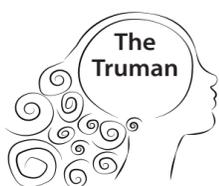


Productivity drives creation of bucket lists



BY ELIZABETH NECKA
Columnist

Visit the grave of Oscar Wilde? Check. Celebrate New Year's Eve in a different country? Check. Go sky diving? Still on the bucket list.

My roommate, a senior, has never been to the train bridge. As we whittle down our last few months in Kirksville, we've started a to-do list of everything we need to experience before we graduate. Included on my list: Complete the 13-mile hike through Thousand Hills State Park, go dancing at Geno's '70s Club, visit the Amish store south of town and go to the PRISM dance. The other night, in negative 7-degree weather, my roommate suggested we go to the train bridge as a homework break and check another thing off of her list. True, the stars were beautiful, and the night sky was clear. But let me reiterate: negative 7-degree weather. We did not go.

I have a freakish obsession with the train bridge, having been there multiple times per year since coming to Truman. But when I describe it to my non-Truman friends, they think I'm crazy. "You stand out on a bridge in the middle of a field in

the freezing cold with nothing to do but wait for a train to come by?" Well, yes. But to me, that experience solidifies my engrossment in the Truman culture, capturing the essence of going to school in a small town. There's no mall, but we do have this really neat hidden gem. The train bridge, like so many other experiences, is a staple of Truman student life.

People do some of the weirdest things just to say they did them. But why is it that people are willing to take the polar bear plunge? What was our obsession with "Fear Factor"? Although I enjoy Oscar Wilde, why did I take a huge detour to see his grave?

According to a study by Anat Keinan and Ran Kivetz that will be published in this April's Journal of Consumer Research, people seek to add to their resume of experiences in unusual ways, thereby enjoying situations that typically would be considered undesirable. The research indicates that people who highly value productivity are driven to seek more unique experiences. In our fast paced society, we often feel wasteful and guilty if we are not using our time efficiently to produce

some physical product or more intangible psychological betterment. The people who are most distressed by this inefficiency have a high productivity orientation and are the most likely to pursue these unusual experiences. They feel as though unusual experiences help cultivate their individual growth, finding additional utility in these experiences. If you'd agree that it annoys you to feel like you're wasting time, or you typically work hard to become the best, you'd also probably be more likely to enroll in a "Show Girl Cardio" fitness class.

Collectable experiences, as the researchers refer to them, have several characteristics. In particular, collectable experiences cannot be replicated or nothing else compares. Unfortunately, going to Las Vegas to see the Eiffel Tower isn't the same as seeing the real deal. Collectable experiences are meant to be remembered, so even though the immediate pay-off is minimal, the greatest pleasure comes from sharing the tale with others later. Don't forget your camera or your journal, and remember to buy souvenirs if you're traveling. The best way to remember is to preserve the experience.

A person's need for productivity isn't the only thing defining how likely they are

to pursue a collectable experience — so are the go-getters that set their watches to run fast. When a group of people were asked if they would rather go on a relaxing vacation or an exotic vacation that would af-

ford them once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, people whose watch was set to run fast were more likely to choose the latter, indicating their preference for an exotic meal instead of more typical American cuisine.

If you're a typical Truman student, you probably thrive on heightened levels of productivity, which explains the popularity of our study abroad programs and the diverse array of campus organizations. We appreciate the train bridge because it's something completely unique to Kirksville, a memory that binds us together that we can discuss at our homecoming reunions years from now. We pursue outrageous experiences because we feel productive, as these experiences inspire personal growth.

Mostly, we create bucket lists to balance our need to constantly be doing something with the threat of not finding the time to do it all. But secretly, we're doing it because in those last few moments of life, or those last few weeks before we leave Kirksville, we want to gather as many collectable experiences as we can.

One hundred and one days until graduation to squeeze it all in.

People do the weirdest things just to say they did them. But why is it that people are willing to polar bear plunge?



Adam (Ashton Kutcher) whimsically brings Emma (Natalie Portman) carrots for their first date, after her request for no flowers. Adam tries to woo Emma into a committed relationship throughout the film. Photo courtesy of rottentomatoes.com

'No strings' and no point



BY KEN DUSOLD
Staff Reviewer

Early in "No Strings Attached," is a four-second shot of the film's director, Ivan Reitman. In this scene, Reitman is — appropriately — acting as the director of a "Glee"-like TV show, in which the challenges and drama of teenagers are exhibited through song and dance. As the film continues, it seems Reitman still is directing a bunch of adolescents who are putting their hearts into a romantic comedy most likely written during second period algebra class.

Still enjoying the attention and accolades pouring in from various organizations, like the Broadcast Film Critics Association for her turn in "Black Swan," Natalie Portman gives a careless performance in her newest venture. Her character, Emma, is a doctor working in residency at a Los Angeles area hospital. She suffers from a severe case of commitment phobia. Every guy she dates, she soon breaks up with. The film's screenwriters thought this was an interesting concept, however, they failed to explain the reason why she

is afraid of a serious relationship. We get a brief glance of her personality as a child in the opening scenes of the film, but even as a 13-year-old girl, she does not like getting too close to people emotionally. How is she supposed to move beyond something she has no reason for feeling in the first place? Emma would be a psychiatrist's worst nightmare because she shows no sign of improvement throughout the film.

What's a girl to do when she doesn't want an emotional relationship? Have sex, of course. Because, as we all know from the movies, casual sex always remains casual. Enter Adam (Ashton Kutcher), a production assistant and aspiring writer for the "Glee"-like program alluded to in the beginning of this review. Adam has problems of his own. His famous TV-star father (Kevin Kline) recently has begun dating his 20-something, gold-digging ex-girlfriend. In need of a distraction, the casual sex idea seems perfect ... until he realizes Emma is the girl of his dreams.

Whoops! What is Emma going to do now?

For the rest of the film, the audience is painfully subjected to lousy romance, awkward characters and little direction from Reitman. There is no chemistry between Portman and Kutcher. Despite a weak attempt late in the film to suggest an emotional need for a deeper connection between the two, Portman plays Emma as only wanting sex from

OK financially?

Indeed, it can be assumed money might be the sole motivator for most of the film's players. Lake Bell is deplorable as Adam's pathetically awkward and kind of creepy co-worker Cary Elwes — of "The Princess Bride" fame — hides himself behind a bushy beard and a total of two lines. Like Kline, one gets the idea he really does not want his name attached to this film. Mindy Kaling, who is most famous for the role of Kelly Kapoor on NBC's "The Office," is type-cast as a subtly bitter, obliviously rude and man-hungry friend to Portman.

There are several moments throughout the film that earn hearty laughs. A few one-liners during a scene in which Adam drops by Emma's apartment with cupcakes while she and her friends deal with their periods should have knowing female viewers in stitches. Recurring jokes involving immature and rule-breaking stars of the TV show for which Adam works come at the expense of FOX's megahit musical sitcom. But besides the laughs, there seems to be no point to the story's happenings. Each scene is simply the product of the previous scene. There is no exit strategy in the film's plot. Unless Reitman is making a political statement — which is highly doubtful — this romantic comedy is left hanging by one thin thread.

The cast of supporting characters is like a who's-who of depthless and defective wastes of perfectly good, polluted Los Angeles oxygen.

Needless to say, it is nothing like Portman's infamous and much more passionate sex scene in "Black Swan."

The cast of supporting characters is like a who's-who of depthless and defective wastes of perfectly good, polluted Los Angeles oxygen. Academy Award-winner Kline plays Adam's pot-smoking, cavalier dad with so little gusto, it begs the question: Is Kline doing

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