

INDEX EDITORIAL

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OUR VIEW

Alcohol sales busts reveal troubling flaws in system

Last month, the Missouri Division of Liquor Control executed an undercover operation that resulted in charges against three area stores for selling alcohol to minors (see story, page one). Unfortunately, it appears that at least one of those three stores has not learned its lesson.

A member of the Index staff recently purchased liquor at one of the three stores charged July 11. The staffer did not know the clerk at the counter, nor had he ever purchased alcohol there before. Though he celebrated his 21st birthday less than two months ago, the spritely and youthful-looking staffer was not asked for identification or proof of age.

Unfortunately, the charges and the purchase by the Index's own intrepid staffer illuminate a larger problem in the legal system — namely, that the penalty for sale of alcohol to a minor is practically laughable.

Under Section 311.310 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, a first offense for sale of alcohol to a minor is a mere class B misdemeanor. The punishment for such a crime carries a maximum fine of

\$500. A second offense results in a class A misdemeanor, with a fine of up to \$1,000.

A first offense for a business owner who fails to check for proof of age normally results in a \$500 fine, according to State Supervisor Pete Lobdell of Missouri Liquor Control.

More action only takes place in "egregious cases." By this, Lobdell means that he is empowered to revoke or suspend a business owner's license to sell alcohol, according to Revised Statutes 311.680.

In such a dire circumstance, the business owner receives due process in a meeting with the supervisor, and the business owner must receive a courtesy letter at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Finally, no action can take place until at least 30 days have elapsed since an alleged violation of the statutes.

The Editorial Board wonders whether students would be given 30 days before any action was taken if they purchased alcohol underage.

We also question what level of egre-

giousness qualifies as enough to warrant the suspension or revocation of a license to sell alcohol. Such a decision ought not be left to the discretion of the state supervisor, though he undoubtedly serves his state and community admirably. But after all, what purpose does a license serve — beyond income for the state — than to prevent the owner from engaging in practices detrimental to the community at-large?

For comparison, the penalty for mere possession of alcohol by a minor also is a misdemeanor. The maximum penalty for a minor in possession of alcohol is a \$1,000 fine and a full year in a county jail, according to the Missouri Alcohol and Tobacco Control Web site. Let the reader beware: This is a heavy price to pay if you're a first-year college student in a world of beggarly scholarships and ever-increasing tuition.

The punishment in such a case possibly even exceeds the crime — \$1,000 and a year in jail for consuming alcohol underage does seem a bit excessive, after all.

We are forced to ask: Should the fine imposed on a 20-year-old college student for

consuming a beer be the same as or more than one on a liquor store that sold a bottle of tequila to an 18-year-old?

This is not a question of the veracity of Missouri Liquor Control in pursuing violations of the law. Obviously, they conduct sting operations and are successful in them.

It also should be granted that we do not preemptively question the integrity of the business owners themselves. We doubt that any business owner intends to corrupt the impressionable minors of Kirksville by sale of alcohol. But the violations merit a greater punishment than the pittance of a fine permitted under the law.

If we expect business owners to comply with the law, we ought make it in their personal interest to do so. There already are exceptions for those business owners who are deceived by fake identification and who have reasonable cause to believe someone is over the age of 21.

The only adequate way to prevent sales to minors is to increase the penalty for violations — neat and straight.

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Letters to the Editor

Student evaluations should be wellspring of improvement

I recently had a professor confess to us, after we had already completed the end-of-course evaluations for the class, that he had tenure and nothing we said about the class or about him could get the class changed or him fired. This was a problem — for I hate pompous professors.

Then he proceeded to tell us that he knows the class is too hard and that it should be split into multiple semesters, but he was the only one who cared about the subject matter and he would continue to be the only one to teach it. Basically, a "too bad" was thrown in our faces.

Here is where I ask, what good is a class that goes too fast for the students to learn anything and lowers the GPAs of hardworking students simultaneously? Evidently the professor knows what is wrong with the class because every year the class receives the same critiques — yet nothing is done by his superiors.

I am not trying to complain about a specific class here. Classes are not always perfect, that's fine. I can deal with that. It would be different if the class were hard and I was learning something pertinent to my degree, but this was not the case.

So why do I fill out evaluations at the end of every semester when it seems that they do no good? I've heard that something may be happening to change this, but I'm not sure. But what I am sure of is that all professors and their superiors need to take their evaluations more seriously — it's a wonder more students don't see them as a waste of time anymore.

I will say that there are many professors who do take the evaluations to heart and use the comments made. For that, I thank those professors.

Benjamin Crump
Senior

Gasch's article sheds light on salaries, leads to new questions

I appreciated Jessie Gasch's article on the AAUP survey of salaries in the April 26 issue of the Index. Here's a further topic of investigation: How do Truman's salaries compare with Missouri community college salaries? This is a tough one because so many community college instructors are not full-time, but then again they don't (usually) supervise as much student research, meet with student groups on campus or go with students to regional and national conferences, either.

Gregg Siewert
Professor of French

Tri-Rivers, Gonzalez's column ignore logic to defend abortion

I wonder if I'm in the minority in being completely amazed at some people's persistence in defending the legality of partial-birth abortion. An opinion piece by Jackie Gonzalez and a letter from Tri-Rivers Planned Parenthood in the April 26 issue of the Index are examples of this defense.

I suppose some would say that I can't understand it because of my gender — I'm from Mars, not from Venus. But surely there are many women who also see zero redeeming value in the barbaric abortion procedure. The Tri-Rivers letter intentionally avoided using the term partial-birth abortion. Instead, they referred to "a federal abortion ban."

They carefully categorized abortion decisions as "private, moral, medical decisions." They intentionally ignored the existence of a second person, the child, whose life may be terminated. Their reasoning seems to be: Fully born is a person, but partially born is a non-entity. How they are able to hold onto this kind of reasoning is an utter mystery to me. How about you?

Karl Schneider
Physical Plant Director

Editor in Chief welcomes first-year students to University

For the love of everything good in the world, don't speed all the way home from Kirksville during breaks from school this year. It costs a lot of money when you get a ticket.

That's all the grandpa-like advice I'm going to offer you in this letter.

I'm the editor of the Index, your campus newspaper. Look to us for news every Thursday. We're entirely student-produced, and we try to keep our fingers on the pulse of Kirksville — especially the Truman community.

But that doesn't mean we can be everywhere all of the time. That's where you come in. If you see or hear something on campus or around town that might be newsworthy, e-mail us at index@truman.edu.

And whatever you do, please don't think we don't care about your issues. We're students, too. We attend the same classes, walk across the same Quad and frequent the same off-campus places. If it's important to you, let us know.

If you see something in the opinions section (or any other section) that gets you steaming like a kettle, write to us! Get on www.trumanindex.com and submit a letter to the editor. You can even send an e-mail directly to me.

We're your public forum, so let us know how you're feeling and what's on your mind. If you don't let us know about it, we can't follow up on it!

We're working hard to bring you the best, most relevant, most accurate news we can. Even though Truman is a small school, it houses many nationally acclaimed organizations, including the volleyball and swim teams as well as the debate team. The Index is another national powerhouse, and we intend to keep up the trend of informing the student body and the Kirksville community.

Nathan Becker
Editor in Chief of the Index
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INDEX

Serving the University community since 1909

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Letters Policy

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 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 Index through a majority vote of the Editorial Board, consisting of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor 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.

Something on your mind?

Send us a letter

● Go to our Web site www.trumanindex.com and click on "Letter to the Editor"

● Send the letter to index@truman.edu

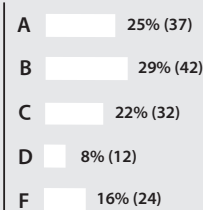
● Stop by the Index office on the first floor of Barnett Hall

INDEX Web poll

How would you grade the Index during the past year?

August 15 Results

as of 9 p.m. Tuesday



Vote online at www.trumanindex.com **THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:**
Do you think Truman Week provides a valuable and useful experience for first-year students?

What was going on in the

INDEX?

98 years ago ...

Vol. 1, Issue 17. July 9, 1909
"A Jolly Picnic Crowd"
39 students attended an Independence Day celebration at a picnic six miles north of the city.

80 years ago ...

Vol. 19, Issue 19. July 27, 1927
"He Will Be With Us Again"
A new statue of Joseph Baldwin was unveiled and dedicated near Kirk Building Oct. 20.

50 years ago ...

Vol. 49, Issue 15. July 17, 1957
"New Auditorium Stage to be Best in Missouri"
Construction work on the auditorium in Baldwin Hall continued, and the hall was set to seat 1,450 and be air-conditioned.

25 years ago ...

Vol. 74, Issue 1. Sept. 2, 1982
"SAB brings entertainment to campus"
Mel Blanc, voice of Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig and other characters, announced he would perform at Truman Oct. 7.

5 years ago ...

Vol. 94, Issue 1. Aug. 19, 2002
"Truman Week Debuts"
Freshman Week became Truman Week, and events and activities were added to the schedule.

1 year ago ...

Vol. 97, Issue 1. Aug. 20, 2006
"ITS cools down after summer mishap"
Truman's e-mail system and network failed after summer temperatures overwhelmed air-conditioning systems.