

OUR VIEW

Current smoking policies respect rights of all

Campus Community Alliance for Smoke-Free Environment visited our University this week to promote smoke-free environments, not anti-smoking environments (see story, Page 6). They encouraged responsible choices for smokers and non-smokers, and we couldn't agree more.

Whether we "puff it up" or not, we do not support a completely smoke-free campus, but we do support students being responsible about where and when they smoke.

Banning smoking on campus would be extreme. Smoking isn't like bringing alcohol on campus, where drinking is illegal for at least half of the student body. Smoking became legal for most of us during high school. We are old enough to make our own choices about smoking, whether we choose a pack-a-day habit or renounce those who spread the ghastly second-hand smoke to our pristine lungs. It is easy to avoid smokers on the quad. It isn't like being in a full lecture hall or stuffed into seats at a football game. There is plenty of room (and clean air) for the smokers and the non-smokers. Plus, it's the dollars of the taxpayers, which include smokers, that support this University. Being around smoke outside, where there is plenty of room to breathe, won't leather any faces.

And what about the smokers, if a campus-wide ban were to be enacted? Those incoming freshmen who are hard-core smokers will choose to attend other schools where they can enjoy their favorite habit on campus. And a smoke-free campus would banish the other smokers to the far outer rim of campus during those winter months when trekking anywhere can be unbearable or even dangerous. This ban won't keep those smokers from lighting up, it will just make their on-campus living a living hell. As Cosmo Kramer once told Jerry Seinfeld, smokers "aren't going to let

themselves be flicked into the ash bin of society. You can confine them, you can punish them, you can cram them in the corner, but they're not going away."

Instead of enacting new laws or policies about smoking on campus, why can't the University just enforce the rules we have now? According to the Residence Life Handbook, "students who wish to smoke must go outside and be at least 10 feet from the building to smoke to avoid disturbing residents with odors or fumes." This seems like a reasonable compromise between those who hate smoking and those who light up. Yet every time we pass the residence halls, we see smokers huddled up around outdoor ashtrays, located less than 10 feet from the doors of residence halls.

The rules and the University's enforcement of the rules do not mesh. If those ashtrays/trash cans were moved to locations that are actually 10 feet away from all buildings, smokers could congregate around them, leaving space for students to walk through doors without passing through a gaggle of smokers and a cloud of smoke.

The only way to keep the smoking policy relevant is to enforce it. Why not fine smoking within 10 feet of residence halls similar to how door propping carries a fine? Student advisers can keep an eye out for it when they are on duty. When word gets around that smoking too close to residence hall doors will lead to a fine, students will begin to follow the rules.

A smoke-free campus is unnecessary when there are already policies in place to protect and respect the choice to be around cigarette smokers and the smoke they create. If we are old enough to smoke, we are responsible enough to respect others' smoking (or non-smoking) preferences, and responsible enough to respect the rules. But the University should do more to enforce them.

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.
•A quote in the Ray Armstead feature, "Remembering a legend," (p. 15 and 19) was incorrect. Armstead said he trains athletes in the summer, not the winter as the article said.

CARTOON

By Alex Boles



Letter to the Editor

Columnist sparks ideological debate

Might one express a heartfelt stance of gratitude to Index columnist regular contributor, Molly Skyles, today for her common sense rebuttal of the conservative hysteria some parents and Aussie-owned FOX TV so-called news have been double-standard hypocrisy raising on their loud-mouthed parts against President Obama's continuation of the admirable practice of U.S. presidents occasionally public address taping to school kids on the vital social need "not to drop out" altogether in the first place. Especially wounding hypocrisy on his critics' part as we now know, (CNN reports) that presumably self-same Floridian conservative parents have made no such discriminatory "ruckus" against regional/state school boards public financing actual school lesson so-called "field trips." For their offspring to hear former President George W. Bush address a vast stadium on his meager indeed "accomplishments" in the partisan heat that is any lively free politics viably anywhere, isn't it?

But Molly misses one defense line of Obama she might not, personally, be at all herself "ideology" distrustful with, that, certainly, people are coming up to me with inquiries I am being literally, locally barraged with as a known international socialist historian, both writing and broadcasting in record. Because it's the discriminatory kernel of objections to letting even a massive popularly elected U.S. president to speak even on national public health care reform necessity, let alone to our kids, allow me a few clarificatory points further, to her otherwise too bourgeois her self fears of treading even once near

this, the supposedly s-word "socialist" topic.

One, Obama is not presently, we on the left-for-real can but eventually hope, a self regarded "socialist" although he does, as Skyles well-puts, have evidently strong "left-wing" beliefs—particularly after seeing his white mum die in huge hospital private bill debt as he, constantly, told this country's capitalistic biased TV last campaigning years for the presidency. It is, indeed, of course a moot if debate point as to whether one "can-not be a socialist" as my nation's avowed Irish Socialist Bernard Shaw once put it to a similar to Obama UK liberal public health reformer, Lord Beveridge in 1945 UK general election course. But there, we are neither Obama nor the frugal Beveridge are that radical! And Obama's actual public health 2009 U.S.A. scheme resembles, rather mildly, the only partially-state UK health insurance scheme the liberal journalist and junior minister and Christian, Charles Masterman, whose papers I publish processed, started, for UK home, in 1912, until we went for full 1949 popular free state service.

Two, finally Skyles might also widen her audiences thought capacities on what it might be to be "ideological," acceptably, even to voteless U.S. high school majorities. By asking this query that we overseas citizens are being shut out about of the Fox-type U.S. media: in prevention of any discussion about in thus Americans denied real debate worthy of both a real open press, TV, and educational set of institutions. All of this denial is an absurdity given how everything is so skewed one-sidedly toward the right-center status quo maintenance inside your in-realty U.S. bourgeois plutocracy and war-orientated U.S. campuses, increasingly paradingly!

Why are millions of world

citizens from elsewhere like myself insulted when Obama is called, thus, so over-censoriously and inaccurately, a "complete Socialist" in attempted effort to deny even him free air wave national speech. Well firstly, Fox Newspeak International owner Rupert Murdoch himself is on record as having actually voted "ALP," today's major Australian Labor party, in his youth. Because, guess what, in his youth his newspapers were, rarely there, opposed to what they called, "The U.S. capitalist Vietnam war," which LBJ dragged the Liberal Party Coalition Menzies government troops donatingly, and losingly too, into a seemingly endless pointlessness, back then! Since indeed many of us work very hard to build up such free political party options as respectable democratic "complete socialisms" as my home UK government Labor party, it really is an insult. To hear Murdoch, a U.S. propaganda outlet defame us so stupidly. Indeed only twice in his own radical youth do we know on any truthful, record that Obama got near avowed full Socialism in all its open democratic Shavian splendor. As a once community Chicago slum organizer devoted, initially, to the collective people power communitarianism of Saul Allinsky and later as, perhaps, a brief paid up member of the eco-warrior U.S. academic Dr. Barry Commoner's brief American Citizens Party. To say anything else, more, is to go into extreme right wing, overly censorious Fox U.S. TV loony parent lands fantasy—"far out" indeed folks. State warfare is apparently acceptable to U.S. conservatives on your youthful bodies. Dragging economically practice health and vigor apparently is not so allowable of any accurate rational debate.

Larry Iles, Kirksville resident

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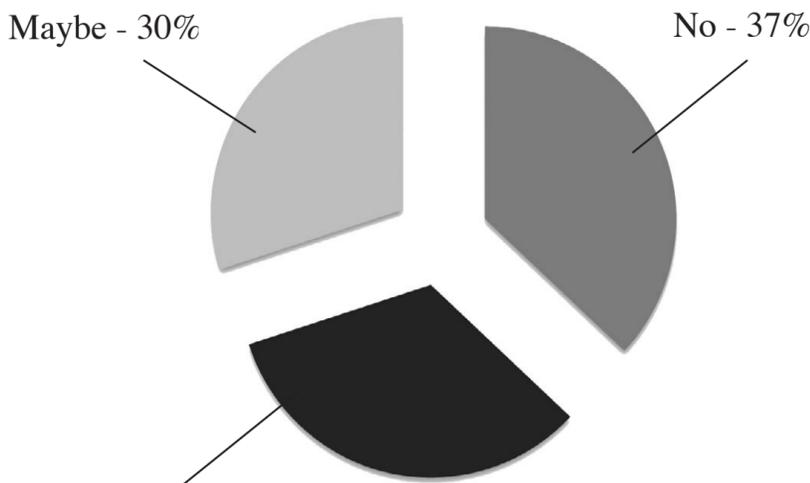
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