

## Walk-in hours' benefits outweigh dangers



Alex Boles

At the epitome of my disappointment with my health care options in Kirksville—and in general—the situation got worse on campus.

With the onslaught of the H1N1 virus hitting campus and the community, the Student Health Center anticipated getting swamped with appointments. Fearful that their runny nose was a flu named after a barnyard animal, students herded to the health center for some cheap and easy health care. Sick people piled into the waiting room sharing

tissue boxes and breathing each other's flu-like symptoms during walk-in hours—sounds healthy, doesn't it? Healthy or not, the Health Center is a great convenience for students, but the health center has decided it isn't worth the risk.

As the Index reported last week, the health center has, for the time being, suspended its walk-in hours to keep students from catching each other's illnesses in the waiting room. Normally, I really wouldn't think of this change as too difficult on the students as there are other health care options available, but my opinion has changed. I've decided that the health center is the best option for sick students, and walk-in hours are a necessity when the sickness strikes.

A couple weeks ago, I became really sick with a fever of 103 degrees. I called the Health Center secretary, who told me that walk-in

hours were no longer in effect and the next available appointment was the next week. Deciding that I probably would be dead by then, I chose not to schedule an appointment. I ended up going to the local hospital and getting a prescription I was allergic to. Needless to say, I'd prefer to walk-in to the clinic, rather than drive three hours home for health care from now on.

Students need the health center to service them. Suspending walk-in hours is not the health center's best option. Students utilize the walk-in hours for emergencies more often than for minuscule things like allergies—that type of mere discomfort is what appointments are for. You can't plan on having a 103-degree fever a week ahead of time and schedule an appointment for the following week just in case your intuition proves to be right. No, the health center might not have the best health care

in the world, but it's relatively free—unless you have tests done—and it's a weight off students'—with less than great insurance—shoulders. I paid a \$500 emergency room fee for medicine I am allergic to, a rash and doctors who wanted to get a patient in and out as quickly as possible. The nurses and doctors at the health center seem to genuinely care about your health and comfort, so I would rather wait in a pool of infestation in the health center waiting room and not pay a fortune.

I understand people are sick, appointments are filling up and the health center can only see so many people in one day. But I propose a solution that the health center should think about. Walk-in hours should be reinstated and used for emergencies only. People who have a 103-degree fever and sound like a dinosaur with a cold should be able to walk in and be seen without

having to call and be deferred to a later date. If your nose is runny and you think you have allergies, think about making an appointment so the walk-in hours can be for those who need to be seen immediately. Your itchy eyes and runny nose can wait until Monday.

I have had good experiences with the health center, but being turned away with a fever of 103 degrees was not one of them. For now, the best way to deal with the current schedule is to become psychic so you can predict when you'll be sick, call the health center and schedule an appointment a week in advance. This way when you actually do become sick, you'll already have an appointment. Problem solved.

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

## Craigslist offers a new technology with old twist



Jean Kaul

Get excited, people—modernity has arrived in Kirksville.

Craigslist, the 21st-century equivalent of the bazaar, now has an option for Kirksville-only listings. After having the indignity of being lumped together with Columbia and Jefferson City, Kirksville is now king of its proverbial Craigslist palace. After learning about this development, I couldn't help but wonder (sorry, Carrie Bradshaw) what would be listed—and raced to the computer to find out.

Craigslist's hodgepodge is pretty astounding, but so is Kirksville's, so I thought that maybe this joining would be an unlikely match made in heaven. If Craigslist is the 21st century bazaar, some vendors are rendered even more bizarre—if you will—by the fact that your ad can be relatively anonymous.

Questions abounded as I readied myself to enter the weird, wacky, practical, useful and sometimes illegal world of Craigslist. Would there be job postings for the unemployed? How about couches for the pitiful living rooms of college students? How

about some really funny personal ads? Or, judging by the pictures, not so personal?

But as I began perusing the listings for tractor parts and cell phone chargers, I thought about what makes Craigslist so appealing. Despite its 21st century make-up, Craigslist has a distinctly retro appeal. In a time of increasing fragmentation and distance, Craigslist harkens back to a simpler time, when there were no middle-men and salespeople or big box stores, just people bartering and trading with their neighbors to get what they needed. You didn't run out to Wal-Mart—you went to your neighbors to see if they had what you needed. The directness of Craigslist gives it a kind of democratic appeal, and, hopefully, the community will take the time to get familiar with just how to make the most of their new electronic marketplace.

Along with all the buying and selling of couches, jobs and apartment listings (a part of Craigslist I've taken advantage of before), Craigslist offers Internet voyeurs a chance to peruse the bluntly unfiltered desires of people in your community. My personal favorite is the missed connections option, in which posters will sometimes write something like this: "Saw you on the F route. You were wearing blue and smiled at me. I have a feeling you might be the One." I always wonder if the person ever replies. As much as I might laugh at these listings, they point to an innate human urge—the need to find

someone who just might know you and to make those connections you're missing out on. In a broader context, Craigslist listings, like the one above, fill that need to get to know your neighbors. Except in the 21st century, it's the person grasping the same subway pole, not Bill and Sandy who have lived next door for the last 20 years.

The seamier, more dangerous side of Craigslist was revealed this spring with the case of the Craigslist killer, who terrorized Boston. By taking advantage of the anonymity of Craigslist, the killer targeted two women who were advertising in the sex services section of the Web site. Many people blasted Craigslist after the crime was discovered—Craigslist was a veritable Wild West, according to critics, with no type of police force keeping watch on more dangerous users. Moral of this story: exercise discretion when using the site, and be careful about whom you contact.

Although stories like the Craigslist killer are extremely worrisome, we can't lose sight of what Craigslist can offer—a new, old-fashioned way of doing business. If used in the right way, the site is a useful tool, not a scary one. And I might just find that couch I've been looking for.

Hello modernity.

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

## Adoption process protects animals



Molly Skyles

Sad puppies and kitties with big eyes looking up at me—that's what I picture when I think of the Humane Society. Just a bunch of lonely animals looking for a home and someone to love them. It makes me feel all warm and cuddly inside just thinking about it.

Sadly, I've never had a pet, unless you count a fish, so I can only imagine how great it must feel to fall in love with an animal and want, more than anything, to have it as your own. To take it home, to make it a bed, and to play with it—it must be great to have a pet. However, I recently learned that adopting an animal from a place like the Humane Society is no simple task. With an intense application process and an abundance of paperwork, this cozy feeling can turn into an annoyance. But when it comes down to

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it, this—what some call annoying—process, really is just a thorough procedure to ensure an animal ends up with the best home and a family can handle the responsibility of the perfect addition to their home.

I heard about the complications with adopting from the Humane Society and initially agreed that it was much too ridiculous. I learned that the necessary information needed to adopt was very complicated. Also, you have to meet an extensive list of criteria. What I heard made it seem like adopting a pet was next to impossible.

My initial reaction of annoyance, however, was soon followed by understanding. The Humane Society is an organization that rescues animals and takes care of them until they find a suitable home and someone to properly care for them. The easy route would be to give a pet to any person on the street who thought it was cute. However, several aspects should be taken into consideration

before you just take a pet home. Can you afford to feed and care for it? Is your house pet friendly? Will your other pets get along with the new addition? If the Humane Society gave an animal to every person who wanted to pet the adorable kitten or puppy, more pets would probably end up abandoned on the streets than there are now.

While writing this column, my eyes opened to many new facets of adopting a pet. I tend to picture little kids begging their parents for a puppy and going to the Humane Society to pick out just the right one. For a child, having a pet is like having a best friend. That dog or cat will always be by their side and always love them. However, a pet can be a companion for anyone of any age. A dog, as they say, is a man's best friend. Although I haven't been fortunate enough

to experience that, I think it is probably true. A dog, or any pet for that matter, can provide all types of support for a person. The least owners can do is supply the same support to the care of their pets. Also, when a pet is adopted from a shelter, the owner is providing it with

love and compassion, something it probably has never known before.

Approximately 74.8 million dogs and 88.3 million cats are owned in the United States, according to the National Pet Owners Survey conducted in 2007-08 by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association. Approximately 10 percent of dogs and 18 percent of cats were adopted from an animal shelter. This proves to me that animal shelters must be doing something right, because even though the process of adoption might be complex, it is probably that way for a reason. So have patience, and just picture the warm, fuzzy feeling of your best friend—your dog—curled up at your feet.

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

## AROUND THE QUAD

What would you like to sell on Kirksville's new Craigslist page?



**"Centennial Hall. It needs to go."**

*Dwuana Bradley sophomore*



**"A month supply of Tootsie rolls."**

*Ellen Russell sophomore*



**"My roommate's futon."**

*Erin Reid junior*



**"My old psychology textbooks."**

*Andrea Sadler senior*

## Geocaching creates opportunity for exploration



Tyler Retherford

Armed only with a handheld GPS unit, my housemate became a modern-day treasure hunter this weekend. She wasn't pilfering ancient buried treasure, but geocaching.

Geocaching, or using GPS to locate hidden containers or "caches" left by other geocachers, is an activity that's gaining popularity across the country and even abroad. According to Groundspeak, Inc.,

which runs a Web site dedicated to listing caches as well as offering a geocaching iPhone app, there are more than 900,000 geocaches hidden around the world. These caches generally hold a logbook so the finder can mark that they found it, sometimes a stamp to mark their own book of caches they have found and usually a few trinkets that finders are allowed to take as long as they replace it with something of roughly equal value. A quick look at any one of several Web sites designed to allow cache-placers to share the coordinates of their caches with potential seekers reveals more than a dozen geocaches within easy reach of any Kirksville resident, ranging from a quick walk to the nearest park to an afternoon's hike through the woods. Kirksville can get a little boring

sometimes because, to be honest, there are only so many times you can go bowling or on a midnight run to Pancake City before it loses its appeal. Geocaching is a great and relatively cheap way to get outside and see all the sights Adair county has to offer. One of the local caches is a multi-cache, where the seeker must follow the first set of coordinates to clues for the next set. It takes you through the A.T. Still museum, where the seeker learns a little bit about the school's rich history in their pursuit of the cache. The prizes left by fellow geocachers can be fun to find as well, ranging from foreign coins to party favors.

Aside from the steep start-up cost of purchasing a GPS unit, which starts at about \$80 for a basic model available through Wal-Mart, geocaching is extraordinarily cheap,

especially if you hike or bike to the caches instead of drive. If the initial price sounds daunting, consider joining Truman's own geocaching club, being formed right now by students interested in sharing a GPS unit and working to expand the number of caches in the area. Geocaching is a great way to get out and enjoy nature or the local sights in Kirksville, and many geocachers participate in the "cache-in-trash-out" policy advocated by many geocaching groups, where cache-hunters bring trash bags with them to take litter out of parks and wooded areas they're hiking through. Geocaching is also a great way to find out about the parks in your area because many geocachers get involved in their local park boards and state parks departments while seeking approval for cache-

placements.

If you get as bored as I do sitting around the dorms watching the same movies over and over again, consider spending an afternoon on one of these guided scavenger hunts and maybe find a cool place you didn't know about before, or meet some fellow geocachers and bring a neat trinket home. If you don't want to be a muggle (the term geocaching groups have borrowed from Harry Potter to refer to non-geocachers) then take a look at geocaching.com or get involved with the newly formed geocaching club on campus to find your own treasure.

*Tyler Retherford is a junior anthropology major from Springfield, Mo.*