

# Bell tower remains silent

BY MAX ERNST  
Staff Reporter

Truman is not investing the money needed to repair the bell tower at Pickler Memorial Library, which stopped ringing last April.

"The company we called in to take a look at it estimates the cost at \$30,000, and up until now, the University doesn't want to invest that much money into the bell tower," said Karl Schneider, director of the physical plant.

Schneider said the whole carillon needs to be replaced. The carillon is the electrical system that moves the four bronze bells, and it also features a hi-tech system of 61 digitally sampled sounds, representing a full range of 61 bells, which are stored in its computer system. This enables a carillonneur, a professional bell ringer, to play the four real and 61 digital bells in the tower as if it were a musical instrument.

The bell tower has been part of the Truman campus for almost two decades. It was built during the renovation of Pickler Memorial Library between 1987 and 1993.

Ruth Warner Towne, former dean of graduate studies at Truman, paid for the installation of the bells and the carillon and donated almost \$1 million to the University upon her death in 1998. The bell tower rang four times an hour every day since its formal dedication in October 1992. The carillon has broken only once before, in the summer of 1993, when the tower was struck by lightning. The University repaired it quickly, and it was in service until last April. Schneider doesn't expect any repairs in the next year.

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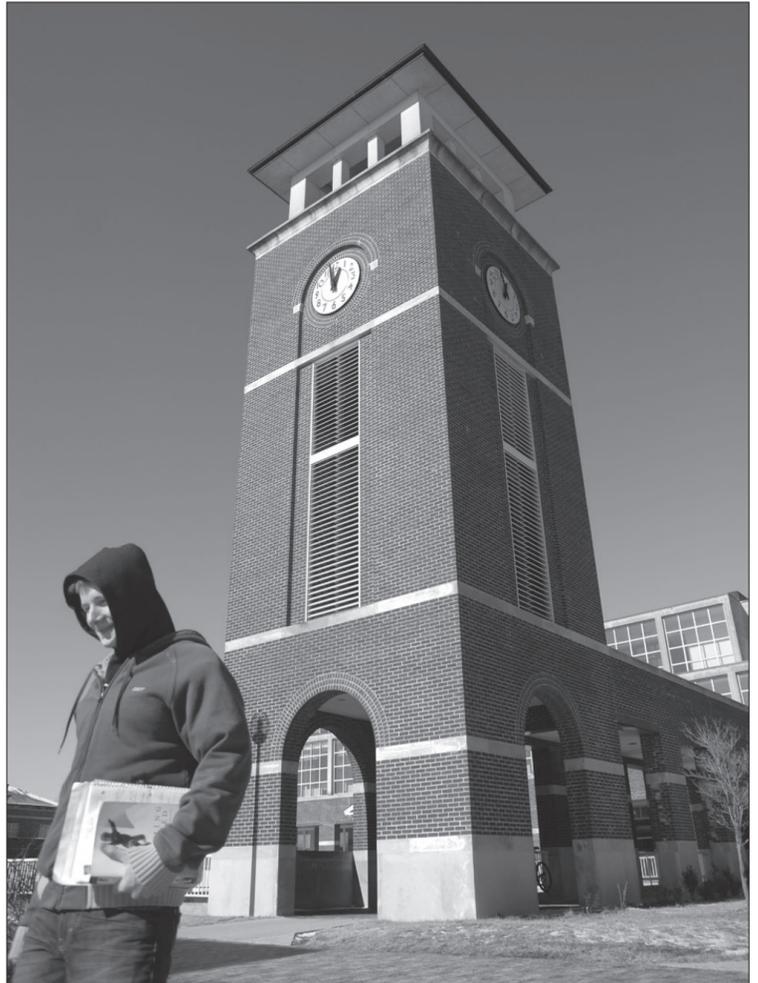
**Karl Schneider**  
Director of the Physical Plant

Schneider also said David Nichols, professor emeritus of music, tried to repair it himself last fall, claiming that only one or two parts needed replacing. Nichols was the music consultant for the bells and also served as the carillonneur until his retirement in 2000.

"Later in the year, he gave up on the repair and since then nothing has happened," Schneider said.

Although the bells have been missing for 10 months now, some students weren't even aware of their absence.

"I haven't even noticed that it didn't ring anymore," sophomore Donald Schneider said. "I don't really care about it. ... If it really costs that much money, they shouldn't fix it."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

The bell tower hasn't been ringing since last April because of high maintenance fees.

# State senator tries to expand texting law

BY ELIZABETH KOCH  
Staff Reporter

Texting while driving might become illegal for everyone, even for those older than 21.

When state Sen. Ryan McKenna, D-Crystal City, sponsored Missouri's current texting and driving bill last year, it was originally written without an age restriction and passed by the Missouri Senate 31-3, he said. But the Missouri House of Representatives later placed the age restriction of anyone 21 or under on the bill.

McKenna said he pointed in the age restriction and thought it was bad public policy to say that texting and driving is acceptable for people 22 and older. He said he hopes to fix that problem this year.

"When it [the bill] came back to the Senate, the people that were in favor of it with no age restriction now had a problem with it, and I did too, because we can't single out one section of society when it's a problem for everybody," McKenna said. "I am hopeful, based on the amount of bills that I've seen the House of Representatives sponsor this year to do away with the age restriction."

Some people have argued that texting and driving is covered under the careless and imprudent law, but that's only the case if a driver is speeding, he said.

"Studies have shown that it's three times more dangerous [to text and drive] than somebody at .08 [blood alcohol content]," McKenna

said. "I think it rises to a level that the legislature needs to address it. My intent was never to get a bunch of people pulled over."

McKenna said his focus with the new bill is to change people's mindsets to make roads safer. He said he also is working to set up public service announcements regarding texting and driving through the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Missouri Highway Patrol to air on TV.

Drivers should hold themselves more responsible for their actions as well, he said.

"If we don't address this situation soon, it's almost to the point where it's so out of hand now, there's no turning back," McKenna said.

If drivers stopped texting, not only would they put themselves in a safer environment, but all of the other drivers as well, he said. A small change in the wording of the law to take out the age restriction is required to

change it. Kirksville Police Chief Jim Hughes said he isn't aware of any texting and driving incidents in Kirksville.

"Distraction driving is a problem and does cause fairly significant issues for the driving public," Hughes said. "A cell phone is just a small piece of that whole distracting driving component."

Hughes said he is concerned about the current policy's age limit. If the new bill is passed, it would

be fairer and more convenient for police because they wouldn't have to guess drivers' ages.

"[Driving] becomes so second nature, you forget about the danger that is inherent, and that's a problem," Hughes said.

Distracted driving includes other disruptions besides cell phones, such as applying make-up or eating behind the wheel, but cell phones are singled out against others because they are so new, he said.

"Every time you get something new it causes people to focus on it and look at both the benefits and what's not a benefit," Hughes said.

Hughes pointed out that all drivers should be cautious of when and how they use their cell phones in the car.

If the new bill went into effect, accidents would be reduced, and it would help with the receptivity of the driving public, he said.

"Doing it across the board sends the message that it's the distraction that occurs, not who it is that's being distracted," Hughes said. "It's equally applicable to somebody who's 17-years-old as it is somebody who's 70-years-old."

Freshman Amanda Daab said she texts while driving about every other day. She said she texts and drives because something might come up, and she might need to contact a person right away, she might need to send something important or she might forget what she needs to send if she waits until she is done driving.

"I was part of the fire department, so I've seen major accidents, but I've never really seen a really bad accident because of texting and driving," Daab said.

Daab said she thinks the expansion is unnecessary unless all cell phone usage is illegal for everyone. "There are too many ways to get



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around that, like, 'Sorry officer, I was looking at my GPS,'" Daab said.

Older people, especially parents, are probably concerned with texting and driving, mostly out of worry for their own children, she said.

Freshman Lauren Gunn said she texts and drives occasionally but agrees with the legislature that it can be a problem because of the drivers who do it consistently.

"It's not like a constant thing, but once or twice when I'm going some-

where ... I want to be able to check my messages and see what's going on while I'm still driving," Gunn said.

Gunn said she agrees with the expansion of the bill because people older than 21 are just as liable as younger drivers. Younger teens think they can constantly text and drive because they're used to having a cell phone in the car, unlike older people, but they don't realize the risks involved, she said.



## BETA THETA PI

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The Men of Zeta Xi chapter of Beta Theta Pi would like to congratulate our new initiates:

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