

# EDITORIAL

OUR VIEW

## City must better notify students of safety issues

Kirksville has a population of approximately 17,000, and roughly 6,000 of those residents are Truman students. With such a large student population, the city must begin to adapt to our needs.

From Oct. 4 to Oct. 6, there was a boiler advisory for two blocks of East Jefferson Street between High Street and Florence Street (see story, page one). However, these streets — populated mainly by students — were not properly notified of the alert. The Adair County 911 center has an automated phone service that calls landline phones in areas subject to advisories to warn them of precautionary boil orders. But, most students do not use land lines, and only one house in this two-block radius had a registered land line. Not many knew about the possible dangers they might have faced by simply turning on the faucet and taking a drink.

The city must find a more efficient way to notify citizens when important local issues arise. The 911 center said it also left door hangers on the houses that were under the boiler alert. However, multiple residents claimed not to have received them. The advisory was posted on the city of Kirksville's website, as well.

The door hangers would have been an effective way to notify residents about the alert. However, when some affected don't receive one, something is wrong. The city must not only be accurate in its method of notifying but must also be able to reach all citizens in a timely manner.

We also think that simply posting this potentially dangerous alert on the Kirksville website is futile. Few students and residents check this site on a regular basis. Who willingly goes looking for a problem such as this unless given a reason to do so?

Were the residents supposed to

wait until they felt sick from drinking the water to go investigate a cause? It should be the responsibility of the city to inform us of these matters — not a game of chance.

Fortunately, the water was safe. The boiler alert was just a precautionary measure in response to a car accident that disrupted a water main on Oct. 2. It is a good thing, too, considering no one received warning or had prepared to boil all their water before drinking it or cooking with it.

The Kirksville Police Department recently put a system called Nixle in place that notifies residents who register with the system of community safety alerts via text messages or e-mails from KPD. In a college city where the campus community operates mainly by cell phones, smart phones and e-mail, this is the most effective way to inform residents of important issues. So why was the boiler alert not relayed to the affected parties in this way?

The 911 center said it has a program in place that allows residents to register and receive electronic alerts about boiler advisories and severe weather. Although this is a good concept, it will not be beneficial unless people are aware it exists.

Information about the alert system and the website address for registration should be provided to all citizens when moving into a residence. It might also be effective to advertise the program when citizens receive their water bills. That way, we won't have to fear unknown parasites every time we get thirsty.

Kirksville must adapt with the times, because calling land lines will no longer act as an effective means of notification. Ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents, including a large number of students, must be a vital objective on the city's agenda.

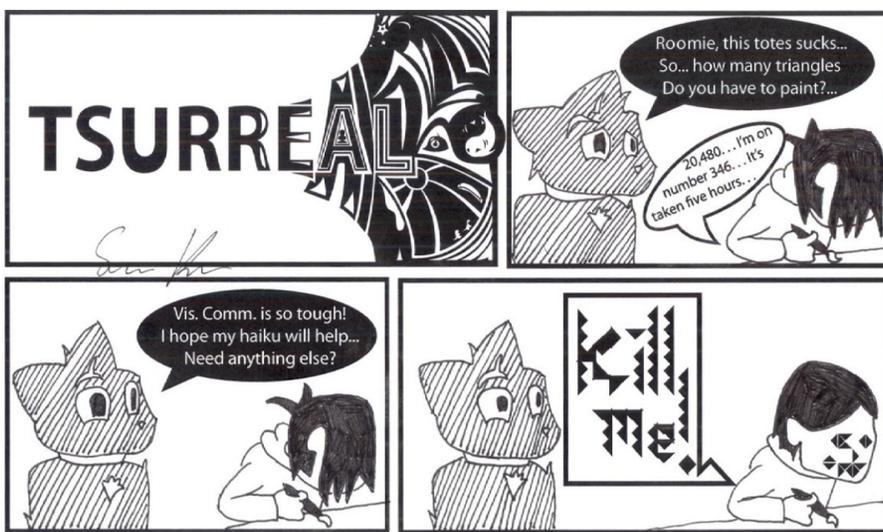
CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail [index@truman.edu](mailto:index@truman.edu), call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

\* The SAB concert article on page one of the Oct. 7 edition of the Index misidentified the date of the speaker. Grant Imahara will speak on Nov. 13.

CARTOON

By Sam Kyker



## Letters to the Editor

### Cigarette smoking should cease

Walking around campus, what do you see? Green grass, busy people, beautiful brick architecture and nasty smoke curling around a smoker's head. One of these things does not belong. Can you guess which one? Smoking!

It is hazardous to everyone's health and just plain smells revolting. Seventy percent of smokers want to stop smoking, according to the American Cancer Society. Why not become one of those lucky few who actually do put a stop to this horrible habit and stop smoking for good?

There are so many reasons to stop smoking. Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death. Someone who quits smoking now has a lesser risk of developing lung cancer or having a heart attack or stroke. There are even some benefits to your health within the first 20 minutes — Your heart rate and blood pressure decrease, according to iVillage Health. Smoking also increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's or depression. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have a stroke or get lung cancer or heart disease. Young children especially are susceptible to the dangers of secondhand smoke — they have a greater chance of developing an acute lower respiratory infection such as pneumonia, bronchitis or ear infections.

Contrary to popular belief, smoking doesn't help you lose weight. In a Finnish study, research showed that people who smoked at least ten cigarettes a day had larger waistlines in adulthood. Girls especially are more likely to become overweight as they age.

Cigarettes also make your clothes and your breath reek of smoke. It stains your teeth and

causes deep wrinkles that make you look way older than you actually are. A Johns Hopkins study found that smokers are four times as likely to report feeling unrested after a night's sleep.

Smokers, imagine if you stopped smoking. A 40-year-old who quits smoking and puts the savings into a 401(k) earning nine percent a year would have nearly \$250,000 by age 70, according to an article called "The High Cost of Smoking" on MSN Money. Not only would you save money on cigarettes, but you would also save money on trips to the dentist's office and dry cleaning. Money is lost on the resale value of cars and homes that smell like smoke, and you also will pay more on insurance.

So the next time you pick up a cigarette, stop and think. Does the pleasure of enjoying that one cigarette outweigh the damages to your health? This is why students should try to quit smoking. It is detrimental to not only the smoker's health, but everyone else's too.

Sydney Lawson  
freshman

### Tax increase will benefit us in long run

Many people running for office say we have too much government, and that taxes are too high. It is implied that if our taxes go down, we benefit. If they go up, we suffer. But when we pay our teachers a decent wage, when we improve our roads, when we provide our veterans with support for traumatic brain injury, when we support children who have been neglected and abused, we all benefit. These things cost money, and these are the kinds of things that get cut when we insist on keeping taxes low no matter what.

So what about the deficit? It is going to take reduced spending and increased revenue to deal with the financial mess we are in, and both will hurt. Reduced spending hurts the poor and the middle class more than the rich. Increased taxes hurt the rich more than the poor and the middle class. We need to do both. Is it any wonder that the rich are financing an effort to convince us that somehow all our problems will be solved if we reduce spending without increasing taxes?

Please think carefully when you cast your vote this November.

Peter Rolnick  
professor of physics

### Advertisement upsets Index reader

I was disturbed to see the advertising insert in the Oct. 7 edition of the Index. What at first looked like an ordinary marketing fold-in turned out to be an anti-abortion screed. I assume that the paper accepted an advertising fee from the pamphlet's publishers.

The pamphlet conflates abortion with social issues like racism and homelessness, repeats the well-debunked myth that ties abortion to cancer, includes misleading or fabricated assertions about the safety of birth control and offers a skewed perspective on psychology and women's choices.

The Index must be embarrassed to be distributing this kind of deceptive rhetoric alongside its journalistic efforts. The paper's commitment to fair and factual information should not be for sale.

Olivia Sandbothe  
senior

## INDEX

Serving the University community since 1909

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The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at [index@truman.edu](mailto:index@truman.edu) or on our website at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com). Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

### Editorial Policy

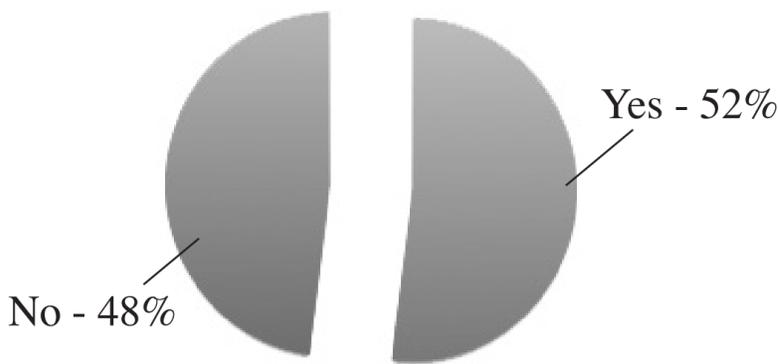
The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

### Advertising Policy

For up-to-date information on current rates or to inquire about the availability of classified ads in the Index, contact our advertising department at 785-4319. Our fax number is 785-7601, or you can e-mail us at [indexads@truman.edu](mailto:indexads@truman.edu).

## WEB POLL

Would universal healthcare be beneficial to society?



This week's question:

What does having a terrorism threat level do to the country?

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