

Celebrity	Shared Traits:	Soldier
Lives in limelight	Years of training in respective fields	Physical strength
Harshly judged	Use skills to benefit society	Honored by many
Music, dance and acting skills	Work-related travel required	Bravery and endurance

## Consumers deserve shot at caffeine



Bob Overmann

Caffeine is the most widely used drug in the world. We consume it by the can, cup, shot, tablet and however we can get our hands on it. It is found naturally in chocolate and coffee beans and is mixed with alcoholic beverages. It is estimated that 80 to 90 percent of North Americans habitually consume caffeine, according to [caffeinedependence.org](http://caffeinedependence.org). We use it to wake us up in the morning, as an afternoon pick-me-up and to help us focus.

There now is a new way to consume caffeine that is causing quite a stir — AeroShot, an inhalable caffeine shot. Under pressure by New York Sen. Schumer, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has announced plans to investigate whether this caffeine delivery system is safe enough for consumers, according to a Feb. 19 MSNBC article.

While this novelty, like any other drug, can pose health risks, it is not dangerous with responsible use. Regulations should be imposed, but we should allow adults to exercise responsibility rather than enacting an outright ban.

In the Midwest, it is only available online, but it is likely to be found in stores in our area soon because of its quick rise to fame, should it be declared safe. Hitting Northeast markets only a month ago, AeroShot already has found its way to the national spotlight. Invented by Harvard University professor David Edwards, this product delivers a puff of extremely fine powder that dissolves in one's mouth, according to [AeroShot.com](http://AeroShot.com). Each AeroShot contains 100 milligrams of caffeine and B vitamins, equivalent to about one six-ounce cup of coffee. Convenient, zero-calorie, fast-acting energy — ingenious product, right?

That depends on who you ask. Because it is being marketed as a "dietary supplement," AeroShot originally did not require FDA approval. Some citizens are concerned it has a high potential for abuse by teens and young adults because large, concentrated quantities of caffeine are able to be consumed quickly, according to MSNBC. Additionally, there is concern the product might be abused because consumers could mix it with alcohol to create an effect similar to Four Loko, which would mask the true effect of the consumed alcohol. Phusion Projects, the manufacturer of alcoholic beverage Four Loko, was forced to remove the caffeine, taurine and guarana energy supplements from their drinks by an FDA ruling during Nov. 2011, according to a November 19, 2010 ABC article. Senator Schumer also largely was responsible for the FDA's investigation of alcoholic energy drinks.

There are logical arguments in each camp. To begin, AeroShot displays a warning to not consume more than three a day. Additionally, someone would have to work to seriously harm himself or herself by caffeine, as opposed to an alcoholic energy drink. The lethal toxicity of caffeine for an average adult is estimated to be between 150 and 200 mg/kg, which translates to consuming about 80 to 100 cups of coffee in an extremely short time period, according to Psychology Today. With one AeroShot roughly equaling a six-ounce cup of coffee, one would have to consume 80 to 100 of these caffeine supplements in a short period of time. This would not be easily done, much less unintentionally.

While such enormous amounts of caffeine can create a lethal toxicity, in smaller quantities, the side effects are minimal. The FDA should recognize this and regulate it to a degree. This product is not overtly dangerous and adults should be able to make their own decisions about their usage of inhaled caffeine, just as they do about other potentially dangerous substances, such as alcohol and nicotine. Used in moderation, caffeine not only can be useful in everyday life, it also has health benefits.

Because of the products's newness, it is not yet available in Kirksville or the surrounding area. Nor has it faced any regulation issues yet in the United States. Should this product achieve success enough to be available in Kirksville, I'm sure Truman State students will provide a thriving market and will hopefully use it responsibly. Personally, I will continue to reach for a cold Coke for my caffeine fix.

Bob Overmann is a freshman English major from Cape Girardeau, Mo.

## Celebrities and armed forces are separate groups



Molly Skyles

When I was a freshman Index columnist and struggling to come up with new ideas, my editor told me to ask myself, "What made me mad this week?" Almost four years later, I still do that from time to time, and this week, military fanatics stepped into my crosshairs.

My initial upset with Army wives, Marine mothers and the American-loving, navy obsession started with the death of recording artist Whitney Houston. My Facebook news feed filled with posts like, "Whitney Houston died today, it's sad, sure. But the entire world doesn't need to stop spinning for her. ... Outstanding men fought and sweat and suffered and died, so that you all could live peacefully. She met her own fate curled up in a Beverly Hills hotel, nursing her selfish drug addictions, not protecting your freedom as these Marines did."

While I don't doubt the men and women of the armed forces are braver than Houston, comparing the two is like forcing a square peg into a

round hole — they don't fit. Indulging in celebrity news and gossip and garnering respect for members of the armed forces must be separate issues.

The root of this problem is comparing celebrities and soldiers in general, and here's the solution: Don't do it. Soldiers fight for our country and keep us protected. Celebrities make films, TV shows and music to keep us entertained. But on the most basic level, is one better than the other? Yes, maybe a Marine makes a more lasting impact on the world, but we can't spend all our time thinking about the uniformed men and women. And that's where celebrities come into fruition.

A teenage girl idolizes Nicki Minaj, but it does not make her unsupportive of the military, just like being proud of her brother overseas doesn't mean "Your Love" can't be her favorite song. Celebrities and soldiers are worthy of our attention, and there is room in our thoughts and Facebook news feeds for both.

Also, attempting to isolate members of society for mourning the loss of a famous singer or laughing at the next ridiculous thing Lindsay Lohan got caught doing is hypocritical.

There is no way even the most devout military supporter ignores every other issue going on in the country to only focus on the events and lives of our military overseas. Maybe it makes me un-American to say this, but no one can be that patriotic. Fly the stars and stripes in front of your house, plaster "support the troops" stickers on your cars and cry during

the national anthem, but you cannot tell me you don't chuckle when you see workout instructor Richard Simmons in a bedazzled blue unitard.

We are a military-obsessed culture, and maybe that isn't as great of a quality as we like to think. Regardless of whether I support what the troops are fighting for, of course I support the troops and their dedication toward something I never could do. However, focusing all your attention on the military must be exhausting.

Whitney Houston's death or even the embarrassing pictures of Taylor Swift are to the military-obsessed what first world problems — having to stay up late to read physics or running out of peanut butter when you're craving a PB&J — are to human rights advocates. In the scheme of things, they really aren't important to our individual lives, but they get us through the day. If you were to live every second only thinking and talking about real issues like the men and women dying for our country or children with no clean water in Africa, you would be really depressed.

War is sad and we should never forget the tragedies our soldiers face, but don't forget about what's around you. After all, it's fun to laugh at Snooki as she drunkenly stumbles through life.

Molly Skyles is a senior communication major from St. Louis

## What is your favorite Truman meme?

"I identified with a meme complaining about having 10 minutes to get from OP to Barnett [Hall]."

Anne Schneider junior



"I think the one that made me laugh most was the 'Inception' one about where the 'Harvard of the Midwest' is."

Kara Boschert sophomore



"I like the condescending Willy Wonka meme about snow days."

Peter Johnson senior



"I think some of favorites involve the socially awkward penguin."

Kayla Oliver junior



## AROUND THE QUAD

## Extremist groups demand yet infringe on religious freedoms



Garrett Kelsey

The United States was founded with the belief that everyone should be free, which of course, includes the freedom of religion.

President Barack Obama's administration made a move Feb. 10 to include birth control to a list of services insurance companies will be required to provide to public companies without copayments or deductibles. Many conservative, specifically Catholic, groups have taken issue with this addition. These groups claim including contraceptives as something insurance must provide, infringes on their religious freedom.

If anything, the groups pushing to remove this service are infringing on every-

one else's religious freedom. Freedom of religion also means freedom from religion. While everyone has the right to practice as they see fit, the religious views of one group should not affect the lives of people who do not share them.

No one is going to force these people to take birth control. The choice to use it is and always has been the individual's. The government is only making it more accessible to people who otherwise might not be able to afford birth control, one of the most effective means of contraception. Often sexually active, college students are a prime example of this — wouldn't we rather them take one of the most strongest forms of protection? Ridding these students of easy access to protection would increase their risk for pregnancy, which is both morally and financially wrong because college students are likely not mature enough to handle an unplanned pregnancy, much less financially responsible.

An argument against the Obama legislation is in regards to mixing religion and politics. "Well, if you apply that preventative medicine universally, what you end up with is you've prevented a generation. Preventing babies from being born is not medicine," Rep. Steve King from Iowa said on the House floor. This statement is egregiously false. Most

people want to have babies, just when they are prepared to, not before. With the uncertainty of our economic times, people need to be able to plan when they want a baby. With birth control controversy comes discussions of the potential for abortions.

Having an unplanned pregnancy can result in abortion, the child being put up for adoption and financial instability from the costs of raising a child, which might result in increased need of welfare and the possibility for a poor life for babies born into such unstable conditions. Birth control suddenly looks much cheaper when compared to these options.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, a member of the Susan B. Anthony List, which is a fanatical conservative group for women, recently spoke on Fox News saying, "As the money for family planning goes up, so do the number of abortions," she said. "We have not seen a reduction in abortions since the full funding of family planning. We have seen an escalation." Sorry to burst your bubble Dannenfelser, but abortion has decreased from about 28 per 1,000 women in 1990, to about 20 per 1,000 women in 2011, according to the United States Census Bureau.

Aside from the common religious arguments against Obama's legislation, those opposed to it take their arguments to the

extreme, bringing up nonsense points.

"In short, liberals want to create a world without God and sexual permissiveness is their battering ram. Promoting widespread contraception is essential to forging a pagan society based on consequence-free sex," Washington Times writer Jeffrey Kuhner said.

This is the most bigoted thing I have heard about the subject. Never mind the fact that paganism is a calm and peaceful lifestyle — a lifestyle that has existed since long before Christianity. But claiming that the use of birth control is pushing some sort of secret pagan agenda is laughable. It's not fair to disregard other people based on a religious conspiracy. Easier access to birth control is not going to convert anyone from Christianity.

These fanatical groups are infringing on the religious rights of everyone else in the public sector, making their own cries of religious discrimination ring out as both hollow, and hypocritical.

Garrett Kelsey is a freshman linguistics major from O'Fallon, Mo.