

# EDITORIAL

## OUR VIEW

### Coffee shop investment neglects financial woes

Professors might be losing their jobs. The budget might be drastically cut. Truman might someday soon cease to be Truman as we know it. We are in a state of economic peril.

And we're building a knock-off Starbucks in Pickler Memorial Library (see story, page 3).

Building a coffee shop in the library would be an idea we are all for — if we weren't on the verge of financial ruin. It's a luxury, a luxury we can't take a risk on. No, the money for the café isn't coming from University budget, but the Parents Council, which is funding the project, seem to be more interested in making the University seem cooler or fancier than actually saving the University. Wouldn't the money better be spent as a project to save professors' jobs? The total cost of the café could save professors' jobs, staff jobs or it could allow some organizations on campus to survive. Instead, it's being used to build a coffee shop in the library, because apparently caffeine is something students can't live without. Try living without custodians, support staff or professors and see how that works.

Maybe it would be nice to not have to stuff water bottles in backpacks or hide a hot coffee in a winter coat and instead freely enjoy drinks at the coffee shop. Maybe it would be nice to sip a hot cocoa in the designated café area. But drastically changing the library won't do students any favors. It is an unnecessary change and an unwise use of funds.

The best thing about a library is the expected silence. It's refreshing to know that if we find the Student Union Building too noisy or our roommates won't leave us alone, we can walk into a place that frowns upon speaking, whistling, laughing or any imaginable verbal outburst. It's a relief to know there is a quiet place to go to think.

It's only logical to think that when a place is established in the

library where people can sit in groups, drink coffee and eat scones, talking will follow. Lots of talking. It doesn't matter whether the talking is for productive purposes like group projects. When students are trying to frantically finish a paper or study for a final, hearing a conversation from a group of people is very frustrating. And there is already a place to get coffee, sit in circles and talk: It's called the SUB Hub.

And if noise is a deterrent to successful studying, imagine the noise construction will bring. There will be at least some redesign of the designated area. Crews building a bar, painting the walls and bringing in furniture would be the epitome of noisy. The last thing Pickler needs is a bunch of sweaty construction workers stomping around.

Another great thing about the library is the open, airy feel of the space. As students, we can sit at a table and not rub backs with the person at the adjoining table, and we can sit at a wide table without someone staring over our shoulders. There is room to breathe, room to think. If there are students crowded around a coffee bar and a few couches it won't feel like the space we've come to know and appreciate. Sitting in a cramped area doesn't help the learning process. Just like cramped classrooms with too many desks make students uncomfortable, our best work will be done when we have space to comfortably spread our elbows in the library.

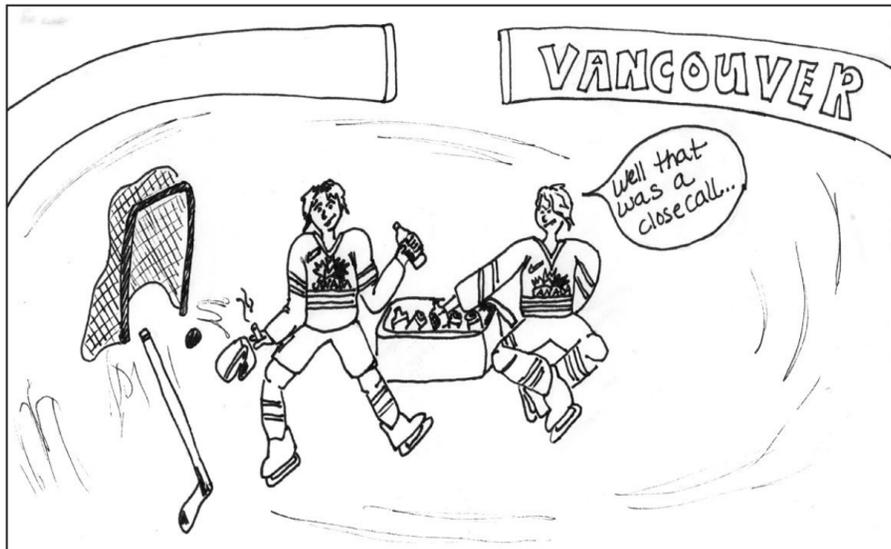
If this were a time of budding financial prosperity, a coffee shop would be an unnecessary, but useful, way to attract new students, and bring students into the library who don't usually utilize it. But we aren't prospering. We're barely treading water. Pouring any money into an unnecessary luxury will only hurt the University in the long run.

## CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail [index@truman.edu](mailto: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

### Fundamentalists don't represent all

The Feb. 25 Index article "Visiting Preachers Create Stir at Fountain" was something I could easily relate to. After all, I am a practicing Christian, I have seen the preachers on campus when I pass by the fountain on my way to class and have occasionally talked to a few of them. They are fundamentalist Christians and want to spread the Word of God to the students. What could be wrong with that? Well, this is my beef. At the heart of fundamentalist evangelical Christianity are fanatical extremes and either/or principles. They say, "You are either with us, or against us. You either agree with us, or you burn in hell."

Make no mistake — this is what these preachers are saying, either in word or intent, to the students at Truman State University. They equate themselves with the moral quality of the Word of God and condemn any who disagree with their views, even other Christians. I myself have in the past been told by them that I hadn't really accepted Jesus as my Savior simply because I possessed a different (lighter) interpretation of my faith. While somewhat comical or annoying, it is also saddening.

In reality a few might take them seriously, but many won't. Regardless of this though, their intent, in my mind, and those of extremist preachers such as Brother Jed, is a tragic perversion of the message of Christ. Jesus condemned sin, not sinners, and he pardoned mankind with his death, even those who crucified him, saying "Forgive them Lord, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Neither did Jesus browbeat the Jews at the onset of his journey by telling them, "All of you should accept me because I am right. Do it or else." Such arrogance never would have been tolerated. Instead, Jesus used parables and outstanding high minded messages, such as in John 13:34-35, to his followers saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The preachers might respond that they are showing "love" to others by informing them of the dangers of not

accepting the salvation of Jesus Christ and God. Or at least, what they perceive as the salvation of Christ and God. And in truth, they are only doing what they perceive to be right. However, this could be said of any person with good or misguided intentions who justifies their own actions in law or religion.

What will happen to those who choose not to partake of Christianity? I don't know, and neither can anyone else, except God. But what I do know is that within all of us lies the potential to emulate the love of Jesus and God. Only by living and loving with open hearts and minds can we be His truest Word.

Peter R. Johnson  
Maryville, Mo.

### Student defends use of nuclear power

I must respectfully disagree with Alex Boles in her column, "Nuclear power endangers, not renewable resource," in the Feb. 25 issue of the Index.

The truth about nuclear fission is muddled with misinformation, and I hope to set the record straight. To begin with, it's true that a nuclear plant is pricey and takes a decade or more to build. But the extra startup capital primarily goes into containment, security and safety technologies, which counteract some of the problems brought up in the column. Cost overruns and time delays due to politics and changing design standards also contribute.

Second, nuclear plants are among the most secure civilian locations in the country. They are tempting targets for terrorist attacks or thefts of fuel for weapons, but they are far from vulnerable. Furthermore, the two most well-known "meltdowns" either brought very little harm to anybody (Three Mile Island) or were catastrophic, but caused by inferior, Soviet-era design and lax safety protocols (Chernobyl). Modern facilities have multiple layers of radiation containment, which also protect against missile and airplane strikes. In case of an emergency, plants can be shut

down within seconds by insertion of control rods, which are held up by electromagnets or pressurized tanks and will fall into the reactor in case of a power failure. A runaway nuclear explosion is next to impossible.

Third, nuclear plants emit no greenhouse gases, and you would actually be exposed to more ambient radiation by living near a coal-fired plant or traveling in an airplane than by working at a nuclear plant. American sailors have lived in close quarters with nuclear reactors aboard submarines for decades, experiencing no reactor-related accidents or health problems. Nuclear plants do, however, produce a huge amount of waste heat, which is typically discharged to the environment by evaporating water, but no more than other types of power plants.

Radioactive waste — unspent fuel and heavy metal fission products — is indeed nasty stuff, and no one is quite sure how to dispose of it. No large-scale energy source will ever be "clean," but I would rather have any waste be concentrated and contained instead of released freely into the environment like fossil fuel pollution. Mining nuclear fuel is also much less harmful to the environment, and safer to workers, than drilling for oil or stripping mountains for coal.

It's also true that the supply of uranium-235, the most widely used fissionable isotope, is running dry. But a new generation of "breeder reactors" can virtually create their own fuel by transmuting uranium-238, which is about 150 times more abundant than U-235 but cannot be used as fuel, into plutonium-239, which can be.

And finally, not only is nuclear fission sustainable, but it is also extremely energy-dense. Unless we blanket the planet with wind turbines or solar cells, no alternative to fossil fuels but nuclear fission power can possibly meet the world's energy demand. Fission has plenty of problems, but it is our best hope for a long-term, large-scale, environmental-impact-minimizing energy solution.

Nick Wilsey, senior

## INDEX

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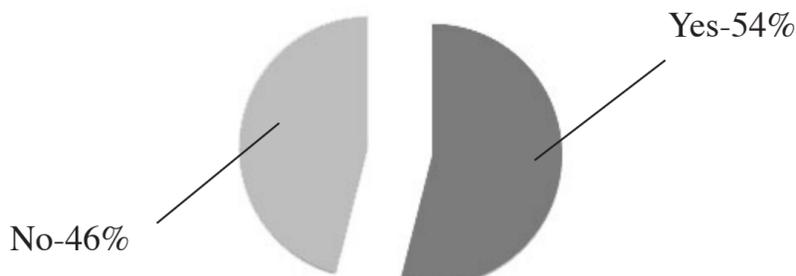
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