I, too, thought that was very important, but I had to adjust my priorities when my financial aid letter came back from Loyola University.

However, having been at Truman for almost a month now and having perused the town of Kirksville, I honestly can say I don't mind it here. I actually enjoy being in Kirksville — well, at least for the next four years anyway. I've realized that in the abstract, Kirksville is not that different from where I came from — small, yes, but not radically different.

I'm from Kansas City, Mo., and attended high school in Liberty. I was about 40 minutes away from the city (including time spent in traffic), so I spent most of my time there in Liberty.

It's a modest-sized suburb and is home to mostly banks, churches and middle-class subdivisions. The town also is sprinkled with a variety of restaurants and strip malls if one is feeling

adventurous.

The more I thought about it, the more I wondered, "How different is Kirksville from Liberty?" Kirksville has many of the same commodities, just on a smaller scale. My roommate and I recently walked through a part of town behind campus, and we noticed the housing developments in Kirksville are rather similar to our hometowns'. Here, as at home, there's a small collection of houses separated by a little bit of land, and it's just outside of the main drag of the town.

I realized that moving to Kirksville was really not that big of a jump for me. I thought I was downsizing, but I actually upgraded as far as my environment is concerned. I am on a college campus with a plethora of activities to engage myself in, not to mention a wonderful educational opportunity. Also, this campus alone has more culture than the entire town of Liberty. Already I have met individuals from different countries and come in contact with people with new perspectives and diverse ideas. For college students, the life outside of campus is as good as an individual makes it because so much activity already is centered on campus life.

However, going to college in Kirksville still is not enough for some people. I have a friend attending the University of Missouri-Columbia who said he needed to be closer to a bigger town when he went to college. I must admit

that the thriving metropolis of Columbia is quite large compared to Kirksville, but aside from the mall, it is just another collection of restaurants, banks and churches. In reality, here in the Midwest, many suburban environments are identical. After all, how much fast food variety do people actually need?

So living in Kirksville really is not that bad. I was a little skeptical on how comfortable I would be moving to a smaller town, but much of what I used to do at home I still do in Kirksville. I can go out to eat or go to a movie, and about the only thing I can't do is go to a mall and spend money I don't have. Plus, between classes and my midday hibernation ritual, I wouldn't be able to enjoy all the benefits of a larger off-campus environment.

I have found myself adjusting quite nicely to the idea of living in a smaller environment. Kirksville is equipped with all a college student needs or really could use. We have a Wal-Mart to stock up on necessities and a delicious pancake palace constantly serving up delights. Truman students have it pretty good here in Kirksville. And although Time magazine probably never will call our town the New York City of the Midwest, it could be worse — we could live in Maryville.

Andrew Kindiger is a freshman English major from Liberty, Mo.

New fears about Facebook privacy lack substance



Kelsey Landhuis

Say goodbye to online privacy — your Facebook public search listing will soon be available to anyone with a computer, an Internet connection and a search engine.

The Internet is going to hell in a handbag! It's the end of the world as we know it!

Well, not really. It is true that the Internet is not a secure place. It never has been. Facebook's decision to make its members' search listings public does not represent an evil desire to provide identity thieves with fresh victims but a different aim. It's called greed — some people prefer the term "capitalism" — and it is one of America's most dominant principles.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, like any other entrepreneur, wants to make money. Allowing search engines access to members' search listings increases the Web site's visibility, generating new members and making the site more attractive to advertisers.

Some argue that making users' identities so readily available is a violation of privacy, but that is not the case. Facebook's public search listings only contain names and pictures. They do not contain e-mail addresses, phone numbers or any other information that is not already accessible through the Internet in other ways. For example, anyone who wanted to could find my name and photograph simply by viewing the online version of this column, which would also provide them with my hometown, school, year and major — far more information than Facebook supplies.

It only takes a short trip to the University's Web site to discover even more information about me or any of the other students at the University who have not opted out of the directory listing. Type in a first name and dozens of e-mail addresses pop up, ripe for spam and online stalking.

Other social networking and blog sites have less strict privacy policies than Facebook. In many cases, it is not even necessary to be a member of the site to view member profiles

and learn who their friends are, where they went to preschool and what they ate for breakfast. In comparison to this torrent of information, Facebook's distribution of user names and pictures is but a drop in the muddy waters of Internet privacy.

The same profit-oriented mentality that resulted in public search listings prompted Facebook to "escalate its use of personal data to target advertisements to individual users," according to a Sept. 11 London Times article.

This decision, like the public search listings, was decried as an invasion of privacy, but using personal information to advertise more effectively is nothing new.

My Amazon.com account, for example, keeps track of the items that I view and purchase, so it knows I am a nerd and presents me with an assortment of Harry Potter merchandise every time I log in. Yet few people have ever complained that Amazon.com is taking advantage of its users or invading their privacy.

Facebook simply is emulating a successful business practice, not committing a gross violation of privacy rights.

Facebook's small infringements on privacy rights are simply the results of a corporation doing what comes naturally: trying to make a profit. These decisions have not created any new problems in regards to privacy and the Internet. They have simply drawn attention to the problems that already exist. Once a person has posted information on the Internet, it is available to anyone who wants to see it badly enough.

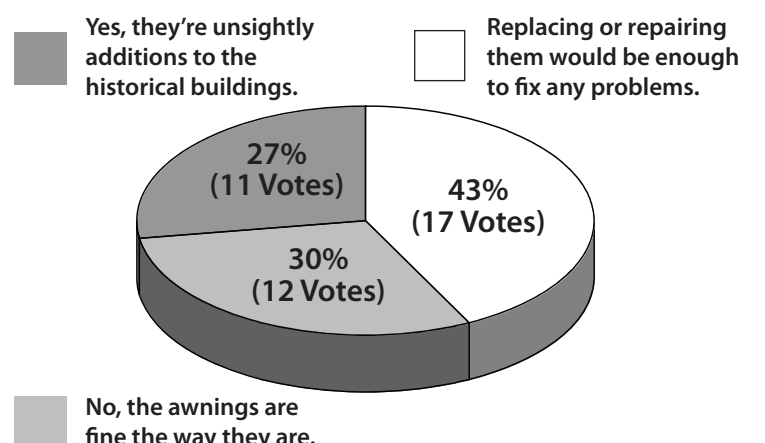
Facebook has done nothing wrong, and if the recent commotion over Internet privacy makes people think twice before putting information about themselves online, the site has even done some good.

Kelsey Landhuis is a sophomore English and French major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

INDEX Web poll

September 20 Results as of 9 p.m. Tuesday

Do you think the awnings on the Square should be removed?



This week's question: Should America have universal health care insurance coverage?

Vote online at www.trumanindex.com