

Derelict classrooms deserve better treatment



Chris Waller

Imagine you are sitting in class one day, and during a lecture a ceiling tile falls down and smashes into pieces a few feet away from you. You then walk down a sidewalk that is missing bricks to another class, during which the professor is forced to cancel class because the projection screen fell out of the wall and landed on top of him when he tried to pull it out.

Would you attend this college? What if I told you that you already do? The above scenario is completely true. I have seen tiles fall from the sky in the middle of class and walked the sidewalks where I must jump over

missing sections. Two years ago one of my professors was forced to miss a few days of class because he injured his back when a screen fell from its perch and landed on him in Baldwin Hall.

Most of the older students are already privy to this information, so my words are more directed toward underclassmen and, more importantly, the administration. Our school is literally falling apart. From questionable renovations in Ophelia Parrish to the horrible neglect of Baldwin and Pershing Building — not to mention the recent abandonment of Kirk Memorial — our school looks more like 8 Mile in Detroit than one of “America’s top liberal arts universities.”

The worst part is that nothing is being done about it.

Administrators tend to stay in their offices in McClain, oblivious to what is really happening in the other buildings around campus, until a problem becomes so big that they have no choice but to deal with it.

Our school is literally falling apart.

Well, right now we have a problem. One of our most beautiful and most historic buildings is not being used for anything. This building, built in memory of one of our longest tenured school presidents, is located in the middle of our campus and at the head of our Quad. This building should represent our school to the outside world, yet now it sits empty — even the Forensics Union won’t work there. And if the Forensics Union won’t work there, you know there’s a problem.

Sure, work is being done to improve buildings around campus, but the amount of work done and what buildings are being improved show a clear bias in the administration’s planning process.

Pershing Building, home of our sports teams and a place where teams from other schools as well as the public come to visit often, is in terrible condition, and even though renovations are being planned, it seems like this is something that should have been done a long time ago, much sooner than building the West Campus Suites.

Baldwin Hall is another building that badly needs upkeep, yet instead of spending the money on fixing decrepit classrooms, the higher-ups opted to put new seats and a new sound system in the auditorium, whereas the classrooms simply received a new coat of paint to cover up their condition.

The administration is obviously aware that we have a massive dilemma, but it chooses to do nothing about it. I say that it “chooses” because if enough money and resources exist to renovate buildings like Missouri Hall as well as to build an entirely new state-of-the-art residence hall, surely enough money exists to put new ceilings in Baldwin

or perhaps fix the problems in Kirk Memorial so that we are not left with a giant, vacant hole in the middle of campus.

Clearly the administration regards the upkeep of the residence halls and the Student Union Building as a higher priority than maintaining the buildings where students actually learn. For President Dixon, it seems that coercing new students into our school with flashy new residence halls and a newly renovated student union is more important than providing a safe and useful environment for its current students or preserving our school’s history.

This is something that is completely unacceptable, and it is high time that something is done about it before the University becomes known for the quality of its residence halls instead of its education.

Chris Waller is a senior communication and English major from St. Joseph, Mo.

Around the Quad

This week’s question:
“What do you think of the new SUB so far?”



“I think it’s nice, really nice.”

*Pat Barron
Freshman*



“It’s weird — I went in expecting everything to be new and it was just the same.”

*Marianne Richter
Sophomore*



“I haven’t even been in it yet.”

*Justin Nichols
Junior*



“I think it’s a really inefficient use of space.”

*Patrick Casey
Freshman*

New Missouri Hall doesn’t live up to expectations



Kelsey Landhuis

I tingled with anticipation at the thought of the amenities that awaited me.

Ever since registering for housing in the newly renovated Missouri Hall, I could hardly wait to move in. Whenever I walked past the building, I tried to pick out my future room and tingled with anticipation at the thought of the amenities that awaited me.

Coming from poor old Blanton Hall with its flickering lights and creepy basement, the concept of new carpet and air conditioning was almost too thrilling to consider. My excitement vanished, however, the moment I attempted to open my door.

After struggling with the lock for a while, I was informed that my lock was one of the stubborn ones, and I should just try using a little more elbow grease. After another moment I realized that the lock was not the problem, but the door itself was wedged so tightly in the frame that I had to throw myself against it like a linebacker to budge it.

Getting out of the room was even more difficult than getting in. If the day had been the slightest bit more humid, I might have been stuck permanently, able to communicate with the outside world only through cell phone and e-mail:

“Dear Professor, I’m sorry I was unable to attend your class today, but I currently am trapped in my room. I now will attempt to escape through the window, and if I am successful I will see you in class on Wednesday. If not, I have probably fallen and broken my neck in the attempt, in which case I am sorry I never had the opportunity to attend your class.”

My door debacle was just one of the many ways that Missouri Hall was unprepared to welcome students back after being closed for months. The bathroom door in another wing on my floor was also malfunctioning, the building was surrounded by bare dirt because sod had not yet been laid and the paint on the stairs still is suffering from major pre-renovation chipping.

In addition to these relatively minor flaws, Missouri Hall version 2.0 suffers from several fundamental problems.

The lack of a computer lab is one

example. There are a sufficient number of computers distributed throughout the building, but only a single printer to cater to more than 500 students. The printer, of course, also will not arrive for several days.

The cafeteria is another area that would have benefited from more thoughtful planning. The absence of shelves near the entrance forces students to simply throw their backpacks into a great heap on the floor, causing inconvenience as well as a sloppy appearance.

The seemingly random positioning of the condiments, soda fountains, cereal and salad bar results in a haphazard traffic flow that creates an ideal setup for collisions among students carrying trays of food. The abundance of large, round tables makes it difficult to have a peaceful meal with a friend or two but lends itself well to awkward conversations with strangers.

When they are finished eating, students return their silverware via an unwieldy chute, careful to avoid brushing against the food-encrusted opening.

Some may dismiss these issues as inconsequential, but Missouri Hall’s unpolished state reflects the physical condition of the University as a whole. The residence halls are livable, except for the rooms infested with cockroaches or mold. The sidewalks are fine until it rains and a lake forms between Baldwin Hall and Ophelia Parrish. McClain Hall is adequate, until a warm spring afternoon when students are unable to focus on a lecture because the temperature in the room just broke 100.

If excellence really is no accident, as the car decals distributed to first-year students so proudly declare, then that should be the standard not only for academics but also across the entire campus. Truman is already a great place to learn, and with a little extra effort it can be a great place to live as well.

Kelsey Landhuis is a junior English major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Convenience of disposability hinders true ecological progress



Megan Klco

The first thing I thought while standing in front of the assorted boxes stuffed with clothes, hangers and tangled extension cords that faced the sheer impossibility of being shoved into my little car was, “Why in the hell do I have all this stuff?”

That’s when the sorting process began. Anything that showed the slightest sign of wear and tear and easily could be replaced upon my arrival in Kirksville on move-in day was tossed haphazardly into a big, black trash bag. I threw out a dented trash can, a couple of dirty, old mugs and a few perfectly good T-shirts that just hadn’t seen the light of day in awhile, all for the sake of a little more legroom.

I know, I know. The mugs probably only needed a little enthusiastic scrubbing, and I at least could have driven the T-shirts 10 minutes to the Salvation Army. Instead, I fully admit to falling prey to a growing tendency in our society, viewing everything as disposable.

It’s no secret that we live in a nation of waste — our waste volume is expanding faster than our country’s

The first thing I thought was, “Why in the hell do I have all this stuff?”

population — but this isn’t a lecture on tossing your Coke bottles into the recycling bins around campus. Because, frankly, that isn’t enough. We live in a country where the phrase “If it’s broke, fix it” has been lazily replaced with “If it’s broke, throw it away.”

After all, why go through the trouble of sewing back on that broken backpack strap when Wal-Mart is decked with brand-spanking-new ones at affordable prices? Why bother washing out a dishrag when you can buy paper towels that easily can be carted off to the nearest landfill? If America wants to start seeing a difference in its waste volume, it needs to become more attentive to the resources it already has.

This calls for a nationwide change of mindset that ranges from personal habits to major environmental decisions. This takes place long before the recycling process comes into play. Even if you are diligent about making sure each flimsy, one-use water bottle makes it into a blue bin, recycling still devours an enormous amount of energy.

This use-it-and-toss-it mentality that infects everything from cleaning supplies to disposable diapers has made the thought of fixing, or even — heaven forbid — washing something look like a terrible burden.

Even the vastly expanding urban sprawl reeks of disposability. More and more American cities are expanding outward, letting older, inner-city buildings rot while freshly built, cookie-cutter neighborhoods sprout up in the suburbs. Instead of improving on the unique architecture already in existence, we do what Americans do: throw it out and replace it with something even more disposable.

The products are available to us to live completely disposable lives (I’ve even seen a locker room with a vending machine for one-use disposable swimsuits), but it is our choice whether we succumb to cheap, easily replaceable substitutes or make use of what we already have.

Hopefully next year I’ll have space to pack because of conservation instead of carelessness. I still might have a soft spot for convenience and clever packaging, but I hope that as individuals our contribution to the world is not outweighed by our waste.

Megan Klco is a sophomore painting and English major from Liberty, Mo.

Political polarization sacrifices rational thoughts for ideologies



Andrew Kindiger

In the political spectrum, comedians have had it rough. Why watch Jon Stewart when you can laugh just as much tuning into a presidential address? Sadly, our current administration’s greatest success has been stealing the spotlight from late-night television.

One would hope that with a new election cycle drawing closer, Americans would think about voting more responsibly and drive away from the humorous escapades of the current administration, but it seems like many are going to make the same foolish mistakes our country has made for decades, stubbornly signing away independent thought to conform to the ideology of a political party.

The political gap in our nation has opened so wide that disagreements are expected, and ideas are lost in the wake of recognizing affiliations. If you want to be a Republican, you are

thought a blasphemer to even consider protecting the rights of homosexuals or defending a woman’s decision to have an abortion. If you are a Democrat you might as well be a gun-toting redneck if you want to stay in Iraq until there is a glimmer of stabilization.

The drift has become so apparent, in fact, that Democrats and Republicans barely exist, and the U.S. is left with the rabble-rousers and the straight shooters. During an election cycle, the rabble-rousers search for the candidate who is going to shake up the current administration no matter what the cost. During this cycle, the rabble-rousers are looking for a candidate that is going to leave Iraq, raise taxes and, most importantly, lean to the left. The straight-shooters will be satisfied as long as marriage laws remain in the status quo and immigrants stay out of the country.

A depressing reality begins to surface once we take a good look at the country’s grasp on political ideology with an objective perspective. There suddenly is no room for independent thought or asking questions about an issue when decisions on certain subjects have already been made with respect to one’s political party.

The people in our society who have chosen to adopt different politi-

cal perspectives or change their minds when more information is considered have been deemed “flip floppers.” Objectivity and reason have actually been labeled as illegitimate when thinking about politics. Sure, our country allows all ideas to be heard in our political setting, just as long those ideas are gathered into groups that heavily contrast when placed on either side of a thick line.

This sort of distinguishable division has cast a shadow over the opportunity of making our laughable administration more distinguished next election season. Our current pitfalls can be attributed to a lack of changing direction and a skewed view when digesting information. If more cannot be asked of our voters, how can our society truly hold our leaders accountable for negligent decisions?

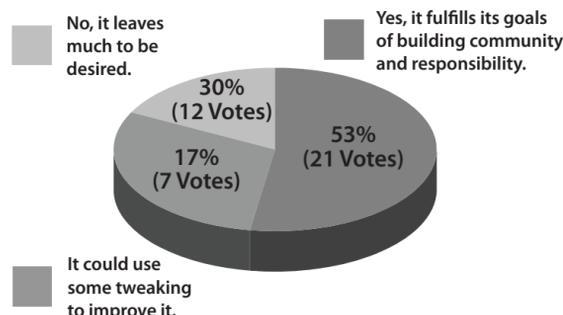
For a while I was able to console myself with the fact that a new election would bring change to our government. Now looking at the potential of those making the decision, I become fearful that politics in our nation have become nothing more than a joke.

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

INDEX Web poll

August 30 Results
as of 9 p.m. Tuesday

Do you think Truman Week provides a valuable and useful experience for first-year students?



Vote online at
www.trumanindex.com

THIS WEEK’S QUESTION: Do you think enforcement of drinking laws in Kirksville is too strict?