

Students need day off to “Storm the Capital”



Tyler Retherford

When the topic of budget cuts comes up in conversations with my friends at other universities across the state, I'm always excited to explain how well I think Truman is handling the situation, especially how well students and faculty seem to be working together. However, as the budget issue starts to be pushed aside in favor of focusing on classes and everyday activities, this university-wide unity seems to be breaking down. That's not

to say a wide array of groups and organizations aren't working to convince legislators and prepare the University for any eventual cuts, but the sense of cooperation from all the concerned groups isn't as prevalent as it once was. Student Senate's "Storm the Capital" event makes this apparent.

The annual "Storm the Capital" event is more important than ever this year, with the upcoming vote on education funding in the state legislature. Although organizers are doing an admirable job of organizing and advertising for the event, it's a shame not to see the same level of campus-wide excitement and involvement that the initial meetings on the projected budget cuts stirred up back in January. This event is a chance to really show those who make decisions about public funding for state universities that the Truman com-

munity is actively working to put that money to good use, can work together to do so and deserves more support and advocacy outside of Student Senate.

"Storm the Capital," scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 25, poses a problem for potential participants who would be missing an entire day of class. If most students' schedules are like mine, the prospect of missing a day of classes is hard to justify. Professors should discuss with their students how to work out a way for them to miss class in order to go to Jefferson City. Clearly the point of "Storm the Capital" is to make sure students have access to a high-quality education, so cancelling classes might be somewhat counterproductive, but making it clear to students that they won't be missing test or quizzes and working out ways to allow students taking part in the event

to make up work they miss could go a long way toward increasing attendance for the event.

The decisions being made in Jefferson City affect every aspect of the University, and as such this really is a matter that should concern everyone: students, administrators, faculty and staff. We all should try to contribute to any efforts furthering the University's interests, whether by more individual efforts such as writing to our representatives, or participating in events such as "Storm the Capital." If professors helped make missing a day of classes for the event less of an obstacle, and if students were willing to do a little extra work later to make up for these missed classes, the concessions would be easy to make in order to promote issues that will affect the entire University.

As well as increasing attendance for

this particular event, fostering an atmosphere of cooperation throughout the various organizations and the student body in general will be a much-needed boon later if the state decides against maintaining level funding. The ensuing debate about how to restructure the University's budget would be much easier if the campus community still was in the habit of working together and trying to find a unified consensus on budget issues. Hopefully such a benefit won't be necessary, and funding will remain at the same level as in previous years, but even if it is, then the work put into cooperating and working together will do our University a great deal of good.

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

Phelps marijuana use parallels drug behavior on campus



Molly Skyles

With a wingspan of more than six feet, 14 Olympic gold medals, seven world records in swimming and a gorgeous body to top it off, Michael Phelps was an American role model in the eyes of many until he got caught — smoking the reefer, that is.

Yeah, you've heard it correctly: The 23-year-old swimming star was photographed taking a hit out of a water bong at a house party last November and because of his inappropriate behavior, he has lost some of his endorsements — namely Kellogg's — and is not allowed to compete for three months. Phelps has publicly apologized for his misconduct and promised to not repeat the mistake.

Now, I understand that many people looked up to Phelps for his accomplishments, but is supporting him even though he smokes weed really equal to condoning drug use? Despite the fact that it is illegal, there are many worse things that someone could get caught doing other than smoking marijuana. Some would even claim that marijuana is a non-addictive drug that has no real long-term side effects. Marijuana's side effects have been debated for a long time, but I think most people would agree that he could have done something much worse — like assault someone. He simply was enjoying himself at a party and smoked a little weed. I have to wonder if the worst side effect that could come from his marijuana use is consuming more than his 12,000-calorie diet because of the munchies.

Despite the fact that it is illegal, marijuana usage is not entirely uncommon. In fact, everyone from former Dallas Cowboys lineman Mark Stepanoski to Bill Gates and

even President Obama has admitted to puffing on a blunt at one point in time, and it hasn't seemed to harm their success too much.

So if our own president has smoked weed, why is it such a big deal that Phelps did? After all, no harm came of the situation and his swimming was not affected. My guess is the real problem some people have with Phelps stems from the athlete-as-role-model debate. If an aspiring young athlete sees Phelps partaking in drug usage, he or she might feel inclined to do so as well. However, Phelps is a 23-year-old man. He might be more in the spotlight than other 23-year-olds, but still, he is young and wants to have fun. And really, who can blame him for that?

This whole Phelps conundrum made me wonder what would happen if a Truman student was caught in such a situation. According to Truman's drug policy, illegal drugs are not

tolerated on any level, but it does not specify the consequences of said behavior. So would that person be expelled? Or even lose

scholarships? I don't exactly know — but drug use has happened on campus.

According to the Department of Public Safety annual crime report nine students were arrested for drug use in the residence halls in 2007. The two years prior, there were two drug incidents each year. These students were taken into custody and charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Just like Phelps, these students were foolish and wanted to experiment.

I don't condone young people going out and getting high. However, I hardly find it surprising that someone who was and is under such pressure as Phelps doesn't want to blow off a little steam by smoking marijuana.

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

AROUND THE QUAD



"I haven't decided yet — maybe I'll go to Omaha."

*Ankeeta Koirala
freshman*



"I haven't thought about it — maybe stay in Kirksville."

*Jennifer Barnes
junior*



"I'm observing at a school and running in a St. Patrick's Day race."

*Katie Boevers
sophomore*



"I might be going to San Diego or Florida — somewhere warm."

*Mayumi Noguchi
senior*

Rec Center space crisis easy to fix



Jean Kaul

Truman's family — the University's various athletic programs and organizations — is going through a growth spurt and the results are not very pretty.

Just like siblings being forced to share a bedroom because of limited space, Truman's football team and the ROTC program on campus are asking to share a building that has been the domain of students who don't participate in either group — the Student Recreation Center. At the Student Senate meeting Sunday, the football team asked to use the rec center. Their request was granted, and prior to that, Senate passed a similar resolution allowing ROTC access to the rec center for physical training (see story, page 1).

Although allowing ROTC and the football team to use the rec center might seem like a no-brainer to some, Senate's decision marks a significant change in attitude from students toward student-athletes. The rec center debate really is a microcosm of a larger problem that consumes our campus. Ever since I entered the campus community two and a half years ago, I've been struck by the disconnect between "normal" students and student-athletes. Often I've heard grumbling that athletics

receive special treatment (most often this discussion centers on the football team) when it comes to grades, scholarships, etc. On the other hand, I've heard my friends who are student-athletes complain about the University's poor facilities, lack of fan support and a lack of faculty empathy to tough game scheduling and constant practice. I've felt it, too — in the spring of 2007 I voted against the Student Athletic Fee, mad that I would have to pay to support athletic teams I barely have any interest in — harsh, I know. As easy as it is to dismiss athletics as unimportant to the University community, fellow non-athletic readers, we need to realize something important:

It makes sense to let students and athletes try to coexist in harmony.

The rec center — a refuge for intramural-playing, weight-watching normal folk — already is used by student-athletes to work out at non-sanctioned team practices, so it makes sense to let students and athletes try to coexist in harmony. If the arrangement doesn't work, scratch it. Some in the campus community have expressed fear that athletic practices might cause unnecessary wear and tear on rec center equipment. But the football team won't be able to wreck your yoga mat. When members of the football team use the rec center, they won't be practicing in smelly pads — I've smelled the locker room, and it

does have a distinct odor — they will be practicing in sneakers and shorts. You kind of have to feel sympathetic to the football team's plight. Before it was allowed to practice in the rec center, the team had to run up and down the hallways of Pershing Building. That type of practice is a little too reminiscent of my grade school cross-country running days to be appropriate for athletes competing at the Div. II college level.

My biggest sympathy goes out to the rec center workers who have to open the building at 5:30 a.m. Provisions need to be made for the sacrifice the student workers are making. My suggestion: Pay student-workers more when they have to open the rec center

for the football team or ROTC.

On the ROTC end, students need to realize that some of their peers are only able to attend this University because of the money ROTC provides. Just like the football team, if ROTC doesn't treat the rec center facilities with respect, then rec center administrators can toss 'em out.

The bottom line is that we are all University students and we need to try to make the Truman experience a great one for all of us — if that means sharing the playground, then we've got to do it. Remember what your mom said: If your brother and sister ask you nicely, you need to share your toys (or rec center) with them.

Jean Kaul is a senior English major from Marengo, Ill.

Monologues conquer sex taboos



Jackie Gonzalez

Tonight marks my third and final year participating in "The Vagina Monologues" at Truman. After my first performance (and the first time ever seeing the show) I embraced my womanhood like never before. Being a part of the production was a spiritual awakening, and I felt a part of something much more meaningful than my prior endeavors. To this day, I continue to feel incredibly proud to have helped The Monologues get off the ground at Truman's campus.

I got involved with The Monologues initially to re-live my high school theater days. Like most former thespians, I crave stage time every now and then. I had never seen The Monologues, so I first thought it simply was a show of girls being overtly sexual and angry. Despite this production seeming to be the antithesis of my being, I signed up anyway.

I would like to think I was a proper young lady. So when I first got involved with The Monologues, I didn't tell my seemingly socially conservative parents for fear of what they'd say. To me, the word 'vagina' was way too improper and inappropriate for any kind of conversation, let alone one with my parents. When I finally told my mother, she was reluctant to show enthusiasm for my name to be associated with something so taboo. I, too, was slightly embarrassed to mention my affiliation, but those nerves disappeared the moment I realized what this show meant for others.

"The Vagina Monologues" isn't just a bunch of liberal feminists who obsess and giggle about sexuality. I — together with many other participants — am trying to make a statement far beyond the realm of anything physical. We're here to take a stand, to prove a point.

A cast member told me about a girl who refused to say the word vagina, and seemed to be uncomfortable to even think about attending The Monologues. She didn't use the v-word simply out of disgust. She's not alone. The title of the play is an automatic turn off for some. Using the giant, often-avoided v-word automatically gives the impression that the play will

be uncomfortable and not for the timid. But it is so much more than the frequent mentioning of a particular body part. It is a show about love and loss, discoveries and disappointments and, most of all, real life. This woman's reaction, and the reactions of many, reminded me of how women (and men) still are often times embarrassed about the things we have no control over. We've got to move on and look at the issue at hand — putting an end to violence against women.

Every year at The Monologues, there is an opportunity for audience members and participants to stand up if they know someone who has been a victim of sexual abuse. Practically everyone stands at that moment, proving instantaneously that the violence has yet to cease. It is disheartening to see that sexual violence has taken a toll on this surrounding community and in so many of our own personal lives.

I don't know when the entire world will conceptualize the fact that violence against women or anyone is not OK, but until it does, you will find me on the front lines of this war.

Jackie Gonzalez is a senior communication and history major from San Diego, Calif.

What was going on in the INDEX?

30 years ago – Feb. 15, 1979

Jong Hyeon Huh, president of Busan National University in Korea, traveled to Kirksville to experience American college life.

10 years ago – Feb. 12, 1999

The Board of Governors approved a 5.31 percent tuition hike for out-of-state students and a 3.99 percent hike for in-state students.

5 years ago – Feb. 12, 2004

Judy Shepard, mother of hate crime victim Matthew Shepard spoke to 1,400 students in Baldwin Hall about the need for tolerance.