

Our View

Sober ride program ensures safety on Kirksville streets

It's good to commend people from time to time. Too often we are complaining about budget cuts or new laws and we forget there are some great people out there doing great things.

Take Stephanie Davis. She is a local bank teller who recently started a sober ride program (see story page 1). She charges \$5 to take a carload of up to four people anywhere they want to go within the Kirksville area until 4 a.m. This program is not just for college students. Through fliers, a Facebook page and word of mouth, Davis is providing her services to all Kirksville residents.

This program greatly could improve safety in Kirksville, but also could become a successful business for Davis. She currently is the only driver, but if the program takes off, she could employ more drivers, and it easily could become a profitable business in this college town.

Davis isn't in this for the money. Charging \$5 per car will not lead to much profit after the costs of gas and insurance, and she knows that. She said she was tired of hearing about drunk driving accidents and people receiving tickets for drinking and driving because there was no sober ride program in place, and she wanted to help. Whatever her motives, Davis is doing a good thing to help keep the people of this town safe.

No longer will you have to drunkenly get behind the wheel at 2 a.m. to buy the Taco Bell you are craving — Davis will drive you to and from anywhere in the area. No longer will you have to walk home in the rain because you are too drunk to drive — just call Davis. No longer will you have to worry about the police finding you stumbling home after a long night of drinking — Davis can be there, no questions asked.

Truman attempted to start a sober ride program a few years ago, but it was shut down before it even began. Student Senate proposed the idea in fall 2007. They would provide a free ride home for students during weekend evenings. In spring 2008, they began the Safe Rides pilot program, which would give students the opportunity to use the program 10 chosen nights throughout the semester as a trial basis. If it was successful, Student Senate intended to make it a permanent program at the University.

For whatever reason, the program did not become permanent. Truman students have been left to fend for themselves when it comes to finding ways home from parties, and their safety is in danger. Maybe it's because the program would have cost too much. Maybe the University did not want to condone student drinking by giving them the chance to drink and have a ride home without any consequences. Or maybe students didn't show much of an interest in the program, although that's difficult to believe. Whatever the reason, the University not continuing with the Safe Rides program was senseless.

Kirksville is a college town. No matter how dangerous it is, students are going to drink, and some will drive under the influence. Luckily for us, there is Davis. She is doing something the University wouldn't — providing students, and all Kirksville residents, with the opportunity to have a night of drinking and arrive free of harm.

It's sad that the University couldn't make the effort to ensure the safety of its students by establishing the Safe Rides program, but at least there are community members like Davis who are looking out for the wellbeing of the town.

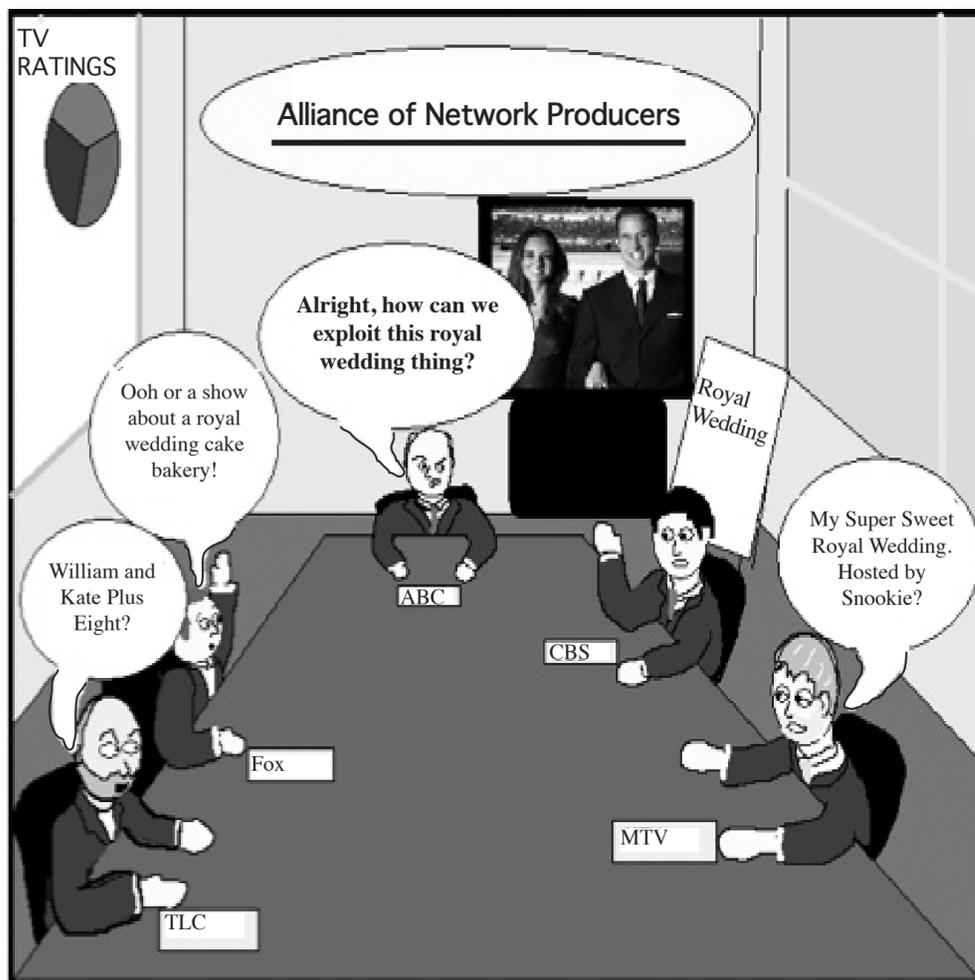
So thank you, Stephanie Davis. Your kindness and thoughtful ideas are helping to save lives.

corrections

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail 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 Danny Jaschek



Letters to the Editor

Wage gaps do not exist in the job market

I would like to address the various claims made by Jennifer Weisbrod in her Letter to the Editor in the April 14 edition of the Index.

Firstly, as one of her so called solutions to the discrimination causing the gender wage gap, she makes the claim that affirmative action programs need to be maintained to make sure "educational opportunities are open and offered to qualified women." Clearly Ms. Weisbrod is not familiar with the definition of affirmative action. From Wikipedia: Affirmative action refers to policies that take factors including race, color, religion, gender or national origin into consideration in order to benefit an underrepresented group. What Ms. Weisbrod is clearly failing to realize is that women, as 57.4 percent of college students, do not qualify as an "underrepresented group." Actions taken to help offer educational opportunities to men, not women, would be considered affirmative action.

Secondly, she supports her claim that unionized workplaces are a good sign for women being paid equally by stating, "Women in unions earn 35 percent more than women in non-union workplaces." Yes, this is true. It is also true that men working for unions earn more than their non-union counterparts. This statistic has nothing at all to do with the so called gender wage gap, it instead deals with the success of unions in using collective bargaining. I would love to hear why she felt it was relevant to include in her letter.

Finally, I will address the actual causes of the 23 percent wage gap

between working men and women. Firstly, a survey from the Department of Labor shows that full-time working women spend an average of 8.01 hours per day on the job, compared to 8.75 hours for full-time working men. Isn't it reasonable to expect that if men are working 9 percent more than they would also be getting paid 9 percent more? Why should pay be equal if effort is clearly not?

Secondly, women in general tend to gravitate toward jobs with fewer risks, more comfortable conditions, regular hours, more personal fulfillment and greater flexibility. Many women, enough to influence the statistics, are willing to trade higher pay for other desirable job characteristics.

Thirdly, women in college have a tendency to choose easier majors. There are disproportionate numbers of males in majors that are more difficult, such as physics, engineering, finance, computer science, math and statistics. Alternately, there are disproportionate numbers of females in easier fields such as library sciences, education, communication, social services and psychology. As salary is a function of demand and supply in the labor market, basic economics tell us people with majors that are not as difficult will not be paid as highly due to there being lower barriers to entry.

Finally, women also take more time off in the middle of their careers in order to raise a family. Therefore, men spend more time in the labor force and thus on average have more experience than their female colleagues. Common sense dictates greater experience equals greater pay.

In reality, if you want to actually compare apples to apples, a recent study conducted by Reach Advisers compared salaries of single, childless,

urban workers between the ages of 22 and 30. Their study found that these women were making 8 percent more than their male counterparts, due mostly to their recent outpacing of their male counterparts in educational attainment. This statistic hardly seems to support Ms. Weisbrod and her feminist allies' claim that the wage gap is somehow due to discrimination in the workplace. Clearly, given all of these facts the gender wage gap is due to a variety of factors, with discrimination playing at most a nominal role.

I will address the single most fundamental flaw with Ms. Weisbrod's analysis. If women really are doing the same work as men for less pay then an arbitrage opportunity exists. For my purposes, I'll choose the accounting field.

Deloitte is the nation's largest accounting and auditing services firm. They hire both men and women. If women really are making less than their male counterparts at any level of the company, I would be able to start a competing firm hiring only women that would put Deloitte out of business. My personnel costs would be 12.5 percent lower (costs for women the same, their costs for men would be 25 percent higher due to your claim of discrimination) than Deloitte's, meaning I would make immense profits because I could charge less for the services I provide. Can this strategy actually work in any industry? Will I become an instant millionaire? Regrettably I will have to find another way to make my millions, as this strategy will not work because Ms. Weisbrod's logic is nonsensical.

Steve Hipkiss
grad student

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