

## Athletic fee deserves student debate, vote



**Molly Skyles**

Fifty dollars per semester is a lot of money for a college student, especially if that money is paying for something that has absolutely nothing to do with your own education or interests.

The Student Athletic Fee that was approved by the student body in Spring 2007 and implemented in Fall 2007 soon will go under review (see story Page 1). The debate is whether this fee should be placed back on the ballot for

student vote or simply reinstated. This fee has put new synthetic turf on the football field, installed new lights in Stokes Stadium, replaced the dividing curtains in Pershing Arena and bought several smaller pieces of athletic equipment in the last three years. There also are plans to renovate the tennis courts and parts of the soccer and rugby fields to improve drainage, Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said.

The athletic fee is not the only extra fee in place at Truman. There is also a health fee. However, this fee is not voted on by students, which makes me wonder — if given the option to vote on the health fee, would students pass it? I sure hope so. I mean, if I get sick I want to be able to go somewhere close that is reasonably priced and can help me get

better quickly.

Although the fees are about the same cost, there is a big difference between health and athletics. In reality, every student is at Truman to get an education, and I understand that athletics are important to some. However, I think being healthy enough to gain that desired degree has a bit of an upper hand to sports. I mean, paying extra to get new synthetic turf on the football field is not going to get me any closer to a bachelor's degree in communication. But if I am not healthy enough to attend classes and have nowhere to go to get better, my GPA will suffer.

It is understandable why some do not want to put the athletic fee back on the ballot. If it were just automatically reinstated every year then it would be easier to hire contractors to achieve

long-term goals. As it is now, it is difficult to make plans for future renovations because a contractor can look only as far as three years in the future. After three years, this fee easily could be voted against and thus removed, which would not allow a project to be completed due to a lack of funding.

Another argument for reinstating the fee without the vote is that, despite what most think, this fee does not pay solely for football. All the plans made for the money received since the fee began have been met, including the new synthetic turf on the field. The stadium is not used only for football, either. Other sports and intramurals use it when football is not. So, one could come to the conclusion that the \$50 athletic fee is helping to benefit Truman

in all sorts of ways. However, one minor detail is missing — this fee is helping only Truman athletics, something I do not care one bit about.

It's plain and simple, the athletic fee should go back on the ballot for student vote. In my opinion, there should not be a fee whatsoever. For those of you like me who might go to one sporting event your entire college career, \$50 is not worth it. However, I realize I am not an accurate measure of the entire student body. Therefore, a vote is necessary to ensure the students are heard and pay only what is collectively agreed upon.

*Molly Skyles is a sophomore communication major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## AROUND THE QUAD

If you could protest against anything, what would it be?



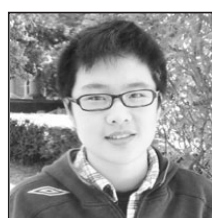
**"ROTC's use of airsoft arms."**

*Tony Bell senior*



**"The war in Iraq and war in general."**

*Bre Palmer sophomore*



**"The potential smoking ban on campus."**

*Myles He senior*



**"The unavailability of the Disney Channel on campus cable."**

*Amanda Rhodes senior*

## Technological advances lead to privacy debate



**Jean Kaul**

Lately, I've been noticing a distinctly sci-fi feel to my daily news.

It seems like everything that used to be impossible is now possible. Before you know it, we might have replicators a la Star Trek. To my five-year-old mind, the idea of Trekkies replicating a hot fudge sundae out of thin air was the pinnacle of technological greatness. Maybe we haven't reached that point yet. Just give it 30 years, Scottie.

We might not have replicators yet, but between iPhones, navigation systems and computers that work insanely fast, today's technology is awe-inspiring. I wasn't so surprised when I read that Georgia Tech student researchers have found a totally sci-fi way to give Google Earth a major upgrade.

Instead of those handy dandy ground level photos of houses and intersections, Google Earth could become live, with streaming video. By triangulating images from cameras on campuses, street lights, outside of stores, etc., this proposed version of Google Earth — named Augmented Earth — could

show automobile and pedestrian traffic in crowded areas, track weather patterns and even show you what's going on at the big game, according to CNN.com. Yes, you read it correctly — Augmented Earth viewers could conceivably watch the game happening inside a stadium via the service. Cool, right? The only downside for techies who want a bird's eye view of Kirksville is that in less urban areas, with a lower density of cameras, there won't be an option for video.

Once I got over the "gee whiz bang" aspect of the whole thing, I started to think about the actual applications and uses for Augmented Earth. Although this plan for Augmented Earth is still in the earliest of planning stages, it does open up an interesting and somewhat frightening discussion. If used for the purposes it has been invented for, the program only can do good. Traffic jams could be avoided, you could check for open parking spots at Barnett and check how cloudy it is going to be in the next 15 minutes. Some organizations are concerned about privacy, and as I watched the promotional video I, too, became alarmed. If people can watch a real time video of your apartment building, it becomes extremely easy to track people's movements during the day, making the technology a potential field day for stalkers. Although the technology is exciting, like so many other

innovative and exciting things, it can be dangerous.

The whole Big Brother aspect of it is a little unsettling. Fences aren't enough to keep out the neighbors anymore or your significant other could watch to see if you were really grilling in the backyard with your best buds. In the promotional video example developed by Georgia Tech, the "real people" that would be seen in a normal street side camera view look are simulated figures, but it has not been settled whether the real images will be used or only the representations. The technology is so new and exciting that little seems to have been decided on just how private citizens' rights will be protected. It seems as though the researchers are grappling with the privacy issue just as much as all of us potential guinea pigs are.

The Augmented Earth phenomenon is just a small part of a larger theme: anything for the sake of convenience, speed and knowledge. Are you willing to give up your privacy and identity? The Information Age has made each of us an open book (excuse me, e-book) and the cost of going blindly down the road of full disclosure has not been calculated.

I'll stick to the hot fudge sundae replicator, thanks.

*Jean Kaul is a senior English major from Marengo, Ill.*

## Insanity plea complicates cases



**Toby Hausner**

I plead insanity! That is an open door to all those in society contemplating criminal activity. The forces in the justice system walk down a path that allows this deceptive, pretend cop out to be abused to a horrifying extent. It is not in society's best interest to allow the continued regression of accountability for one's actions.

I should preface the remainder of my argument by stating I do fully understand insanity exists, and elements of criminal intent, malicious behavior and pre-meditation needed for prosecution are undermined when the suspect has a mental illness. Understanding these factors, my concern is not for these cases but the cases that stem from them in the form of rational, sane criminals having a "get out of jail free card" option in the arsenal.

The case that most exemplifies my growing fear is that of Brian David Mitchell. You might remember his abduction of 14-year-old Elizabeth Smart from her home in Utah in 2002. Mitchell is just now being tried for the six felonies levied against him. During her nine months imprisoned by Mitchell, Elizabeth was kept on a 10-foot tether and subjected to horrible acts. When asked in court how often she was raped, she replied, "On a daily basis, up to three or four times," according to CNN.com. The accounts are gross and horrifying.

The prosecution's case rests on proving Mitchell was manipulative, malicious and his actions were intentional, and he is therefore not mentally ill. The public defender's case hinges on proving that those things "exist side by side: manipulateness and mental illness," according to CNN.com. The argument goes on to say that not only can manipulation and criminal intent coexist with mental illness, but they are, in fact, indicators of it. This line of argument is what should devastate one's sense of rationality in the scope of criminal justice. If we accept this line of argument, it might lead to one arguing he or

she is insane because he or she committed or contemplated a heinous criminal act. All criminal acts could thus be argued in this manner. If criminal activity starts becoming synonymous with mental illness, justice will be undermined by a duty to protect the criminal from their deserved punishment.

Part of the reasoning behind prosecuting and convicting criminals is to deter others from committing the same criminal activity. If one is truly mentally ill, they will not be deterred by the consequences of their actions, and therefore this population should not dictate conviction tactics. You cannot deter the insane, but you can deter a rational actor who uses the simple logical procedure of cost-benefit analysis. If the insanity plea grows in acceptance and in scope of usage a huge element of the rational criminal's "costs" will be taken away.

Criminal activity is not founded on mental instability but is instead generally an indicator of purposefully attempting to take something that isn't yours. Smart, sane, rational people break the law all the time. If we as a society start turning a desire to have something that isn't ours into a mental illness then we endanger the very common law and code of ethics by which we live.

Not guilty by reason of insanity is a plea reserved for those who are so mentally disturbed they do not realize they are committing an infraction against another person. I think people this ill can nearly always be identified prior to committing a heinous criminal act. As such, if one does not have a prior history of mental illness, I am not inclined to believe they are innocent.

Potential insanity is a factor that should be considered in some cases. But to reason that someone is insane because they committed a crime is not only a grave fallacy, but calls into question the sanity of those making the claim. I don't know whether Brian David Mitchell is insane or not, but I can say that if this type of logic persists, there will be more Brian David Mitchells around.

*Toby Hausner is a junior political science major from Kansas City, Mo.*

## Meat regulation demands heavier scrutiny



**Alex Boles**

Imagine eating a cheeseburger one day, being forced into a nine-week coma and finding out you're paralyzed from the waist down when you wake up.

Not such a great thought, is it? Well, that is exactly what happened to now 22-year-old Stephanie Smith in 2007 after she consumed a store-bought hamburger, according to a New York Times article published on Oct. 3, 2009. E. coli was the food-borne illness Smith has to blame for her unfortunate circumstances.

The article reported that ground beef has been the cause of 16 E. coli

outbreaks in the past three years. According to the article, beef was recalled from 3,000 grocers in 41 states just this summer, and although the number of outbreaks might be decreasing, the processing of meat remains just as faulty. The Times article points out two shocking revelations pertaining to the production of ground beef. That the makeup of ground beef is similar to that of a hot dog, and that safety procedures within the slaughterhouses and grinding facilities are not being followed closely enough to assure their consumers' health.

The Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS) Web site states that 30 percent by weight of fat is allowed in meat packaged within a U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection plant. It also says that the USDA has eight grades of meat, none of which are applied to ground beef. Why? Because ground beef is made from less popular cuts of beef and usually includes trimmings from other parts of the cow, possibly from other slaughter houses.

Basically, a hamburger is a flattened version of a hot dog, combining fat, bread crumbs and spices to add a variety of flavors to the two equally disgusting foods.

If you haven't guessed it by now, I don't eat red meat and generally try to avoid eating meat at all, as much as possible. I was not one of those people who didn't eat meat because of the treatment of the animals or the production of the meat, but after reading up on the subject, I don't think I could ever eat a hamburger again.

Beef can be exposed to E. coli in any number of places along the processing line. The bacteria form in the intestines of the cow and can be exposed during slaughter, gutting or grinding. The FSIS Web site stated that the bacteria can multiply rapidly between the temperatures of 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit and can only die after being cooked above 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Really, though, do we all stick a thermometer into the hamburgers we cook during our

summer barbecues? Probably not. We'd rather know it's not there in the first place because the proper safety regulations and inspection procedures were carried out. Sadly, we can't rely on that.

The FSIS procedures compel state inspection laws pertaining to beef and poultry to enforce requirements at least equal to those of federal laws. The Missouri Department of Agriculture requires a facility to develop its own written standard operating procedures and a hazard analysis control point plan before being granted state inspection, according to the Web site. The MDA encourages companies to test carcasses before the grinding process for harmful bacteria, so that proper safety regulations are followed, and meat will not have to be recalled later in the process. The same guidelines apply to the state of Kansas, where the Cargill Meat Company is hosted — the same company that made the hamburger Smith ate that caused her paralysis. Unfortunately

for Cargill, they decided not to test the carcasses before the grinding process when the meat was mixed with product from multiple slaughter houses, according to the Times article.

Meat processing companies have gotten lazy. They are finding loopholes and ways to bypass testing their products early to avoid a potential dent in their profit from a dangerous recall of their meat. But what is more important — human lives or making money? If you think about it, not testing the meat early allows the E. coli bacteria to multiply and spread, which might infect many across the country. This only deters people from buying your brand and lessens brand loyalty. Taking the extra time to test the meat early for potential deadly bacteria will not only save lives, but will keep consumers loyal.

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