

# Personal attacks distract voters from issues



**Andrew Kindiger**

I thought it might be a good idea for McCain and Obama to cater to their political strategists and incorporate the tactic of putting their opponent on the defensive. Maybe instead of having a town hall meeting, have a town hall brawl. Then the candidates could start using the debates to actually garner some depth in relation to the major issues in the election. This way they wouldn't

be forced to gloss over important policy matters to get their verbal digs into one another.

After awhile it just becomes hard to watch the wicked back-and-forth attacks politicians make in an effort to discredit their opponent's character. It's a strategy to make your opponent seem weaker, but come on, there has to be a limit. Recently, John McCain's campaign has seen swing voters go to the other side because of how brutally intense a McCain rally can get regarding the bashing of Obama.

But even Obama is guilty of making attacks on McCain. During the presidential debate at Belmont University, Obama made sure to add in what he thought about the "Straight Talk Express." And

even though Biden calls McCain a close personal friend, he does not miss an opportunity to undermine McCain's ability to function as the President.

If there are already designated mediums to explore the more negative qualities of politicians, like "Saturday Night Live" and opinion columns in newspapers, why are candidates trying so hard themselves to discredit the images of their opponents? More importantly, why are they distracting the American public from issues they actually care about? The public already gets its fix of character insults

from Keith Olbermann and Bill O'Reilly. We don't need to see Obama and McCain try to turn a formal debate into an SNL sketch.

Political campaigns are focusing more on the image of politicians than articulating what candidates are going to accomplish. That's why we have people thinking that the first thing McCain is going to do if he gets

see both parties concentrating more on their own platforms. That way the candidates will let the people decide who is the best person for the job instead of force-feeding false accusations to the public because, sadly enough, people who don't read up on the candidates are left with a misrepresentation. Hopefully this negative trend will cease and politicians will leave the character assassinations to the professionals. At least when they are creative with the truth it's humorous.

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

**Maybe instead of having a town hall meeting, the candidates should have a town hall brawl.**

ected is bomb Iran, or if Obama gets elected he's going to invade Pakistan.

I don't want to suggest that Obama and McCain should be falsely cordial in each other's presence, but it would be nice to

### AROUND THE QUAD

Do you have any advice for the interim University President?



**"Be more open to Greek Life."**

*Lawrence On junior*



**"Be visible. Let the students know what you're doing."**

*Kara Levery senior*



**"Not really. I don't know what the old president did."**

*Laura Schroeder freshman*



**"Don't tick off agricultural science majors."**

*Adam Priest sophomore*

## Covering vice presidential debate proves enlightening



**Jackie Gonzalez**

Two weeks ago, I was fortunate enough to cover the vice presidential debate at Washington University in St. Louis with a team of other campus media staff. My experience as a professional journalist — press badges, free loot and all, was overwhelming and extremely exciting. We were there with the big dogs, the experts. Despite being unable to acquire full-access credentials, we really got to listen and experience the debate like every other student at Washington University.

Surprisingly, the major media outlets stayed away from student happenings and kept to themselves. Initially, I was surprised about the editorial decisions to exclude much student input, but then I realized the mainstream media's perception of the youth vote: all talk. Granted, youth registration was incredibly high, but it seems like most journalists report on this with a hint of skepticism about actual voter turnout.

I, like many other young college students, find these stories and assumptions silly. Youth voter enthusiasm is higher than ever. I see

enthusiasm on campus and I saw it at Washington University.

But we don't know who is right until Election Day. Not everything we saw suggested voter interest. We made an effort to observe student reactions to the elections, and we watched as dozens of students made a mockery of the upcoming election. Although there were many students who actually were interested in the debates at hand, there were just as many who couldn't have cared less, and who chose to joke about change and the issues.

Instead of civil discussions, students eagerly piled in front of every television camera in sight for their two seconds of fame. Signs advocated issues of unimportance such as napping and sandwich-making. A video clip on MSNBC showed Chris Matthews at the debates being "Rick-Rolled," with two banners reading the lyrics of Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up." I was not impressed.

A group of these ridiculous protesters attempted to define their legitimacy to us. We later found out that these individuals were nothing more than phony advocates completing a fraternity pledge requirement. Although we were cordial, it was hard to remain neutral because their behavior wasn't remotely entertaining. The sarcastic

signs were taking away from the importance of the experience at hand.

The severity of these seemingly innocent and humorous attempts suddenly dawned on me. The apparent trendiness of caring about the election seems to be wearing thin. Being politically savvy has become such a trend that a potential backlash is entirely (and quite frighteningly) possible. This backlash would cause students to spiral back into the world of political disinterest and not vote at all.

Unfortunately, the apathy and inappropriate behavior isn't as uncommon as one would hope. The lethargy is all around us, and it's growing. We're approaching those last few weeks before the big day — we're all bound to get annoyed. Even I admit to immediately passing through the news networks in an attempt to avoid the election every now and then. But we must stay informed and make it to the polls. The upcoming election is no joke. Change won't come immediately on either side, but choosing someone to represent the United States is absolutely critical. The process might be a bit painful but well worth it.

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

**The apparent trendiness of caring about the election seems to be wearing thin.**

**Is anyone ever changed by reading pamphlets about a God who is often portrayed as judgmental of the masses?**

I just got a call on my cell phone. Actually, that's a lie. I pretended to receive a call on my cell. And no, it wasn't because I was avoiding an old flame, though I have been known to do that on occasion.

I pretend to get calls on my cell phone to avoid that most awkward of campus encounters — me and the evangelist. I tell myself that maybe if I pretend to be on the phone I won't be

barraged with flyers telling me about my chosen path to hell or Mormons on a mission. I never had runs with religious pamphleteers until I came to Truman. My roommates tell me it's a Missouri thing — and until this past Midterm Break, I was inclined to believe them. But I was wrong. The pamphleteering had spread north to my hometown in northern Illinois. Walking from the parking lot on my way into a Mexican restaurant with two of my friends, a young man apologetically approached me with a flyer — that had a bleeding Jesus on the front. I dumbfoundedly took the pamphlet and added it to the growing pile in my car — all of them unread.

This encounter made me wonder: Does this brand of evangelism ever work? Is anyone ever changed by reading pamphlets about a God who is often portrayed as judgmental of the sinful masses? I think the answer is no. It just seems like a waste of paper.

And it's not only flyers, it's door-to-door visits. One recent Saturday, an early morning knock made me rush to the door, thinking that a long-awaited package was finally arriving. I was wrong — my new cell phone hadn't arrived, but God's Word had, in the form of an

earnest messenger. I unmercifully left my roommate to the evangelist's devices. My roommate was polite but rather uncommunicative, while I sniggered in the background. The best part of the conversation: When asked whether she had ever thought about God existing in a world full of suffering, my exasperated roommate baldly replied, "No, I never have."

Or there is the experience one of my best friends had as a freshman. She tried out a church one week and finding it too different for her taste, didn't go back a second week. Unwisely, she had left contact information on a meet-and-greet sheet. That led to church elders knocking on her door Sunday morning asking her about her

experience at their church. The lesson the elders imparted to her: She learned to look through the peephole before answering the door. Somehow, I don't think that's the point they were trying to get across.

Basically, I want to know why certain churches think this method of spreading their word is a good one. After attending a conservative Catholic church my entire life before college, all of this out-and-out pamphlet distributing and door-to-door visiting threw me for a loop and has made me entirely unresponsive to this method of spreading God's Word.

Readers might wonder why I don't just refuse the pamphlet when it's offered (when I don't draw the cell phone fast enough), or don't answer the door when it's knocked upon. My answer: I don't know. It might be the vestiges of childhood politeness my mother drilled into me or respect for the light shining in the messenger's face while they preach their version of God's Word. I tell myself it's an extended lesson for me in tolerance of others' opinions.

My last request: Can all of the pamphleteers congregate in one area? My mother is getting tired of my fake phone calls.

*Jean Kaul is a junior English major from Marengo, Ill.*

## Students should treat sleep deprivation as serious issue



**Kelsey Landhuis**

We are in the midst of an epidemic. I have it. You probably have it. Chances are good that the kid who sits next to you in statistics has it, too.

"It" isn't a disease — it's a lack of sleep, and it might be doing more harm than you think.

Everyone has heard about this problem before, but in light of Sleep Awareness Week, brought to you by University Counseling Services and the Student Public Health Association, I figured it wouldn't hurt to revisit the issue of sleep deprivation.

According to the Sleep Awareness Week Web site, about 25 percent of Truman students only get eight hours of sleep one or two nights per week. About 8 percent of Truman students went through an entire week without getting enough sleep to feel rested. And more than 30 percent of Truman students reported suffering academically because of a lack of sleep, making it the second highest-ranked reason for academic difficulties. If reading all of those statistics made you sleepy, maybe you should go to bed earlier tonight.

The side effects of this lack of sleep are, frankly, scary. Study after study has shown that sleep deprivation leads to decreased brain function, weight gain, diabetes and depression, among other issues. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site, driving while drowsy is just as dangerous as driving while intoxicated.

The evidence for the unhealthiness of sleep deprivation is overwhelming. If there was a drug that produced the same negative effects as drowsiness, it would be banned. But there is no way for the federal government to regulate rest — sleep deprivation can't be measured with a Breathalyzer test. As a result, the only way to prevent the problems caused by lack of sleep is to self-regulate.

If my own attitude toward sleep is any indication, this won't be an easy task. People in general and especially college students tend to view sleeplessness as a badge of honor, testing the limits of our endurance so that we can brag about it to our friends: "I haven't slept for the past two days! I have no idea what's going on right now, but isn't that awesome? Wait, who are you? Why is everyone looking at me like I'm crazy? Am I still talking?"

I realize that the occasional late-night study session is necessary for college survival. However, I also realize that the vast majority of late nights are spent in far less productive ways. "I

know I should be asleep right now, but this is so much more fun!" I think on an almost nightly basis as I start watching another YouTube clip or begin my 35th game of spider solitaire, never mind the fact that it's 2 a.m. and I have class at 8:30 the next morning. I'm guessing you spend your late nights in far more entertaining but equally unproductive ways.

Explaining the negative consequences of sleep deprivation won't make anyone sleep more, just like discussing the dangers of consuming too much alcohol won't prevent anyone from partying on Saturday nights. However, being aware of the impairments caused by drowsiness should make you think twice about how you act when you are suffering from a lack of sleep. Just as you — hopefully — wouldn't get behind the wheel of a car when you're drunk, there are certain actions you should avoid when you're sleep deprived. Driving would be one of them. Taking a test would be another: Do what your high school teachers always told you and get a good night's sleep the night before. And once you're well-rested for your test, who knows? You might like it so much you decide to try it more often.

*Kelsey Landhuis is a senior English major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

