

# EDITORIAL

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## OUR VIEW

### Spotlight on Sept. 11 grief shines too bright

In the not-so-recent past, Henry H. Bliss was struck by a taxicab at the corner of West 74th Street and Central Park West in Manhattan. Without calculating the probabilities, it's highly likely that you don't know the significance of Henry Bliss. He has the distinction of being the first person killed in an automobile accident in the United States, and he died 108 years ago today. He is the first victim in a long and tragic war against pedestrian fatalities.

In spite of his rightful claim to tragic fame, Bliss doesn't get much action these days in the press. In fact, one of the more recent times he was mentioned was five years ago in an article about toy cars.

We don't mark our calendars as Accident Day, we don't meet annually in his remembrance and read his name, and we don't normally invoke his memory to support anything, much less a war against the electric automobile industry.

So if we don't remember Bliss as the first victim in a nameless struggle, why do we continue to dwell upon those killed in the Sept. 11 attacks to such an extent? At the risk of sounding hard-hearted or cruel, why do 2,974 people continue to warrant intense media interest more than six years after their murder?

During the last week, there's been considerable coverage of the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks and those who died in them. There also has been quite a bit of talk about how much attention should be given to memorial services and other remembrance activities, but little thought has gone into why we try to continue the process on a national scale.

The grief of the events, of course, remains raw for a great many Americans, especially those who lost friends and relatives in the attacks. But at this point, we can't help but think that as a nation, it's time to move on from spotlighting the grief. After all, we swiftly pass over the deaths of countless others — 4,000 soldiers lost in Iraq and Afghanistan come to mind — and we overlook an-

niversaries whose dates aren't easily memorable monikers.

On Sept. 11, 2007, the memorial service at the site of the World Trade Center included a speech by Gen. Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He told the people there — specifically, victims' families — that he hoped "that somehow these observances will help lessen your pain."

But really, is that possible? It's doubtful that reading someone's name, placing a wreath and giving a pep talk is going to help much. So is it worth it to go on with international

media performances that might not help lessen the pain? The New York Times quoted Tanja Root, whose husband's aunt died in the attacks, as saying, "I thought it would be different [at this year's memorial service], but it's the same feelings, and just as hard." That hardly sounds like a good reason to continue reopening our national wounds.

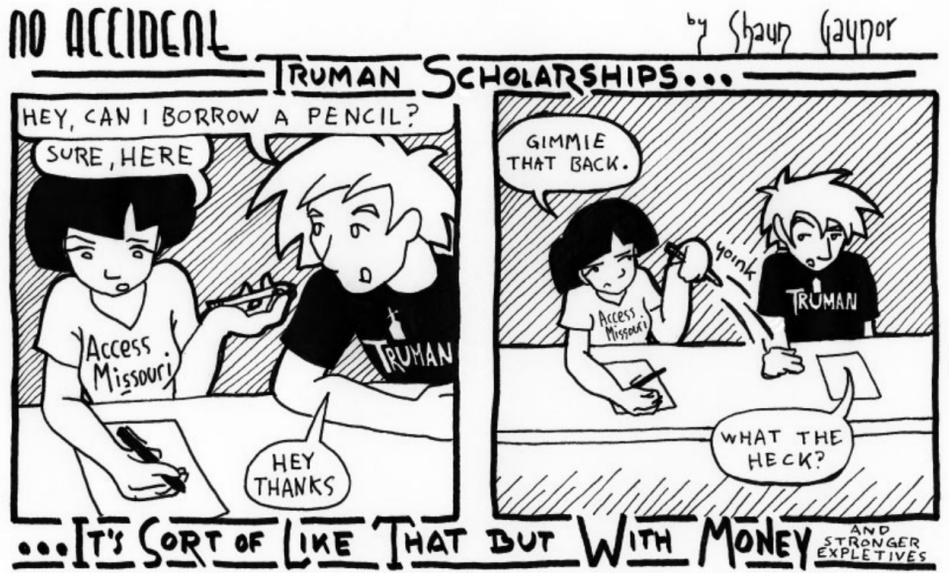
About the only people who are convinced of the need to keep bringing up the victims of Sept. 11 are politicians and those who pinpoint the attacks as the seminal moment when our nation "went to war." They say we should remember they were attacks on our country and that they were the moment when Al Qaeda and other fundamentalists declared war on America. That's too easy.

Unfortunately, that leaves out many victims of terrorism and Al Qaeda, and it oversimplifies the war on terrorism. It leaves out the gaping hole left in the USS Cole in 2000 and the destruction wrought in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. Our patriotic frenzy to remember the victims and the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, speaks to our national amnesia about terrorism, not our national pride.

The victims of the Sept. 11 attacks will never be forgotten, nor will most Americans alive that morning ever think of Sept. 11 as just another day. But it's time to stop putting Sept. 11 on display, like a museum diorama of our national mourning. If anything, it's time to shed our national veil of grief.

## CORRECTIONS

- An article titled "Truman Week DWIs increase" on pages 1 and 7 of the Aug. 30 Index incorrectly stated that Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives officers were present during Truman Week. Although no ATF agents were involved in the arrests, Missouri Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control agents were present.



## Letters to the Editor

### Bike Co-Op pursues space, provides repair lessons

For more than a year, I have been working with a small group of people who are petitioning University administrators for an on-campus bike workshop. The Truman Bike Co-Op wants to provide a space with tools and replacement parts for people to learn how to repair their bikes. As I am sure anyone with bike problems can attest, it's almost impossible to repair your bike in Kirksville, which is unfortunate as there is a bike culture.

People understand the health, monetary and environmental benefits that come with biking. People like to bike to class or to the grocery store, and they like not to have to shell out gas dollars or circle parking lots for a space. In six years at Truman, I have seen a huge increase in bikes on the roads and the racks.

Too often, however, bikes are chained to the racks, rusted, with flat tires and sit stationary for an entire season. I know their owners are out there somewhere, abandoning the bikes not because of disinterest but for the mere inability to repair them. No more! In spite of the absence of indoor workshop space due to lack of support from people in positions to allocate it, the Co-Op has begun mobile workshops on the Quad, and our first occurred during the Activities Fair last Thursday. The Co-Op will continue hosting workshops on the Quad on the second and fourth Fridays of the coming months from 3:30 to 5:15 p.m.

For our workshop last Thursday, we obtained tubes from Walt's Bike Shop in Columbia, Mo., and charged \$3 per tube. This fee included a crucial bonus: a lesson. Our organization is not interested in merely fixing bikes but in educating people. During the course of four hours, we helped between 20 and 25 people and talked to many others. I learned from one new student that the first thing he looked for when considering Truman was a bike shop. Luckily, he came to Truman anyway — in other cases, we miss out on great potential students who identify the lack of an adequate bike workshop as unacceptable.

Cassie Phillips  
Graduate Student

### Recent legislation slights accurate sexual education

Earlier this year, the Missouri General Assembly created an omnibus anti-sex education and anti-choice bill that was passed, signed by Governor Blunt and then went into effect at the end of August.

I find all aspects of this bill disturbingly short-sighted, but the attack on sex education in public schools is truly appalling. Until this August, public schools in Missouri were required to include complete, medically accurate information about contraception in sex education classes. However, they now have been given the explicit option of providing no information about contraception except for the failure rates of various methods. In addition, they have been prohibited from making use of materials or sex educators with connections to an entity that performs or even makes referrals for abortions.

Such entities include not only organizations like Planned Parenthood, but most hospitals and clinics. Withholding full and accurate information from young people will not protect them from their own sexuality — it will only deny them the tools they need to make wise decisions about sexual behavior. Ignorance is not innocence. This is bad legislation that encourages bad education.

Mary Sims  
Kirksville Resident

### Truman renovations yield progress, memories persist

[An editorial in] last week's edition of the Index chastised the Truman community for failing to realize the emotional and historical value of Grim Hall, which is slated to be demolished amid the Pershing Building renovations.

The lack of protest, or worse, the positive desire for the renovations was branded "shallow" and a detriment to the University's personal feel. The rationale that not all universities can boast former houses as residence halls is among other claims. I find such views, or at least the manner in which they were expressed, shallow.

It is unfortunate that we as conscious beings are so frail in our values — and so quick to forget them — that we must constantly chain ourselves to tangible symbols and heaps of brick and mortar. What is in a building but cold material? What reason to preserve it but to stoke our vanity, so that we may say with a certain smug self-satisfaction, "Look, there's a hall with ghost stories, and a swing and porch, and a history before our own — it makes us special?"

The pleasant memories, good times, quirks of the hall and of the people who lived there, and those who admired its homely attraction will invariably persist long after its replacement. For those who never knew it, the hall will be but one less Truman Week tidbit. Those looking for that warm, fuzzy feeling will have to look elsewhere, perhaps in the personalities of their classmates or the pervasive aura of a community aiming just a little higher than the mere appearance of character.

A few years from now, when you speak so fondly of that hall — if you speak of it at all — perhaps freshmen will cast you a patronizing glance, the kind old people get when in reminiscence. Instead of pointing to old buildings, you may look inward and realize that you have untouchable values and memories and simply smile.

Shane Bretz  
Junior

### Volleyball team voices concern about singling out athletes

In regard to the Aug. 30 issue of the Index, there are some concerns we need to address. As Truman student athletes, we feel as though we have been attacked by the article, "Arrested athletes deserve their fate," by Joe Barker. We are well aware that mistakes will be made as college students, and we are in no way justifying the actions of what occurred [during the weekend of Aug. 25 and 26] in Kirksville. We do, however, wonder what makes it necessary to single out student athletes to the rest of the community. To portray us as if we are all negative role models because of the actions of a few people is inaccurate and judgmental.

As Barker mentioned in his article, "All athletes must know that their actions don't just affect them." This is definitely a true statement, but why stop at athletes? The Greek community, band, ROTC and many academic groups may receive scholarships, just like athletes, to represent Truman in "the best way possible." Would these groups' mistakes be just as publicized? Lucky for them, we have yet to see their mugshots on the front page of the Index. Instead of warning just athletes, consider advising all Truman students to think the next time they go out.

Our problem is not with athletes being punished for their bad decisions but with the way the Index went about publicizing it. Do coaches need to publish how they are punishing their athletes, or can we put trust in our coaches to take necessary action when events like these occur? Implying that

consequences are not given is misleading to the readers. Every situation is different, and we must leave it to our athletic department to do what needs to be done. Barker brought up an event that occurred two years ago. The athletes involved were not suspended, and because of this he leads readers to believe no action was taken to punish these players. Just because nothing was published does not mean that those athletes did not serve a penalty.

Singling out athletes and putting a spotlight on their possible mistakes and punishment is not just making the athletes look bad, but the Truman community as a whole. It is a community that we are all a part of, a community that no one should be ashamed of representing because of a few people's mistakes. Being described as athletes who all "run wild" is erroneous, and we find it unfortunate that a fellow Bulldog would want that impression given to the community.

2007 Truman Volleyball Team

### National anthem encourages misperceptions about America

On the anniversary of 9/11 (or nine-one-one if you're into puns) we have, as always, choices to make.

Here's one more to consider: Which set of lyrics do you want to sing to a familiar melody composed in London around 1770 by John Stafford Smith? The melody is a challenging one, a roller-coaster with a determined beat and high notes nearly impossible to reach.

You probably know the melody as "The Star Spangled Banner," the song designated our national anthem back in 1930. In singing Key's lyrics, we celebrate ourselves as courageous in battle and vicious to our haughty foes. We watch our flag streaming while rockets glare redly and bombs burst in "the havoc of war and the battle's confusion" and our enemies' "foul footsteps" are "washed out" with their blood (Do you know that stanza?).

But you could instead sing "To Anacreon in Heaven," the lyrics for which Smith's tune was originally written. If you choose to sing Ralph Tomlinson's London drinking song, you are celebrating the Roman deities of love and wine, Venus and Bacchus, and their harmonious union under the tutelage of the Greek poet Anacreon. As global public relations, our blood-spangled anthem is problematic nowadays.

Composed in 1814 when we were genuinely defending a fledgling post-colonial country from attack — and canonized in 1930, when we were deep in the Great Depression and craving empowerment — the lyrics of "The Star Spangled Banner" now reinforce the notion that we are arrogant violence-junkies. We no longer are more bombed-against than we are bombing, and to claim that ours is the land or the home of the free or the brave is not just ethnocentric. It's a grammar mistake, an improper use of definite articles.

If you choose to sing "Anacreon," you could still be creating a P.R. problem, signaling to outsiders that Americans are indeed the self-indulgent sensualists others think us to be. The Anacreon Society was a drinking club composed entirely of rich, white males, and some "anacreontic" songs celebrate pederasty.

Still, I recommend that you at least try singing "Anacreon in Heaven." I am not condoning free love, under-aged drinking and male privilege, but there is something sweet about a song that asks you to "preserve unanimity, friendship and love," and "flourish happy, united and free" while you "entwine the myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine."

Betsy Delmonico  
Professor of English

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### 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.