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Spring in Kirksville gives Kirksville residents and Truman students the opportunity to pick through the unwanted trash left on curbs to create something new and special.

April showers bring May flowers and trash

BY SHANNON WALTER
Staff Reporter

In April Kirksville provides treasure in the form of unwanted trash on every curb. The annual Spring Clean Up gives Kirksville citizens the opportunity to throw out unwanted items, but others see this as an opportunity to find furniture, clothes or odd pieces for art projects. The Spring Clean Up began to supplement the closing of the Kirksville landfill in the 1990s. Public works director John Buckwalter said the city is divided into four sections based on the day trash is regularly picked up. The old system split the town in two halves and the trash sat on the curbs for a month, he said. This new system minimizes the time trash waits on the curb. "I think the most popular items that are at the curb during Spring Clean Up are couches and overstuffed recliners," Buckwalter said. "And that's exactly what Spring Clean Up is intended for, for household goods that or household trash that people can't get rid of in a normal trash pick up." Senior Hannah Hemmelgarn said she rode her bike through town during Spring Clean Up to search for interesting items. She said she found a new jacket, books, art supplies and old windows. "I found a lot of stuff that really seemed like it shouldn't be trash to most people like books and clothing

items," Hemmelgarn said. "You'd be surprised what you can find." Hemmelgarn said she is a scavenger and has dumpster dived throughout Kirksville. "Dumpster diving is cool because it's diverting the waste stream," Hemmelgarn said. "If you're willing to get a little dirty ... You have to wear the right gear." Hemmelgarn said she is a member of ECO, a club that works to make Truman and Kirksville more environmentally friendly. "It's really unfortunate because there's so much waste, especially in industrialized countries," she said. "It's really depressing. We're just filling up landfills and sea fills with plastics that are toxic to our environment. So I'd rather have fun and find things in the trash than let it get that far." Alumnus Tim Dickmeyer said he and his roommate once furnished their entire house with items they found on the curb including a couch, a bed, lamps and tables. "This would have been the spring of 1999," Dickmeyer said. "It must have been quite a sight. We drove around in his Mustang with the top down, throwing anything we could find or fit into the back." Dickmeyer said one of the rewards was putting the stuff back on the curb when he graduated. He said he was throwing out a large stuffed animal and a Kirksville citizen found it as a present to give his grandson. "It was really rewarding and cool to see the karma come around for someone else," he said. "It was an amazing experience to watch all of it recycle to more people."

Dust settles on Mexican journey

With three weeks left in Mexico, I've come to realize I'm much more of a homebody than I ever thought. I always figured that since I travel frequently and have lived in multiple states, I am somewhat of a drifter, a free spirit, one that can't be tied down. I've discovered that's just an illusion. I'm tired of being away, and I'm ready to go home. Every day I miss something new. At first my longings to flush the toilet paper or make a phone call were present but slight. I would move on to a more satisfying thought, like how awesome it was that from my classroom. I had the perfect view of Puebla's volcano, Popocatepetl, releasing gentle wisps of smoke that trailed in a ribbon across the sky. Then I missed driving my own car rather than suffering the previously mentioned horrors of the public transportation system, which I disliked almost immediately, even if it is handy. I prefer whatever the price of gas is at home to the obnoxious music, small seats (not made for even moderately long legs), deafening horns, dangerous maneuvers and countless coins draining from my pockets. Soon, my yearnings to come home covered not only wishing for an alternative to Mexico's inconveniences, but simply for a concept of normality in spite of how nice it is here. Take the weather, for example. Since my arrival in January, there has not been a day out of the 65 to 80 degree range, and it has rained a grand total

of three times, two of those spritzes lasting all of 15 minutes. The sun is always shining, there are always flowers, it is always warm. But I would enjoy a good rain. I would enjoy a lazy, cloudy day, I miss wearing a sweatshirt and seeing the spring flowers pop up from the gray, dead world. (Just to be clear, though, I have never once missed Kirksville's icy winter.) I've grown tired of the dust that lines the streets here, accumulated from the combination of Popo's ash and dirt from the lack of rain. I've grown tired of tripping daily on the uneven, cracked sidewalks. I'm ready for Thai food, decent radio stations, a walk with my dogs and a clean river I actually can swim in, unlike the polluted muck that passes under the highway at Angelópolis. Despite any complaints I might have or any shortcomings Mexico has shown me, I know I will miss things from down here, like the man with a little bike who rides around in the early morning shouting "Tamales, tamales!" through a loud speaker. Even though the muffled, amplified jumble of words has woken me up countless times, I know it will make me smile if I ever hear it again someday. I'll miss the food: the tacos árabes made with meat stacked with onions and roasted in a flame and the bounty of inexpensive avocados and unbelievably sweet fruit. I know I'll be sad to say goodbye to my friends around

town, like the man who stands guard outside the computer center where I catch the bus, the girl who works at the coffee shop and waves when I walk by and the little old lady who does my laundry and writes my name on the slip without asking how to spell it anymore. I wish I could take a little bit of Mexico home with me — all my international friends, the breathtaking beaches, the sounds of exotic birds, the cookies from the bakery, the smell of herbal smoke from the native healers outside the National Cathedral, the town square on a Sunday morning and horchata, a drink made of rice water and cinnamon. I wish I could take back the spirit of hospitality and family closeness — that way I could share it with my country, and we could share our good attributes and change a little bit for the better. In my remaining three weeks, I'm sure I'll spend most of my days dreaming of home and everything I can't wait for, but I hope I spend at least some of my final days taking account of everything I've gained and appreciating everything I might never have or see again. But who knows, maybe I'll just end up making mental notes of all the places I'll go and things I'll do if I ever make it back to this town. With that, I bid this country a fond farewell. See you back in Kirksville!



Kelly Schute



Delta Sigma Pi

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