

## Students need to explore Kirksville's culture



**Tyler Retherford**

When I think about art in Kirksville, my mind automatically goes to the University. But my mind is making a terrible mistake. Culture in Kirksville isn't strictly the University's domain.

A quick glance at the Kirksville Arts Association Web site makes it evident that the University doesn't have a monopoly on celebrating and displaying art in Kirksville. Although

they might not be as well advertised to students as many of the University-sponsored events, there are an amazing number of community art events in Kirksville which deserve just as much patronage. In fact, community art projects tend to have a crucial advantage over those hosted by the University because they offer a broader degree of accessibility and allow for even greater involvement from both local residents and University students.

University events are by no means some sort of closed-door, secretive affair only for art majors or students, but they are predominately advertised to students. Consequently, their content usually is catered to the interests of students. This is logical considering that their funding largely

comes from student tuition, so their budget should be spent to ensure the programs it funds are beneficial to students. Community projects, on the other hand, often allow a wide array of people to actively participate, such as the Community Orchestra or the Curtain Call Theater Company. Many University-sponsored events might have a mixed audience of local residents and students, but by their nature, the participants tend to be either visitors or students. This doesn't make these events any less important or worthwhile, but active involvement is another aspect of art that many local programs offer to an extremely broad array of people.

The quality of art projects that can be viewed locally isn't to be underestimated either. The Kirksville

Arts Association currently is hosting a Smithsonian exhibit called "New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music," complete with academic accompaniment in the form of a lunch learning session every Wednesday this month. This "Lunch and Learn" series hosts local musicians, historians and, for the past two weeks, associate professor of music Marc Rice and graduate student Paul Niehaus, to discuss the history and culture of music in the area. The biannual Round Barn Blues Festival certainly is not to be underestimated either, and the Red Barn Arts and Crafts Festival is undeniably popular as well.

It's easy to focus on events such as exhibits in the University Art Gallery, orchestra performances and the-

ater productions when talking about local art. When you start including a wider array of events like the Student Activities Board-sponsored open mic nights and concerts, both on campus and at local venues — not to mention less traditional events such as The Society Of Dance Arts recital, the Children's Literature Festival being hosted in the Student Union Building for area schoolchildren April 17 and the annual Red Barn Arts and Crafts Festival — it becomes very obvious that we certainly have a vast variety of opportunities to experience art right here in Kirksville if we're willing to look for them.

*Tyler Retherford is a sophomore anthropology major from Springfield, Mo.*



## Tru Rants

**What makes you mad? Excited? Annoyed? Happy? Don't be shy, share it with other Index readers! Send us an e-mail and get your thoughts published in next week's paper. It's just like Facebook, but better!**

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**"Yes. Hello? (Is this on?) Well, I think rants are way too high! All in our society deserve lower rants! It's not right for rants to eat up such a big percentage! What can be done about this? We would try to organize a demonstration, but these horrendous rants make it horribly difficult!"**

**"I would like to sit down and have a talk with the individual who vandalized the quad and the people who have to clean it up."**

## Posting policy confuses campus



**Molly Skyles**

Sidewalk chalk messages, posters, table tents and flyers. Advertisements about everything from a jazz band concert to a fraternity party are plastered around campus. Because of the current posting policy debate (see story, page 2), students are asking what the limitations are to these various types of advertisements.

According to the Student Conduct Code, any type of advertising for a student organization containing the "promotion of alcohol consumption" is prohibited on campus. Also, all of these types of advertisements — referring to posters, flyers and the like — must meet the guidelines put in place by the dean of student affairs, Lou Ann Gilchrist, and be enforced by the Center for Student Involvement. Although it is not explicitly stated in the Code, these advertisements are not allowed to be distributed if they advertise an event at a bar, because that condones alcohol usage.

Because of the lack of explanation regarding the posting policy, the Student Senate, inspired by

student complaints, addressed the Board of Governors at its recent April 4 meeting. Senate argued that the posting policy should be more explicit in regards to the do's and don'ts of advertising on campus.

When most people see that an event is going to take place at a bar, they assume alcohol will be present, and I am by no means arguing against that point. However, what about restaurants like Ruby Tuesday? It is an establishment that happens to serve food as well as alcohol. An organization should be able to advertise an event at a restaurant I go to when my parents visit. I highly doubt a lot of people hit up Ruby Tuesday on a Friday night to party and get wasted. Honestly, I don't know if restaurants that also have a bar are on the list of prohibited places to advertise about on campus because nothing in the conduct code specifies the permissible establishments to begin with.

It's understandable that a college campus, and a dry one at that, would not support advertising events where alcohol will be present. However, there seems to be a lack of consistency with the issues in the posting policy. Not only are the acceptable establishments not clearly stated, but also the posting policy itself only really applies to student organizations. Department-sponsored events can, but are not required to, obtain the CSI's

approval of advertisements before they are distributed. In essence, the Theater Department could advertise an event at the Dukum Inn but a fraternity could not. This seems unfair. I guess the various departments could also have specific rules that prohibit bar advertisements, but once again, this is not stated anywhere. All campus-wide advertisements should have to meet the same criteria. After all, in regard to the advertisements for events at bars, people throughout the University community will see these ads, and not all of them are at least 21 years of age. It just seems strange that the world of academia does not need to meet the same guidelines as other organizations when it comes to advertising.

I think Truman's posting policy needs to be enforced — a college campus should in no way support alcohol usage. This means that advertisements should not mention the locations of events that take place at bars or that disclaimers should be placed on the ads warning that alcohol may be present. No matter what your opinion on the posting policy, I argue that the real problem is the vague and open-ended nature of the current policy.

*Molly Skyles is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## Public speaking class is proof of misguided curriculum



**Andrew Kindiger**

The student group petitioning for COMM 170, the public speaking course, should think about for what and whom they are fighting.

Communication is a very interesting and diverse field within itself, and has a lot to offer those in other majors. However, what COMM 170 achieves for students is very similar to the benefits that students receive in other courses that have a presentation requirement. Majors ranging from English to computer science and anthropology encompass elements that utilize presentation skills and teach students to talk about their topics intelligently to a group of people that might or might not have researched the same topic. Thus, students will take time in their course of study to effectively

communicate information to an audience in interesting ways suitable to the topic.

The three credits that COMM 170 take up under the Essential Skills portion of the Liberal Studies Program could be better utilized by students who already feel they have enough information regarding public speaking because of their involvement with presentations in other aspects of their academic career. Take, for instance, students competing in debate or students involved in social organizations where they have to present information to a group like a fraternity or club. I don't think that COMM 170 or a similar course should be entirely removed from the communication curriculum, but it should definitely

not be a requirement for those who are already achieving the goals of COMM 170 in different disciplines.

My experience in COMM 170 helped me point out some flaws with the class. The main point of the course simply seemed to be to have students become familiar with giving speeches in front of their peers and also to get a few tips about persuasion and presentation. But the course also encompassed a loose overview of concepts ranging from rhetoric to politics. Although beneficial, the intricate aspects of communication were hard to grasp in a course so heavily focused on giving speeches. If there is to be some sort of communication requirement in the Essential Skills portion, COMM 170 should be modified to facilitate a minimalist focus so students who want to get better at public speaking can and students who want a more advanced

approach to communication can take a course in rhetoric. I wouldn't even be opposed to an LSP mode involving rhetorical studies over a general communication course needed for the Essential Skills.

I have to say that I know where the communication majors are coming from. As an English major I thought I gained a lot from taking Writing as Critical Thinking, but other students found it too similar to advanced English courses they took in high school. Many students seemed to get bored very easily and did not want to re-learn how to write a paper, but others who were English majors engaged the class in more positive directions and got involved with the literature and took a lot from the course. I would not suggest that COMM 170 be removed from the curriculum, but the course should be more generalized so that non-majors can receive the skills they need but have the flexibility to invest in courses that offer them more motivation to excel.

As far as the Essential Skills

are concerned, Truman needs to revise that area of study. I think it would be more worthwhile to look at the ES requirements as Modes of Inquiry requirements, so students could take a variety of courses to satisfy the public speaking, composition, analytic analysis, health and statistical skills requirements. For example, how would a student who participated in the Student Research Conference, took Applying Literary Theory, Symbolic Logic, Yoga Traditions and a sociology course focusing on social marginalization be any less prepared for the world or graduate work if they completed the ES requirements formally?

As students we should make our voices heard about the curriculum, so it's good that communication majors have decided to step up. But I would suggest taking a step back to better facilitate a more generalized curriculum for those of us who are not majoring in communication.

*Andrew Kindiger is a sophomore English major from Liberty, Mo.*

## Campus graffiti proves to be little more than nuisance



**Brenna McDermott**

"Students-revolt!" I was shocked to find this phrase spray-painted across Pickler Memorial Library this weekend, and even more surprised when I found out more sayings had been spray-painted all over campus. From "the state is murder" to "broken minds, broken hearts," I was confused about the overall point of the seemingly unrelated writings. Graffiti can be used for art, social message or change, but I don't consider this weekend's spray-painting to be anything but stupidity and vandalism.

I'm all for a powerful social message. But the phrases painted everywhere don't make sense. First of all, we're being told to revolt against

something, but we don't even know what it is. Truman? Sodexo? Education? They could be asking me to revolt against bunnies for all I know. And how does "broken minds, broken hearts" fit in with the revolt messages? It sounds more like a lyric from some emo song than a means of spreading a message or change.

Mostly I find the vandalism annoying. If, as I assume, the vandals wish us to rebel against the University where we are students, then I just have to laugh. The leaders of the "revolution" remain anonymous, and therefore will not be kicked out of school for the messages they spray-painted on the walls of the University that they supposedly want to rebel against. If I'm supposed to revolt, shouldn't I know what I'm revolting against and who I'm revolting with? The graffiti has no merit and no point. It is stupid, pointless and disrespectful.

The only thing the vandalism has accomplished is to unite students and the University even more. Student-initiated Facebook groups were formed just to get students to help out

the Physical Plant with clean-up.

Perhaps I am missing the point. Maybe there is a really good message behind all the spray-painting and I am super-dense. If so, there are much better ways to express ideas. A university campus is a perfect place to get ideas out there. These vandals could have started a student organization, submitted statements to TruRant or Tom Thumb or just stood in the Quad and yelled out their ideas. A college campus is the only place where a person has this many opportunities to take a stand. And instead of using those opportunities, they abused the University and insulted the students, their potential revolutionaries. If these vandals had something good to say, I would have been more than happy to listen, and if the cause had been a good one, I would not have been afraid to stand up with them. But instead, they took the beautiful buildings of our campus and made them bathroom stall doors. They made them unimportant, useless chalkboards. And I say that if you don't

have any respect for the University and you want to rebel against it, then come forward, admit who you are and tell us what the point of it all was. If you really support rebelling against the school, then what does it matter if you get kicked out? Stop wasting our money, time and resources.

Spray-painting confusing, ambiguous, dumb phrases on the sides of the buildings where we get our education is not art. It is stupidity. This incident has done nothing but prove that there is nothing to revolt against. Students choose to get their education here, and they chose this week to help take care of Truman by taking down the gunk that is written on its walls. I will always support freedom of speech, but there are too many opportunities to express opinions that don't involve illegal, detrimental acts. This isn't free speech — this is the act of children spewing nonsense on our University and our ideals. The vandals got their wish in a way. This absolutely revolts me.

*Brenna McDermott is a sophomore communication major from St. Louis, Mo.*

**Spray-painting dumb phrases on the sides of classroom buildings is not art. It's stupidity.**