

OUR VIEW

Local election gives chance to participate

It seems like just a few weeks ago we were bombarded with endless public advertisements and admonitions to vote. Maybe this sentiment is better expressed in the succinct, immortal words of name-changing rapper Diddy, "Vote or die."

And so, we voted. The civic-minded among us voted for a new president, new representatives — the whole kit and caboodle. Now, we have two more years of rest before the national stage is flooded again with presidential candidacy rumblings, right?

Actually, the Kirksville community and the Truman student community have about two weeks before we get to enact our civil privileges again — April 7 we get a chance to vote on issues that will have a fundamental effect on Kirksville's future. Truman students get to help decide the fate of the community we reside in by voting along with the rest of Kirksville on a new City Council member and a proposal to raise the sales tax in order to retain city employees that work at the fire and police departments (see story, page 1).

Although the local election might lack the glamour of the "Yes, we can" national elections, local election results have a much greater effect on the way the people of Kirksville live. Because local laws and lawmakers decide a larger part of a community's future than most presidents ever will, it seems foolish to give up a chance to make a difference. And for those who complain that one vote never makes a difference, take note. There aren't millions of other voters in Kirksville — or an electoral college. Never has your one vote had a bigger chance of making the difference. Recent debate about the city's

fair housing ordinance only reinforces the importance of making the student community vote heard. Although sometimes it takes a polarizing issue like gay rights to draw students into the local debate, keep in mind that we have more to offer. By staying consistently invested in local politics, students will be exercising the civic duties we've all learned so much about in the classroom. Becoming invested in the Kirksville community gives students a chance to contribute two cents, a two cents that maybe, just maybe, could improve the place we live for at least four years.

Not only will voting in the election give students the chance to help decide the fate of the community they live in, mutual participation in the local election can improve community relations.

Some might argue that Truman students' non-permanent residence in Kirksville makes their vote a hindrance to the "real" Kirksville residents — we disagree. Just because your residence is of shorter duration doesn't mean you shouldn't get involved in the community. Also, in today's more transitory society, the "same old, same old" small community, just like Kirksville, "lifers" (people who live in the same community for life) are fast disappearing. According to the U.S. Census, the average American will move 11.7 times during their lifespan. Four years is plenty of time to make a positive mark on a community — voting locally is just one feature of that community commitment.

After all, if we're supposed to leave Earth a better place for the next generation, let's try to leave a better Kirksville for the next generation of Truman students.

CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail index@truman.edu, call us at 660-785-4449, or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo. 63501.

- In a story on page 9 of the March 5 issue of the Index, professional jazz musician Ben Allison was incorrectly identified as a Truman student.
- In the online edition of the Index, Shannon Currier's record at Concordia University-St. Paul was incorrectly stated as 25-9. In reality, his record was 32-12.

CARTOON

BY ALEX BOLES



Letters to the Editor

Fair housing law is good move for community

We concur with the Our View in the March 19 issue of the Index that supports adding sexual orientation to Kirksville's fair housing ordinance. As a step toward community resolution of attitudes on the issue, we offer some additional comments.

The article "Students react to Rodgerson's vote" in the same issue quotes some assertions of fact and theory by Councilman Aaron Rodgerson that must be replied to. He said, "Homosexuality is a matter of choice ... I don't think that people are born that way, but I do think there are environmental issues like people being molested when they were young, rape, mistreatment ... based on that kind of environment people might gravitate toward that kind of behavior." However, the weight of contemporary science holds that an individual's genes and the biochemical environment experienced as a fetus in the womb can be an important influence on a person's sexual orientation. At any rate, whether it is a choice, as it is for some, or it is something innate, as is the case for others, compassion and wise policy say that the gay community should not be discriminated against.

Kirksville benefits from being hospitable to all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. With two universities and many other professional workplaces in Kirksville, our creativity and intellectual keenness are better if individuals don't have to be preoccupied with suppressing their sexual orientation or with conforming to the traditional narrow stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Kirksville's Equal Employment Opportunity Statement assures that all potential residents of Kirksville will be welcome. The City Council's decision is in accord with "Kirksville: Where People Make the Difference."

Jana Arabas, instructor in health and exercise sciences
Monica Barron, professor of English
Jon Beck, associate professor of computer science
Marc Becker, associate professor of history
Patricia Burton, professor of philosophy
Paula Cochran, professor of communication disorders
John Cochrane, Head Men and Women's Cross Country and Track coach, instructor in health and exercise sciences
David Conner, professor of psychology
Cynthia Cooper, professor of biology
Robert Cowan, professor emeritus of psychology
Datha Danron-Martinez, assistant professor of business administration
Tim Deidrick, instructor in health and exercise sciences, assistant men's basketball coach
Taner Edis, associate professor of physics
Julie Flowerday, assistant professor of anthropology
Vayujeet Gokhale, assistant professor of physics
Keith Harrison, associate professor of accounting
Melody Jennings, instructor in health and exercise sciences
Amber Johnson, associate professor of anthropology
Michael Kelrick, professor of biology

Barbara Kramer, associate professor of chemistry
Joan Larkins Mather, professor of theater
Bonnie L. Mitchell, associate professor of sociology
Elaine McDuff, associate professor of sociology
Maureen McHale, lecturer in biology
Judi Misale, professor of psychology
Maria Nagan, associate professor of chemistry
Terry Olson, professor of economics
Matthew Piantalo, assistant professor of philosophy
James Przybylski, professor of political science
Peter Rohnick, professor of physics
Dana Smith, associate professor of theater
Jane Sung, professor of economics
Rob Tigner, associate professor of psychology
Bridget Thomas, associate professor of classics
Jim Turner, associate professor of accounting
Tony Weisstein, assistant professor of biology
Cole Woodcox, professor of English
Janice Young, assistant professor in health and exercise sciences

Making fun of disabilities is no joke

Barack Obama makes a little joke about the Special Olympics and a few people get mad. I'm one of them. "Oh, it's just a little joke," I heard one person comment. "Why do you have to take yourself so seriously?" said another. "It was harmless."

Yeah, I get the joke. I'm a person with reasonable intelligence. I'm on my way to a bachelor's degree from a prestigious university. I even get British humor (to a limited extent, mind you). The problem is my good buddies with Down syndrome and autism don't seem to understand the difference between a nation of comedians laughing at them or laughing with them.

As a former special education paraprofessional, I've heard all the jokes directed toward our mentally challenged students. I've sat on the edge of the playground and heard the "normal" kids call a special education student a "retard" because he flubbed a kickball play. In the lunchroom I've also seen the "normal" kids convince that same student that trading his entire lunch for a carrot stick would result in a lasting friendship. I've even witnessed parents (who should know better) ask me in the hallway, "What's wrong with that kid?" I've always failed to see the humor.

So when the President of the United States of America takes a job at Special Olympics, I admit, I take offense. It's not the right thing to do. It shows that he doesn't believe that developmentally disabled individuals are worth anything. They are merely objects of our laughter, a measure of absolute human zero by which to compare ourselves and our accomplishments. And while we are discussing the hearts of the influential elected, let me remind you that some past leaders believed these "inferior" individuals should be not only the butt of our jokes, but perhaps should be at the butt of

their rifles. Adolf Hitler decided to euthanize Down syndrome children rather than make a joke of them. He felt it was better for us all.

Rather than beg an apology from the President, demand a picket line in front of the White House or insist more nasty letters be sent to the editor, I'm calling for action on a different level. I'm starting a grassroots campaign by myself. I'm going to demonstrate compassion for individuals with special needs by volunteering for the Special Olympics as a coach, a helper, a trash collector, whatever these worthy citizens need this year. Let's not worry about changing the President's heart, let's start with our own right now. Who wants to help me?

Anthony U. Potter junior

Student tour guides need more training

As a graduate student in my fifth year on this campus, I applaud the efforts to construct the Ruth Towne Museum and Visitors Center. Too many times I have walked through the first floor of McClain Hall and seen the shoddy admissions sign (often with letters missing) directing prospective students up a dark staircase to an office in a corner of a building that is in desperate need of renovation. When selling anything — a product, a service or a college experience — it should go without saying that you must put your best foot forward. When the Ruth Towne Museum and Visitors Center is fully complete, Truman will have taken a giant step in this direction.

However, if we are to give ourselves the best chance to continue to attract top students from around the region, another change must be made. Today as I walked through Violette Hall, I overheard yet another uninspiring campus tour. The prospective student and his entire family appeared clearly uninterested and distant, and I even heard the tour guide make a statement that was completely false. While other schools recruit the help of well-trained tour guides and staff to interact with visitors on campus tours, Truman enlists an army of more than 100 thinly-trained Student Ambassadors — many of whom are unqualified for their role. As a former Student Ambassador, I witnessed first-hand the fact that two semesters as a Truman student and just a few hours of training does not qualify anyone to give tours.

We have some very talented people working full-time in the Admissions Office. I'll be the first to say that one of the admissions counselors was a major reason I considered attending this University. However, until these individuals are given the resources and programs they need to "sell" our school to the best of their ability, Truman will continue to face an uphill battle against declining admissions of high-quality students that the University must attract to preserve its reputation.

John Sturgeon graduate student

INDEX

Serving the University community since 1909

Staff

Editor in Chief Julie Williams	Managing Editor Kelsey Landhuis	Opinions Editor Jean Kaul
Sports Editor Blake Toppmeyer	Features Editor Stephanie Hall	News Editor Jessica Rapp
Assistant Sports Editor Jack Nicholl	Assistant Features Editor Cassandra McCarty	Assistant News Editors Margaret Hooper John Moenster
Sports Staff Joe Bell Krista Crider Brent Foster Arron Husted Logan Jackson Jocelyn Nebel	Features Staff Harry Burson Franklin K. R. Cline Tyler George Julia Hansen John Hitzel Zoe Martin Emma Mueller Anne Rebar Kelly Schute Krista Shrestha Lindsey Williams	News Staff Dana Bruxvoort Amanda Goesser Blaise Hart-Schmidt Andrea Hewitt Kelly Kiesel Jane Krienke Colette Linton Michelle Martin Andy Moore Sarah Scott Jared Young
Photo Editor Brian O'Shaughnessy	Design Chief Antionette Bedessie	Copy Chief Alex Boles
Assistant Photo Editor Mayank Dhungana	Designers Rose Runser Sarah Schneider	Copy Editors Lily Bicknell Chris Drew Katie Huffman Amanda Jackson Zoe Martin John Marty Jennifer Piel Julie Pincus Shannon Walter Emily Ward
Photographers Krista Goodman Amy Gleaves	Advertising Manager Ashley Hancock	Adviser Don Krause
Online Editor Mike Solomon	Assistant Advertising Manager Katie May	
Cartoonist Alex Boles	Distribution and Circulation Andrew Hamline Puskar Dahal	
Business Manager Olivia Crandall		
Advertising Staff Ekaterina Ivanova Natalie Wernimont		

Letters Policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at index@truman.edu or on our Web site at www.trumanindex.com. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

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, and additional copies cost 50 cents 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 Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief 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.

Advertising Policy

For up-to-date information on current rates or to inquire about the availability of classified ads in the Index, contact our advertising department at 785-4319. Our fax number is 785-7601, or you can e-mail us at indexads@truman.edu.