



Truman

Truman students make an online sitcom based on college experiences

BY EMILY BATTMER
Staff Reporter

Seven Truman State students are using their acting, filming and video editing abilities to create a show about their college experience.

In an effort to entertain themselves and other Truman students, the five residents of a house on Halliburton Street have been creating The Halliburton House, a Youtube sitcom, this semester with a handheld camcorder and a tripod.

The cast and crew of the Youtube shorts are made up of house residents, seniors Jordan Banner, Tony Wang, Josiah Belzer, David Estes and Phil Arnold, along with freshman Jesse Banner, and junior Luke Morris.

Jordan, who co-writes and produces the show, said residents of the house were looking for an activity they could do together, and everyone helped with the ideas for the videos.

Jordan's brother Jesse does most of the writing for the sitcom.

The show is fashioned like an episode of "Scrubs" or "Arrested Development," Jordan said, with his character narrating the story between scenes. Plot lines vary, but he said the episodes usually deal with familiar issues to college students.

"A lot of the theme is kind of related to what guys deal with a lot in college, and that is dating," Jordan said.

The pilot episode follows Jordan's character, whose girlfriend of three and a half years recently broke up with him, he said. His housemates help him cope with the breakup, and the following two episodes revolve around the preparations for and execution of a date night.

The Halliburton House's YouTube channel has been active for about three weeks, Jordan said, and their first video has received about 900 views, with all their videos being viewed a total of about 1,800 times.

Many of Banner's friends have asked if they can make an appearance on the show.

"They can see the quirkiness and relate to that," he said. "That's really reassuring, that we are doing something and they can tell we are having fun with it."

Arnold, another Halliburton House resident, said originality is what makes the show interesting. The show has been constructed around the novelties they have at the house, like their homemade indoor swing set, he said. Many episodes involve the "Date Book," another unusual keepsake the residents own.

"We take the interesting or quirky things about us and blow them out of proportion to make them better suited for the show," he said.

He said the show reflects cast members' personalities and the personalities of Truman students. He said he thinks people attend Truman not just to study and have fun, but because the people are entertaining. The Halliburton House is a show about those people, he said.

"It shows we make our own fun," he said. "We make the little things more entertaining. In a town the size of Kirksville, with the workload you have at Truman, that's an ability you need to have or you'll go crazy."

Jesse said they'll change the characters' backstories to make them funnier, but other than that, the characters are based mostly on their real-life personalities. He said their sense of humor is sarcastic and dry, and they often employ subplots to make the show more interesting.

"The characters kind of develop themselves because they're based on us," he said. "We just put each other in different situations, so it's pretty easy to write."

Jesse said he always has liked creative writing and the freedom it offers, and he hopes to keep the show going during the summer and into the fall semester. He said he'd like to see more people interested in participating in the show, but his main goal is to just have fun with it.

"I enjoy doing it right now and people seem to enjoy watching, so hopefully we keep that up," he said.

Jordan said the show is something they're doing for fun, but it is also a demanding time commitment. He said it generally takes one day during a weekend to film and several weeknights to edit using Final Cut Pro, a video editing software.

"School comes first because we are at Truman," he said. "And other organizational obligations come second, but the sitcom usually comes right after that."

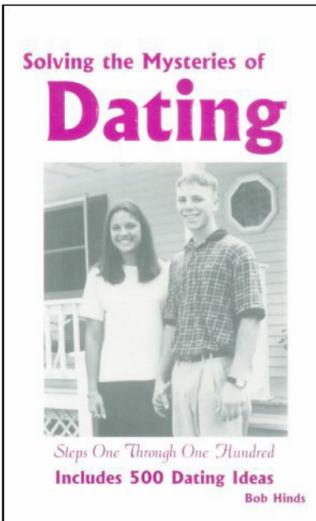
They began filming during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend during 2011 and he said he spent the following weeks editing and posting each 10-minute episode on YouTube. They are in the process of writing and filming their fourth episode, which will be released at 10 p.m. Feb. 29. In addition to their 10-minute episodes, the house sometimes posts what they call a "Halli Short" — a two-minute video meant to appease their fans.

Anyone can view the episodes on the show's youtube channel, HalliHouse.



Submitted photo
From left to right, seniors David Estes, Phillip Arnold and Jordan Banner and junior Luke Morris read from the "Date Book" during the filming of the pilot episode of their YouTube sitcom, "The Halliburton House." Estes, Arnold, Banner and Morris, along with three other friends, are responsible for the show's writing, acting, filming and editing.

The book and excerpts



Submitted photo
The cover of "Solving the Mysteries of Dating, Steps One Through One Hundred," the made-up dating guide used by the characters from "The Halliburton House". Around the cover are quotes from the book the characters use in the show.

☞ [Dating] is like registered livestock producers picking herd sires. They look at many herds in several states and at many potential herd sires and then they pick the best from their list of top prospects. ☞

☞ Just think of the horse and buggy days. Dating was just as exciting then as it is now. There were no movies, TV, videos, automobiles, or discos, but kids created their own fun. That too, must be done in this year as well. ☞

☞ You should not go through high school and especially college without two or three courtships. ☞