

All Eyes On: John Hoffmann

Retiring chemistry professor plans to travel, help others

BY CHARUNDI PANAGODA
Staff Reporter

Professor of education John Hoffmann drives 20 miles to campus every day from his small farm outside Kirksville.

He has done this for the past 20 years. Despite the distance, it's still worth it to teach at the best workplace in all of northern Missouri, he said.

Hoffmann never intended to become a teacher. He started his career as a scientist. He did research on plant parasitic nematodes as a graduate student at the University of Florida, Gainesville. If someone had told him back then that he was going to become a teacher one day he would have laughed in their face, he

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John Hoffmann
professor, on his plans after retirement

said.

When he began teaching as a graduate student, he was surprised to find out that he actually liked it. He taught high school science for 14 years, 10 of which he spent at Kirksville High School.

Teaching six high school classes every day, five days a week in eventually burned him out, he said. Hoffmann re-

signed as a high school teacher and applied for a teaching position at Truman. He has been a science and education professor here since then.

"Teaching is what's fun," Hoffmann said. "If I weren't able to teach, I probably wouldn't have stayed here. I enjoy teaching. I enjoy interacting with students, working with them and seeing them grow."

This semester will be Hoffmann's last semester as a full-time professor at Truman. He decided to retire

from his long career and look for something else to do.

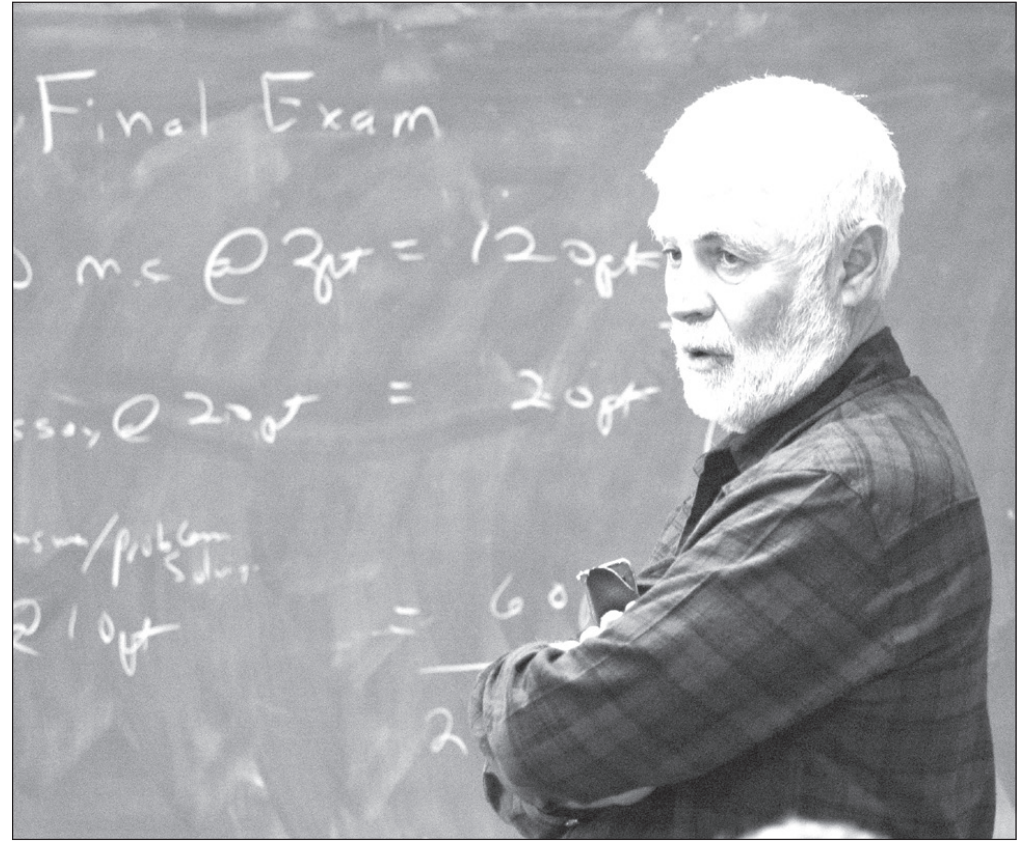
"I want to be able to get away and see more things," Hoffmann said. "I'm closer to the end of my life than in the beginning of it, and so you get a sense of that, you know there are other things you want to do. Other things that will come to mind as you retire."

These days Hoffmann is preparing for his retirement. As a fervent admirer of the outdoors and the rural environment, Hoffmann said he plans to travel extensively in the western United States. He once hiked sections of the Appalachian Mountains collecting soil samples for his graduate thesis.

"There's a section of the Missouri River that Louis and Clark explored back in 1804, 1806 in Montana that's the same as it was when they were there," Hoffmann said. "It's about a 150 mile section of the Missouri River. I would like to canoe that."

Traveling is not the only thing Hoffmann hopes to do after retiring. He also wants to help people in need.

"One of the things that my wife and I want to get involved in is, we want to be more involved in community service things," he said. "We want to get involved in Habi-



Krista Goodman/Index
Professor John Hoffman gives a lecture to his Chemistry 100 class. Hoffman has taught at Truman for more than 20 years, but said he never expected to become a teacher.

tat for Humanity, helping construct homes for people who can't afford them. I think that is a great thing to do."

Hoffmann said he still plans to teach at Truman as a part-time professor for another three years after retirement.

"I think what's special about [Truman students] is that they are academically able," Hoffmann said. "They are quick to catch on. They don't always work as hard as I would like to see them work, but they do tend to, when they apply themselves, they tend to learn rapidly."

Senior Luke McDuff cur-

rently is taking a chemistry course for non-science majors with Hoffmann. He said Hoffmann is very passionate about his students and always is willing to help.

McDuff said Hoffmann's student-centered approach to teaching is what makes him a great teacher.

"I've had teachers where they are good teachers who know a lot about their subject but they are not very friendly towards you," McDuff said. "I have people in class who say he's is their favorite professor. And they've only been here a couple of months, some of

them are freshmen."

Junior Sara Kluba took the same chemistry course with Hoffmann several semesters ago. She struggled with the course a lot but passed with Hoffmann's assistance.

"I frequently went to his office hours, and he gave me a lot of extra help," Kluba said. "We'd just sit down. I'm not very good at chemistry, so he would just work with me, and he'd say, 'Sara, stop. Look, you can do this,' and he'd make me write it all out on the board and then I would easily see 'Oh, that was easy.'"

Ringers bring change for local poor

Salvation Army bell ringers volunteer time to help others

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY
Staff Reporter

Standing in the cold next to a small red kettle, a volunteer rings a bell, wishing shoppers "Happy Holidays." Many shoppers stop and drop spare change into the kettle, while a few pass by, continuing their day. The bells can be heard

outside stores nationwide as a part of the annual Salvation Army Bell Ringing Campaign.

"The Bell Ringing Campaign is one of our major fundraisers throughout the year," Salvation Army Major Bill Hogg said. "We have a lot of volunteers."

These volunteers come right from the Kirksville community. Hogg said several service organizations such as the Kiwanis and Rotary Club, devote their time to bell ringing. Many Greek and service organizations on campus also volunteer.

While the Salvation Army occasionally pays their workers, most of the time they are volunteers, so more money can go to the social services the Salvation Army provides to the community.

"All the money that's put in

those red buckets stays right here in the community for the Salvation Army to do all of its social service work," Hogg said.

Hogg said the money specifically pays for food, peoples' rent or utilities, clothing and providing shelter for those in need. Last year the buckets brought in more than \$60,000 to help those in need in the Kirksville community.

Nationwide the buckets brought in more than \$139 million, according to the Salvation Army website, salvationarmyusa.org.

All of this is done in the month between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

There are seven buckets at five locations in the Kirksville community this year: two at both Wal-Mart and Hyvee, and one at Westlake Ace Hardware, JCPenney and Walgreens.

Hogg said they ask each volunteer to work a minimum of two hours per shift. They welcome volunteers with talents to show off during their shift. These can be anything from musical talent to ventriloquism. The Kirksville Community Band will perform with the bell ringers a couple times during the month.

Many volunteers give their time yearly.

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Bill Hogg
Salvation Army major



Joyce Wong/Index
Salvation Army bell ringer Brian Welch stands outside of Hyvee as freshman Brooke Giddens donates some change. This is Welch's first year as a bell-ringer.

year," Hogg said. "It's a good way to make you feel good and help somebody else."

Brian Welch is a first-time bell ringer this year. He became involved after working at the food pantry three days a week. Welch said he plans on doing it again.

"It feels good in your heart," Welch said.

Krystle Wilson also was a first-

time volunteer. She said that despite the cold weather, it has been a rewarding experience.

"It's fun to see little kids run up and give you quarters," Wilson said.

She also enjoyed watching the babies come by, especially when they look at her bell in amazement.

Kevin Chierek, another first-time volunteer, plans on trying to take a shift once a week this holi-

day season.

"It's been pretty cool," Chierek said. "You get to meet a lot of people and wish everybody Happy Holidays."

The Salvation Army still has shifts open for anyone wanting to volunteer. Those interested can contact the Salvation Army at 660-665-7885.



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