

## ONE-ON-ONE

This week, two of our columnists debate each other. Their topic for this issue is:

## Do Freedom of Choice flags affect abortion dispute?



Zach Vicars

Flags have a place in Kirksville and the abortion debate

In the past week or so, blue and pink flags have been popping up all over Kirksville. They are in the front lawns of residents, the windows of business owners, and the yards of churches. Many fly 169 flags, representing the number of unborn children aborted every hour in the United States. This silent demonstration is in direct response to the Freedom of Choice Act that will be presented before the 111th Congress.

FOCA will give women the right to have an abortion anywhere in the United States, erasing several prior pieces of legislation. The bill also threatens to make abortion available at all medical facilities, even those with faith-related objections. Furthermore, should the bill become a law, all taxpayers might be forced to fund abortions.

I, for one, stand behind these flags. Not because they are the most articulate way of addressing the issue, but because they reveal a violent truth to the passerby. These flags may not engage the viewer in a scholarly debate on the implications of FOCA, but the flags do present the ugly side of abortion.

Unwanted children are roadblocks in the American dream inasmuch as the Jews were roadblocks in Hitler's dream for Nazi Germany. For

## Flags showcase ugly truth of abortion debate

many Americans, a child gets in the way of their utopian lifestyle and must, therefore, be exterminated in a way as cold and methodical as the gas chambers of the Holocaust.

This comparison is sickening, and it pains me to make it, but the heartless ethic that we as a people have adopted demands that we weigh the cost of abortion on the same scale as the greatest atrocity in human memory.

Sadly, many Truman readers are probably more offended by my language than they are by the thought of fetuses being ripped from the womb and thrown in the garbage.

Most people who call themselves pro-choice will never view a baby inside the womb the same way they view a baby they can see and touch. They will never admit that first-trimester fetuses have beating hearts, functioning brains and developing nervous systems.

Then there are some who might agree that the fetus is alive but maintain that the bigger issue at stake is women's right to choose. Well, quite frankly women had a choice — to make wise sexual decisions, take the necessary precautions to avoid pregnancy and be responsible.

The argument then flows to the women who had no

choice, those who were raped. However, a little research reveals that these cases are far rarer than we are led to believe. In their 1987 study for the academic journal "Family Planning Perspectives," A. Torres and J.D. Forrest found only one woman out of 1,900 was aborting her child because of rape. As heartbreaking as the plights of these mothers are, I don't see how this number can

make a case for the widespread use of abortion. I'm sure that when the letters to

the editor come in next week, furious students will defame me for not examining "every side" of the abortion issue. A thoughtful observer, however, will understand that there can be only two absolute sides to the topic of abortion. My column, just like the flags popping up all over town, stands firmly on one side. Readers must choose for themselves which side they will take.

One either wishes to protect the sacred life of a helpless infant, or one wishes to protect the convenient choice of an irresponsible couple. One either stands on the side of life, or one stands on the side of death.

*Zach Vicars is a freshman English and history major from St. Charles, Mo.*



Andrew Kindiger

## Religious right uses flags to simplify issue

The onslaught of religious propaganda currently adorning Kirksville streets was designed to remind citizens where the church stands in regards to issues concerning abortion. Churches all over the nation have come together to petition Barack Obama's promise to sign the Freedom of Choice Act, a bill that would optimize the options available for women wanting to have an abortion. Religious organizations in Kirksville have chosen to utilize dense groupings of pink and blue flags featuring the slogans, "Abortion Kills Babies" and "Jesus Forgives."

When I first saw the flags I wasn't surprised by the message so much as by the vigor with which it was being portrayed. So many flags ominously grouped together seemed to be an excellent ploy in order to bring attention to an important issue of the church as well as to guilt anyone on the fence about FOCA into God's corner. Even though I disagree with the message, the flags do not bother me. It is a peaceful way for the church to argue against a law that they believe to be unjust. The main goal of the anti-FOCA movement is not so much to protest but actually to pray.

Even though I can see where some Christians are coming from on this issue, I do not understand why our nation needs to constantly lump sensitive issues regarding the freedom of Americans into a

category of either good or bad. The flags are an undeniable reiteration of the constant guilt trip the church attempts to instill in those who believe that abortion might be the right decision, but such a decision is not so clear-cut. Furthermore, our nation seems to constantly reject an objective view concerning the rights of an individual in order to advance a social cause. The field of science repeatedly has been ignored on issues such as stem cell research because of the church's heavy sway in relation to ethics.

Despite our own personal convictions regarding morality in terms of abortion, an objective synthesis is needed not in an effort to be correct but in an effort to be fair. As a nation we currently are experiencing a recession as well as a social situation where the divorce rate is high and many mothers are forced to raise their children alone. At this point, not every child that comes into the world is going to be given equal privilege of livelihood. Young women who are not ready or are incapable of supporting a family need more options in order to provide better lives for themselves.

Although the opinions of the church are valid in a religious

sense, they greatly overlook the social dichotomy of the U.S. and have not evaluated what might be the best decision facing a young woman who is not ready to take on the responsibility of raising a child. In some situations it might be better for a family to have an abortion instead of raising a child in an abusive, unstable or simply inadequate environment. If the church really is concerned about protecting the potential life of a child, more factors must be considered than simply what

religion suggests about the issue of abortion. So should Christians simply sit back and allow the society in which they live to pass laws that go against their faith? Sermons do not have to change and the minds of those who believe abortion is wrong should remain resolved. However, our great nation allows us the privilege to remain objective with regard to the law so that the freedom of choice is not exhausted for those not subscribing to the same moral convictions of a particular religious denomination. So Christians, pray on but recognize that more factors than religion need to be evaluated in order to make a judgment for an entire nation.

*Andrew Kindiger is a sophomore English major*

### These flags reveal a violent truth to the passerby.

### The flags feature the slogan "Abortion Kills Babies."

## Technology brings unwelcome respite from dating woes



Brenna McDermott

Recently a friend came to me and asked me for dating advice, because he had met a girl he was into. He asked how he should get in touch with her, where he should take her, even what times were acceptable to call her.

He wanted to ask her out on a real live date — a date where the boy asks and picks up the girl and opens doors for her and pays for her dinner and a movie. And I had to search the shelves of my brain for what dating was and how it works. I understand "hanging out," and I understand "talking." But dating the way our parents and grandparents did? The thought was echoing around over and over: Why doesn't our generation know how to date?

I wasn't quite certain of the answer right away, but I immediately knew what the cause of our dating disability was: technology. Technology has made us a bunch of wimps.

The way I understand it, when people used to date they would have to actually approach each other and need a good old-fashioned, face-to-face conversation. Bobby Jr. would need to have the courage to ask Peggy Sue to dinner and the sock hop afterward. Peggy Sue would have to have the courage to accept, admitting her affection in return. They had to look each other in the eye and show their feelings for one another.

The problem is that today we have much more than just house phones. We have online communities like Facebook and Myspace and cell phones with texting capabilities. We've gotten so wrapped up in technology and electronic communication that we've forgotten how to just suck it up and talk to each other in person.

I think the reason we don't know anything about dating is because we don't have to risk immediate, face-to-face rejection by asking in person.

Conversations can begin without any visual contact. We can show interest in someone without our friends ever knowing. No one is forced to declare themselves anymore. If we aren't brave enough to be seen in public with our crush we can still "talk."

We decide to save ourselves the possibility of humiliation and exposure by playing it safe. We use the most nonthreatening and least gratifying ways of interaction. We've all "talked" to someone or "hung out" with someone, but how often do we give or receive date proposals?

We are all less experienced daters than our parents because we've never needed to date. It truly is a lost art. Instead of dating, we facebook back and forth, trying to figure out whether or not our crush has the hots for us by dissecting ambiguous T9 language and cryptic electronic flirtation, without clues like body language or facial expressions.

As we become more and more technologically fluent, we become illiterate in the language of love, or at

least human interaction. We are lazy, and because we can text, "yo how u doin'?" we don't have to walk up to that girl or guy who has been in our dreams and get the ball rolling with a simple, "hello," though hearing that "hello" back is probably worth the risk.

Technology brings the world closer together, but it keeps individuals from taking real steps in relationships. Dating is a physical and emotional activity, one that can't truly be done in a virtual world. We all need to suck it up and take a step toward person-to-person interaction, not screen-to-screen interaction.

My friend actually did go on that date. He called — he didn't text. He planned the date ahead of time. He picked her up and took her out. On a real, live date. Of course, I got a thank you text from him the next day instead of a call, but, hey, I can't ask for miracles here.

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

### AROUND THE QUAD

What was your favorite part of the Inauguration ceremony?



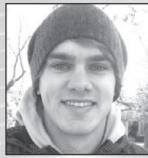
**"Most of my attention was on Obama's speech."**

*John Whiteman  
freshman*



**"I was stuck in class and wasn't able to watch it."**

*Kylie Raihell  
sophomore*



**"Obama's emphasis on individual service."**

*Philipp Bacher  
senior*



**"The connection to civil rights really touched me."**

*Sarah Torbert  
freshman*

## Studying abroad offers needed escape from American culture



Megan Klco

As you read this, I am shoving the last few things in my suitcase before boarding a flight to France.

This moment could not have come soon enough.

As an anonymous reader of my blog was so kind to suggest, "if you don't like the society you live in [sic] move away and stay away from American culture." Well, helpful reader, my bags are packed: Tomorrow I, at long last, begin my semester abroad in Aix-en-Provence.

I'm diving into what my hefty stack of prep materials calls the "honeymoon stage" of culture shock, which means that my expectations are, perhaps, unrealistically high. I've spent the last month driving through sprawling suburbia, wistfully picturing myself weaving instead through endless quaint stone alleyways with a bottle of wine in tote. My limited knowledge of French culture has transformed the country into a utopia where street musicians play "La Vie en Rose" on

every corner, where baguettes are handed out as liberally as prescriptions (thank you, socialized medicine) and where art breathes into every aspect of daily life.

In truth, I am facing a reality check. Soon. My postcard-worthy fantasies of picnicking on a red checked blanket in the rolling French countryside largely exclude the stresses of classwork and cultural immersion. Not to mention that much of my understanding of the Provence region is based on early 20th century art history and thus is a tiny bit romanticized and outdated. (So maybe I won't spend my weeknights sharing a bottle with a modern-day Paul Cezanne — a girl can dream, right?)

Still, there are a few American cultural curiosities I have no qualms about trading in for French equivalents — first and foremost: food. My last American dining experience involved watching patrons circle an empty Chinese buffet for refills like animals during feeding time at the zoo.

Clearly, I break no ground in saying that we are a quantity-over-quality people, so I won't waste time bemoaning the fact that the phrase "Super-size me" has relegated taste to an afterthought in our nation's cuisine.

I will say that when the French dine, they savor. Meals out are multiple-hour affairs complemented with wine, espresso and (O la

la!) actual conversation. In fact, savoring might be what the French do best. They work shorter weeks than we do, up their vacation time, treat meals as an enjoyment rather than a necessity and are highly incorporative of the arts. The French understand the importance of a little relaxation, and as I bid goodbye to this fast-paced, fast food nation, I'm welcoming the slowdown.

When I moved out of my apartment at the end of last semester, I was surprised to find that it had passed in such a blur that I hadn't unpacked most of my belongings since moving in. I opened whole boxes full of half-started artworks I never got around to, books I never read, sewing patterns I never completed — a whole semester's worth of creativity and enjoyment I had declared myself too busy for.

This semester, savoring is on my agenda. I plan to relish these next months slowly, like a four-course meal. I want to bask in French culture. I want to hit the museums instead of the books. True, "study abroad" does by definition require some actual "study," but I'd hate to find myself at the end of this trip with a head full of verb conjugations and little greater knowledge of culture.

"Honeymoon stage" or not, I'm ready to absorb what France has to offer.

*Megan Klco is a junior painting major from Liberty, Mo.*