

## Reclaiming used materials gives satisfaction



**Zach Vicars**

Let's face it. We're all just broke college kids. If we weren't, we probably wouldn't be at Truman.

Still, as we try to make the most of our college experience, we occasionally find we need, well, stuff. Sometimes a desk breaks from the weight of our library books, a couch is too big for our studio apartment or the bookshelves are just too small for that literature survey, and we starving scholars find ourselves in need of something new.

The traditional remedy to this conundrum is to reach deep into the checking account and buy whatever we need as soon as we can. Usually this hasty purchase results in settling for a flimsy, overpriced, made-in-China item that either will break or be thrown away in two years. And although the store-bought solution may solve the

problem in the short-term, after a while the bills start to pile up and another set of problems surfaces.

I'd like to propose an alternative to this wasteful cycle of break-and-buy. You've probably heard of recycle, reuse, reduce, but I'd like to add a third 're.'

Reclaim.  
The process of reclaiming is simple: Find something that is about to be thrown away: an old sofa, a few boards lying around or maybe just some trash. And find a new use for it. Turn those old shoe strings into a clothesline, convert that toilet paper roll into a song flute or transform those milk jugs into a personal flotation device. The next time you're in need of something, don't just buy it — reclaim it. By doing so, you will save yourself money, lift a burden from the environment and hopefully learn something new about yourself in the process.

I've spent much of this semester reclaiming, but I'd like to share one story that really demonstrates the potential of reclaiming.

A few weeks ago I drove past a pile of junk on the side of the road. Any other day I would have seen a few

busted sheets of plywood, tin roofing and some odd-shaped two-by-fours. But not that day. That day I saw a comfortable home for my dog.

That broken down pile of junk did in fact turn into a doghouse — or more like a dog palace, really. It took some work — a buddy and I spent the better part of an evening designing, framing and finishing the house — but now my dog has a cozy place to sleep on chilly nights.

The next day I went to a local outdoor store to price doghouses, and the one closest in size to my homemade version would have cost me more than \$150. I only paid a few dollars for nails and one bruised thumb for my doghouse. That really got me thinking — what if I tried to meet all my needs this way? Not by just throwing money at a problem but by putting a little hard work and creative energy into a project to make something that will last longer and ultimately be better suited to my needs? Since that revelation at the hardware store, I've spent numerous afternoons with friends reclaiming other projects — building a bench, shelves, flower pots and artwork out of junk we've found lying around. And as

I've invested more in this reclaiming process, the benefits have continued to add up.

I've discovered that building with reclaimed materials also has ecological benefits. Take a drive around the neighborhoods in Kirksville and you'll see numerous dumpsters filled to the brim with useful materials — scrap lumber, discarded metal, even whole pieces of furniture. Reclaimed construction breaks the wasteful cycle by keeping these items out of a landfill and relocating them into a living room, garage or outdoor space. By building something yourself, you also cut down drastically on emissions: A trip to the Home Depot for a box of screws has a much smaller footprint than the boat ride your new lamp might take from Sri Lanka. From a sustainability point of view, reclaiming it yourself is simply the most responsible option.

Another aspect of the reclaiming process that gives me joy is the break it provides from academic life. One of the most difficult aspects of being a college student is that so much of it seems artificial. We've all spent days writing a term paper that we don't

like or hours studying for a test that doesn't really matter. But when you reclaim, you make a tangible difference. You create something that is going to function or provide aesthetic beauty for a long time to come.

That, to me, is the true beauty of creating reclaimed furniture and art. The process of reclaiming does much more than save money and the environment. It also creates in the reclaimer a new sense of ability. Reclaiming old junk and turning it into something new awakens our creative desires, expands our imagination and provides the satisfaction of working with our hands.

By breaking us of our tendency to buy a solution, using reclaimed art and furniture allows us to meet our daily needs in a way that provides a fuller life rather than an emptier pocket.

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### AROUND THE QUAD

#### What do you think of Humans vs. Zombies?



**"It's definitely entertaining to watch."**

*Kaitlyn July  
freshman*



**"You can't do it outside of college, so enjoy it while you can."**

*Andrew Grojean  
sophomore*



**"Sometimes I'm slightly disturbed. Always highly amused."**

*Elizabeth Field  
freshman*



**"I used to hate it, but it has grown on me."**

*Will Erker  
senior*

## Student Senate vision lacks focus



**Brenna McDermott**

There is such a thing as taking on too much.

Sometimes college students, especially Truman students, forget that. We join too many clubs, play too many sports, take too many courses. We want to be everything to everyone and solve the world's problems. When we're stretched so thin, often the end result is we don't accomplish much except exhausting ourselves.

Case in point: Student Senate's 2010 Vision document, titled "Beyond the Horizon." The goal of the 25-page document is to "develop a vision for Truman State University from the perspective of the Student Association."

But the "vision" lacks any focus, something essential to enacting change.

Apparently the Student Association thinks there are problems with everything from the use of Pickler Memorial Library to the number of bike racks on campus. Evaluation of the University, from a student perspective, is always a noble way to continue the liberal arts tradition. But Student Senate would have served the administrators and students better if they had focused on the most important issues instead of discussing every possible way to make the University better.

It isn't easy to discern what is most important to the committee, and it doesn't seem like the committee is even sure what is most important to them because they want administrators to accomplish so many goals, some of which seem impossible.

For example, when discussing scholarships, the committee states that they "believe that a commitment to merit based scholarships is essential," yet later said, "An increased emphasis on need-based scholarships is becoming inevitable." This seems less like a firm stance in support of either and more like admittance of defeat to the budget cuts. We all know scholarship cuts will be made, so Student Senate have more success

focusing on other issues.

The document also calls for the creation of new positions and initiatives such as Director of Community Relations, a Queer Resource Center and a Safe Rides program. While these are good ideas that would benefit the student body, it simply isn't feasible to make new positions and new University-sponsored organizations with the ever-present budget cuts.

There are other good ideas that won't break the bank but lack specifics. Student Senate discussed the curriculum placing "emphasis on the process of learning and not on the retention of factual information," which is something a liberal arts education could benefit from with little or no cost to the University.

Wanting to improve our University is an admirable goal. But by addressing every single issue the University faces, Student Senate failed to give us one vital thing: their opinion on the places we should focus the most effort and money. As our elected leaders, our senators should take a stand on the "top 10" things we should focus on as a University. Then it would be easier for us as a community to work toward a goal of conquering those top 10 concerns. But when there are more than 30 issues addressed in the Vision document, there isn't much vision to the plan.

"These next five years will be ones of action and change, changes that will only further strengthen the Truman community," according to the document. Truman students should be encouraged by this sentiment but also expect that the next five years will be tough times for the University. Taking on too many initiatives will result in failure.

Evaluating the state of the University doesn't mean nitpicking every single aspect of Truman life. Taking on a few important tasks for the next few years would be a better way for Student Senate to serve and represent the interests of the student body.

*Brenna McDermott is a junior communication major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## New legislation protects unborn life



**Alex Boles**

But what if?

This is a phrase pro-lifers hear when delivering their stance on the abortion issue. I am an advocate for the children who cannot make the decision for themselves and believe women should take responsibility for their decision to engage in sexual activity. I understand and am tolerant of extenuating circumstances, but there are many legitimate reasons to keep a child even if you do not see yourself raising it. Now, new legislation passed in the Missouri House of Representatives lends support to the pro-life stance.

House Bill 1327 now states that the act or acts of coercing a woman into getting an abortion is illegal and can result in a maximum 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine, according to the bill summary at [house.mo.gov](http://house.mo.gov). The bill, which was last updated April 12, also states that the name of any woman under the age of 18 who requests an abortion must be given to the prosecuting attorney for that county and a tissue sample must be taken for DNA identification purposes.

An aspect of the bill I am particularly happy to see is that physicians have to provide the patient with extensive information, including video footage, of the current development of their child.

This material will provide the mother with physiological and anatomical characteristics of the unborn child, including brain and heart function, methods of abortion and the risks involved with each one and information about a father's responsibility to pay child support even if he is offering to pay for the abortion, according to the bill.

This information is given to the woman in private so she can contemplate the decision on her own without feeling pressure from outside sources. The decision, of course, is ultimately hers to make.

Coercion can include anything from encouraging a woman to get an abortion, saying that an institution will take away scholarships or threatening unemployment or a reduction in wages to instigating acts of violence toward the woman or her family. The bill's alterations should help prevent situations where women are pressured into getting abortions out of fear of losing their job or fear of a family member's rejection of their commitment to keep the child.

There are many infertile women who would love to adopt. There are plenty of families who choose to adopt even if they can have their own children. So why terminate a perfectly good life

when others are more than willing to accept your unwanted child into their lives?

People can argue that physicians prying into whether the mothers were coerced into getting an abortion is intrusive and unnecessary, but I disagree wholeheartedly.

Having this requirement to know that your child has fingers, toes, a heartbeat and can feel pain and move should have an effect on the woman carrying the child. If the only thing preventing a potential mother from keeping her child is fear, then there is definitely a necessity for this piece of legislation.

No woman should have to make judgments about her own body based upon the coercion of someone who doesn't feel the living person inside them. The boss who says he'll fire her does not feel the kicking, and the institution that threatens to take away scholarships will not hear the heartbeat, so why should women surrender to their threats? They shouldn't. Take responsibility for your body. If you're not responsible enough to be a mother, don't have sex or at least use protection. In any case, terminating an innocent life that has no say in the decision should not be the answer.

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## Junk food tax neglects teaching healthy lifestyle



**Molly Skyles**

As college students, we live on junk food most of the time. True, we know it isn't healthy, and we also don't think it tastes that great. But most greasy and sugar-infested food has one thing in common: It's cheap. And to most college students, cheap is all that matters.

However, we might have to start looking elsewhere for our low-budget diet. Policymakers are looking into raising the sales tax on soda and pizza to 18 percent from between 7 and 9 percent in Missouri to lower calorie intake and

help fight obesity across the country. A research team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that Americans could lose up to five pounds per year with the enforcement of the higher tax.

Not only is this tax a waste of time, but it also doesn't make much sense. How could one possibly conclude that raising the tax on just two of the many unhealthy food options available in the country will help people lose weight? Also, why five pounds? I'm no researcher, but this logic just doesn't make sense. There is no way to prove that if the tax on pizza and soda is raised to 18 percent, people will consume 56 fewer calories per day, resulting in a five pound weight loss per year, which is what the researchers said.

If this tax gets enforced, maybe some people will stop eating pizza and drinking soda, but they won't necessarily choose a salad and juice instead.

They will go to McDonald's and order something just as bad and just as cheap off the dollar menu. Also, is a tax increase really going to stop people from purchasing pizza and soda? If I'm craving pizza, an extra few cents or even a dollar is not going to stop me from picking up the phone and calling Pizza Hut.

This research is not taking the main demographics of fast food eaters into consideration either. Eating healthy is not cheap, and sometimes a pizza is all that can fit into someone's budget. If the tax is raised on some of the only financially feasible food options, I guess some people will have to just stop eating. At least they won't become obese, because that's what matters, right?

Intoxicated people also are frequent pizza eaters, and I can guarantee that they are not thinking about the health concerns of what is going in their bodies and will not mind spending a bit extra

to get a greasy, delicious pizza delivered right to the door.

Obesity is unhealthy. We all know this. With two-thirds of Americans either overweight or obese and \$147 billion per year being spent in health costs, something needs to be done to stop this awful and sometimes deadly trend. However, raising taxes on soda and pizza is not the right answer.

The government already has a lot on their plate. Keeping the country at a healthy weight should not be a concern of theirs, and a national tax should not be implemented. Healthy eating habits and exercise regimens need to be handled on a smaller level. To curb obesity rates, schools need to start offering more fruits, vegetables and non-fried foods. Soda also should not be offered in schools (it's not like kids need any more sugar), and gym classes need to be taken more seriously. In my grade school, we would sometimes play

board games or just sit and talk. This is not the proper way to teach children the importance of physical fitness.

By teaching the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to children on a smaller scale, there would be no need for a nationwide tax on pizza and soda. And if these benefits are taught at a young age, the obesity rates might lower across the country in the coming years without having to increase taxes. We should stop trying to find ways to fix the issue of obesity and focus on preventing it. Maybe that way the next generation of college students will know how to find a healthy alternative to pizza.

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