

## Hard-working Olympians deserve to celebrate



**Brenna McDermott**

A little partying never hurt anyone. Seriously.

After winning the gold medal in women's hockey, the Canadian team stepped out of its locker room when the audience had dispersed and proceeded to drink beer, pour champagne and smoke cigars, all while wearing their uniforms and skating around on the ice. Photographers took pictures of their celebrations.

They've since received quite a bit of unnecessary flack for their celebrations. But if I'd won a gold medal, you better believe

I'd be drinking a rum and Coke and puffing on a cherry-flavored cigar. Days, weeks, months, years go into training for one game that gives you the chance to take the gold. Being an Olympian takes total dedication to your sport. It's physically, emotionally and psychologically exhausting to focus on a single goal: To win the gold for yourself and your country. That is some serious pressure. People criticizing how or where the team chose to celebrate after that pressure is over need to chill out.

Alcohol is a cornerstone of celebration in many parts of the world. Get married — drink some champagne. New Year's Eve — drink some champagne. Win a Stanley Cup — get boozed up in the locker room. Why should the Canadian Women's Hockey team receive criticism for a tradition perpetuated by almost everyone? Hopefully not because they are women. They work just as hard

as male athletes. Hopefully not because they are Olympians. Just because they are extremely gifted athletes doesn't mean they should be held to a standard of holiness. Hopefully not because of their nationality. No matter where a person is from they should be able to enjoy themselves whether their country is hosting the Olympics or not. There is no legitimate reason why these women should be held to such criticism for celebrating their gold-medal-winning victory.

The International Olympic Committee and the media have been throwing a fit over the post-game celebrations, but if I had just won a gold medal, I'd feel entitled to drive a Zamboni around the empty ice rink too. The problem with this controversy is that the Olympic committee has no right to curb the alcohol-related celebrations or traditions of Olympians. The Olympics were plastered with commercials and ads for alcoholic

beverages. A bottle of Absolut vodka was specially designed for the Vancouver games. Our own President bet the Canadian Prime Minister a case of Canadian beer over the U.S. vs. Canada men's hockey game. Messages all around viewers and athletes are telling us alcohol is OK. They associate it with athletes and the sweet smell of victory. Yet when a group of elite athletes chooses to celebrate with a nice cold one, they are urged to quickly issue an apology by their coaches. For celebrating their gold-medal win.

Controversy did grow when one member of the team turned out to be 18, one year below the legal drinking age in Canada. But neither the media nor the IOC have the right to chastise her. If the Canadian government wants to take action against her, it has the right. But the woman won a gold medal. Let her have a beer. It's simply frustrating when

hard work doesn't merit the right to relax and blow off steam. As students we push ourselves academically. Many of us have jobs or are members of clubs. But our distinguished résumés won't mean a thing if a potential employer finds a picture on Facebook of the applicant with a beer in their hand. Does that beer keep a hard-working, talented student from doing a good job at work? Does it affect productivity? In most cases, probably not. Work hard, play hard. For hard-working people, whether they are Olympians or ordinary people working in an office, everyone deserves the chance to blow off some steam without criticism.

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

### AROUND THE QUAD

What is one thing you would do to make Truman a cooler University?



**"I would put a laser tag/ice-skating rink on campus."**

*Alena Armstrong sophomore*



**"I'd just be happy with a small amusement park in Kirksville."**

*Julius Wright junior*



**"I would get a Buffalo Wild Wings."**

*Patrick MacMurchy freshman*



**"It would be really cool if C-Hall would stop catching on fire."**

*Taylor Colvin freshman*

## All disasters and tragedies deserve aid



**Alex Boles**

Saying something is a minor tragedy is kind of like saying someone is a little pregnant.

There should only be one definition of tragedy, much like you're either pregnant or you're not. The tragedies in Haiti and Chile should not be compared to see which one is worse, and the decision of whether to send aid to Chile should not be decided with regard to the country's wealth or preparedness for the earthquake.

I understand Haiti's structures were far more underdeveloped than Chile's, and the two countries' levels of preparedness were drastically at odds, but why should that matter when it comes to deciding whether to help someone in a time of need?

Would we want other countries to think "Oh, why should we help the United States after they had a devastating earthquake when they're financially capable of helping themselves? Who cares about the amount of lives lost or the millions who are homeless — they have their own backs, right?"

No, we wouldn't, and we would be upset if the world did say that to us. We would expect the same courtesy we provide to them, and I think it's only fair to be objective in times of need.

A New York Times blog reported that the Red Cross raised an impressive \$322 million for Haiti. This has further reaching consequences than emptying citizens' pocketbooks. Apparently smaller relief efforts have been negatively affected, such as the refugee problem in Pakistan, according to the blog. This makes me think that if a majority of international relief efforts are being aimed at Haiti, there might not be adequate support for Chile, or people might sweep this tragedy under the rug because it was "less severe." It

pains me to think that while people are paying so much attention to one disaster, they're neglecting other causes that need long-term attention, like cancer research or even the Salvation Army.

It's important to not be so focused on one tragedy that we turn a blind eye to the others solely because they were more privileged than the first. If a wealthy family and a lower class family's homes were to burn down and both families lost all possessions, would their community only give assistance to the lower class family and say, "You can take care of yourself" to the wealthy family? Probably not. The community would band together to provide equal support to each family because tragedy has no bias, especially to the victims of the tragedy. We wouldn't feel less sorry for a child who lost his parents in Chile than we would for a child under the same circumstances in Haiti

because of the country's economic status.

People who are under the impression that Chile doesn't need our support because they are not as underprivileged as Haiti might choose not to provide monetary

**"Tragedy has no bias, especially to the victims of the tragedy."**

aid. I bet millions of people will buy unnecessary items this week instead of volunteering money to help Chile or other efforts. Why should you donate when you just donated to Haiti? You already did your good deed for the year, right? Wrong. Take out your checkbooks, gather your spare change and instead of buying those boots or that jacket you've been eyeing, donate the money to support the many tragedies taking place all across the world right now. That money could help buy a homeless kid a pair of shoes or purchase the lab equipment that contains the future cure to cancer. Wouldn't you want to say you donated to the cause when and if that happens? I know I would.

*Alex Boles is a senior communication major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## ID costs unreasonable amount



**Jessica Rapp**

I must have looked like an idiot, showing up at the Sodexo office for the umpteenth time in two-and-a-half years, after my student ID eluded me once again.

Most times, the purple piece of plastic appeared days later under a seat cushion or buried under my mountain of laundry, resulting in a breath of relief. I could throw away the temporary lunch ticket Sodexo supplies to scatterbrains and vow never to come back again.

This time, I wasn't so lucky, so to relieve the sharp pain I felt from having to pay a fine, I told myself it was stolen.

However, no consoling could justify the fat \$25 sucked from my student account after I was handed my replacement. The fee had increased by \$5 in January, according to a sign outside the office door.

An ID that took seconds to make and weighed the same as a credit card would cost more than five meals at the dining hall, half my phone bill, two boxes of contacts or a tank of gas. This fee blended in with a monthly list of debit charges that ruled my finan-

cially independent life, while the ID itself had little, if any, significance. Very few plastic items in a wallet incur a replacement fee: You pay for overdue library books, but not for the card. You settle an overdraft fee, but not a lost bank card.

David Hoffman, assistant Dean of Student Affairs said the need to raise the replacement fee derives from the increase in cost of producing IDs for the new residence hall perimeter access system. Before, it only cost about a dollar to create an ID, but now, with card stock that has a special proximity wire embedded into it, ID production costs about \$4.

That, however, leaves \$21 unexplained.

Hoffman said the remaining dollars go toward refunding equipment and labor costs. Student Affairs used money from its auxiliary budget, money coming in from room and board fees, to fund the changes in the residence hall system. A portion of that budget pays for two printers totaling about \$12,500 and a \$900 software upgrade necessary to make the cards.

The rest? Well ...

"Some of it is basically a deterrent," Hoffman said. "We have some people lose their cards multiple times in a semester."

He's definitely referring to me.

"If we did everything at minimal cost or no cost, then there's not really a reason to modify your behavior," he said. "College is a time when students need to learn

responsibility."

In 2009, 557 students lost their IDs, making about 10 percent of Truman irresponsible. It seems like Student Affairs might have a point. Considering, however, those 557 students brought in \$11,140, I'm not sure Student Affairs actually would benefit from deterring students from losing IDs. More lost IDs means more funding that comes in to supplement various perimeter access costs.

Increasing fees an extra semester before the perimeter access system is implemented will most likely bring in some extra cash. Student Affairs should simply be up front about the fact that they're having to stretch their auxiliary budget for this project that lacks options for financial resources.

So is Truman really teaching their youngins responsibility? Maybe. But I think responsibility should be left to the parents when it comes to draining this many dollars. As far as I'm concerned, no other I'm-teaching-you-a-lesson device on campus, including library fines and lock-outs, cost as much proportionally as an ID replacement.

But perhaps the extra \$21 is reasonable if you're trying to pay for a \$12,500 printer.

*Jessica Rapp is a junior linguistics major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## Employers and writers misuse craft of writing



**Connor Stangler**

My first attempt at a novel came in seventh grade. After seeing the then-love of my life flirt with another boy at the local pool, I sat down at the computer and wrote, with all the fury and passion of adolescent love, an unfinished story of an amorous young man and the siren who wronged him. It consisted of two chapters of biased and vindictive dialogue between me and "Chelsea." Back then my literary style was somewhere between verbose meta-garb and post-modern indirectness.

Some things never change.

However, the world in which I write has. The image of the poor, struggling writer — once a half-facetious cliché — is now an increasingly disturbing inevitability. If you were to be enshrined in the pantheon of literary greatness, you had to suffer through torturous poverty and/or hardship to write about the truly beautiful and dark things of life. You had to know what it's like. But what was once a rite of passage is now a rite of permanence.

In this kind of economic environment, writers are out of place and out of work. Internships are, for the most part, unpaid. Businesses are hiring the technicians and the pragmatists among us and leaving the now-emaciated authors with no choice but to reconsider the previously self-evident truths of the art itself.

Blogs and other web-based media have changed the face of

writing permanently. In a process dubbed the "proletarianization of the writer," the Internet has leveled the playing field for authors of all genres, styles and ages. Perhaps we should eulogize the blog, that Great Equalizer. To publish, you no longer have to be a member of the Old Boys' Club. Anyone can write and publish whatever they want. The canon of writing has moved from the exclusive, upper crust institutions to the two-man, apartment-based endeavors. It is the age of the common man.

But before we fully immerse ourselves in this Marxist utopia, let's consider if this "proletarianization" actually demeans the profession. As more writers flood the market, their worth declines at a troublesome rate. As journalist Leon Wieseltier says, "Writers are the only people I know who are expected to work for next to nothing or nothing." Writers are now seen as easily interchange-

able because so many of them (and there are a lot of them) will write for free. Because everybody is a writer, and the idea of a writer's wage is quickly disappearing, writing as a profession now seems idle.

The "writer," as he or she was once defined, is increasingly rare. The writer is now a cog in the machine. Internet media prize brevity and content. The craft is forgotten. Writing has ceased to be a means and is now valued only as an end. But in that attempt to satisfy the public's need for the instantaneous, it also has compromised the ability of the writer, in the classical sense, to compose.

The burden is now on the universities. Truman faculty need to emphasize the importance of lucid, cogent language that does not sacrifice poignancy for word count. In addition, they need to understand the urgency of the circumstances. Wieseltier writes, "The forces of

concision and distillation are winning. After the death of waiting, I do not see the wisdom of preaching impatience. A culture cannot thrive upon a fear of discourse." It is this fear of discourse that poisons the blogosphere and holds devastating ramifications for the future. Prose was meant for so much more than to be utilitarian.

Eight years from now I'll still be writing, and I'll still be using too many words. And I'll be at my laptop, eating my third bowl of cereal, because that will be all I have. And I will participate in passionate discourse because that's what I love. Maybe one day I won't just be a cog in the machine. Maybe one day I'll be a writer.

*Connor Stangler is a freshman English and history major from Rocheport, Mo.*