

EDITORIAL

OUR VIEW

Williams' resignation betrays voters

Democracy is a beautiful thing. As citizens, we have the opportunity to vote for our president, governor, members of the state and national legislatures and even some judicial officials, such as county prosecutors.

Many Adair County residents acted on their opportunity in November 2006, when 70 percent of the 7,681 residents who voted on the Adair County prosecutor position cast their ballot for Mark Williams.

In that election, Williams was opposed on the ballot by Jo Fortney. Fortney, however, failed the Missouri bar exam, so if voters had elected her, Matt Blunt, Missouri's governor in 2006, would've had to appoint a prosecutor.

At the time, Williams said he didn't think the selection of county prosecutor should belong to the capitol.

And neither does the Index Editorial Board.

But Williams deviated from his 2006 stance Tuesday, when he announced he will resign from his prosecutor position March 5 (see story, Page 1). He will leave his post with about 10 months remaining in his term.

Because Williams is resigning, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon will have to appoint someone to finish out Williams' term. In doing so, Nixon will be appointing someone voters did not elect in 2006.

By resigning, Williams is betraying the wishes of voters who voted to have him passionately represent the people of Adair County in court and prosecute offenders of the law. Voters wanted Williams to represent them for 48 months, not 38.

The Editorial Board is not disappointed with what Williams did during his nearly two terms as prosecutor. In fact, he has done

an admirable job of prosecuting offenders.

Williams has worked with law enforcement to prosecute drug offenders, and he has been especially active in reducing Adair County's meth problem. He also has been diligent in prosecuting offenders of child pornography, and he has assisted in some high-profile cases, such the trial of former Kirksville mayor Debbie Masten, who was convicted of arson.

Rather, the Editorial Board is disappointed that Williams isn't fulfilling his duty to serve Adair County residents for the four years he signed on for.

We realize that vacating an elected position early is not unusual in politics. For example, Barack Obama vacated his U.S. Senate seat to become president. But traditionally, when an elected official leaves a position early, he/she is vacating the spot to take another position to serve the people.

This is not the case for Williams. Instead of completing his duties to represent Adair County citizens, Williams is ditching his post for work as a private attorney at The Benson Law Firm in Kirksville.

A move to private practice often yields a nice pay raise. If that is the case for Williams, we don't fault him for seeking more money for his talents. But the move to private practice could have waited a few more months.

Williams is quitting the mile race with just more than a half a lap to go. But his county prosecutor term didn't call for 1,300 meters.

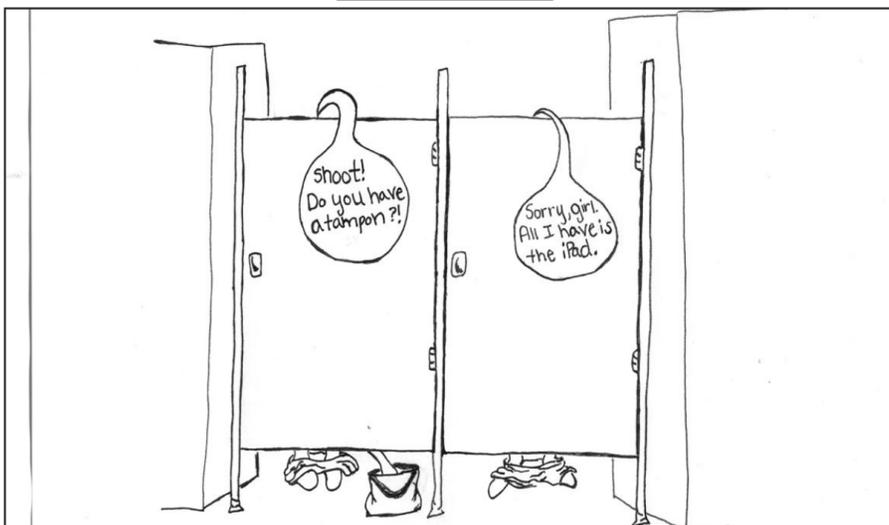
Williams should have finished the race and listened to his own advice from 2006 instead of taking the decision out of voters' hands and leaving the prosecutor position up to the capitol.

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.

CARTOON

By Alex Boles



Letters to the Editor

Objections show political bias

On Jan. 28, a letter was published in the Index in which the writer asked that no further letters from Larry Iles be published, a request which apparently made a couple of online friends happy. The reasons given for this request were objections to Iles' writing style and his political views. Following the writer's request that this censure be imposed, he proceeded to give his own political views in an attempt to counter Iles' criticism of republican Congressman Blake Luetkemeyer's use of taxpayer money to send out mail to his constituents for political propaganda against Health Care Reform proposals under consideration.

I am uncomfortable, as are many people, with a request that anyone else's views not be published. Imposing such censure violates a constitutional right to free speech. We are a society which, throughout most of our history, has claimed this right as sacred, as precious, to the point that, to protect that right, we even allow Nazi Party demonstrations in the parts of Chicago suburbs where there are heavy concentrations of Holocaust survivors. I remember working in Congress on one historic occasion when that right was challenged in 1977, and how vehemently but reluctantly constitutional lawyers and experts defended it. We fail, sometimes, to protect it. But it is disappointing that a request to deny that right to anyone should be made, and praised, even by only a couple of people. It is even more disappointing that this request be made within an educational community, no matter how much people differ from each other in their political views. And, frankly, if you would rather not bother reading something considered too challenging, even for college educated people, then don't. But there are people who wish to read such views and can manage it. We have seen generations of readers throughout centuries of writing take the time to read what differs, in content and style, from their contemporaries. And thank heavens for that. There are people who encourage this writing and want to see this freedom in these continually written pieces, however dense, however nonconformist in style, however outspoken in content. I know, because I have seen it. They have stopped Iles in the street, spoken to him in passing or in friendly correspondence and have told him he is needed, his voice and his principles, however politically volatile are the issues he

examines, and whatever may be the individuality of his commentary. Many historical voices we take for granted in the books we read from the past are those with the same experience.

I also have noticed throughout the years that publicly expressed insults regarding stylistic criticism of a person's writing comes from those who are politically opposed to the views of the writer they wish to censure. It seems to be generally used as a means to attempt to humiliate, to bury the writer's voice beneath petty personal insults, rather than challenge the writer's views and polemic on the same level of ideas and political debate. Given the close faculty mentoring generally provided some very bright republican students, reflected in some of the letters published over the years, and the barrage of Fox broadcasting, even on college campuses, there should be no loss of inspiration for substantive polemic and debate.

Lastly, the writer brings forth a criticism regarding democrat lawmakers, which has been generally recognized by the public. I gather that the writer's point was that democrats should be chastised as well for their wrongdoing, not just republicans. It seemed a little like the game of "Tit for Tat". Both parties have done wrong. Understood. No argument. But the public, frankly, is tired of that. To the American people and to the world, it would be even more in the public interest not to move on or ignore either wrongdoing by calling out an unethical act by the opposing party, but to try to find a way to protect the public from either unacceptable abuse of public trust, in a nonpartisan act of citizenry.

In any case, I will say to the writers of both letters under discussion: Keep writing.

Betty L. McLane-Iles
French professor

Art exhibit uncovers history for student

When I first discovered my English class was escaping the everyday classroom and venturing off to a modern art gallery to observe ancient Egyptian artifacts, I was truly excited. Upon entering the art gallery, I envisioned Indiana Jones trekking through an uncharted pyramid, suddenly falling into a hidden tomb as the quaking floor collapses. Gently tip toeing through the dark, narrow paths, scrambling through deadly booby-traps, he swiftly snatches the forbidden gold plated artifact embedded with rubies. As the

pyramid crumbles down to the ground, he nose-dives out of the pyramid at the last second with the artifact. However, as my class entered the ancient Egyptian art exhibit, I noticed clay pottery. I was surprised that there wasn't any gold jewelry, glistening diamonds or lifeless mummies.

As I drifted through the art gallery unimpressed, something caught my eye. I identified a foreign symbol engraved in a grayish piece of clay with jagged edges. I glanced over to the left and read a small folded white piece of paper, which stated: Storage Jar Fragment with Ka symbol, from Abyos Archaic, Dynasty 0 c. 3100-3000 BCE, and unknown artists. I couldn't fully comprehend what any of the facts meant, except that the artifact was older than I could conceptualize, but I was attentive in regard to what the symbol represented. I proceeded to another piece of paper, which deciphered background information in relation to the Ka symbol. Ka ruled the Abydos and was buried at Umm el-Qa'ab (Mother of Broken Pots). He was the immediate successor of Narmer (sometimes called Menes), who united Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt. This background information on Pharaoh Ka helped me further analyze the serek (symbol) that was written on the small piece of clay fragment.

I think in the Ka serek the artist was revealing the significance of Pharaoh Ka and Namer working hand in hand to merge Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt to attain indisputable sovereignty. Embodied in the symbol, there are several lines grooved into the clay extending in two directions, vertically and horizontally. More importantly, however, there is a distinctive line separating the symbol into two halves — the top contains the horizontal lines and the bottom encompasses the vertical lines. I think the artist was contemplating that the two halves perpetuate one symbol, which represents the unification of Egypt as an independent nation and collaboration between the two Pharaohs to unite both halves of Egypt.

I am fascinated with the idea that every line drawn in the symbol had a specific purpose. Even though the simple clay fragment isn't a gold necklace or a gemstone, the symbol made me curious as to what it meant. The unknown meaning behind the symbol will remain unidentified, leaving it open for interpretation, which is what sparked my interest in the artifact. Like Indiana Jones, I also fell into a dark narrow path, but unlike him, I am still searching for the truth.

Devin Heier, freshman

INDEX

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Editorial Policy

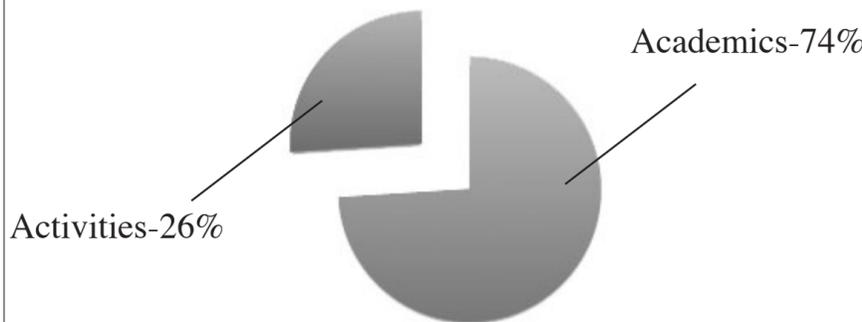
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