

Media Hypocrisy Reaches new Heights



Erik La Londe/ Index

Media hypocrisy causes frustration, confusion



Ken Dusold

"I've stopped giving to [Susan G.] Komen because it no longer represents who I thought Komen was," said Eve Ellis, a former fundraiser and board member for Komen's New York City affiliate, who recently was interviewed during a segment on NBC Nightly News.

In this segment, it was revealed that donations to the organization made famous by its raising awareness of breast cancer's deadly toll and the pink ribbon have taken a serious hit since the beginning of 2012. When I heard this woman's comment, I screamed an expletive at the television and seethed with anger for several minutes before reclaiming my composure. The cause of my frustration: hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy isn't a new concept. Yet, there is something menacing about the level of hypocrisy we've witnessed with more frequency during the past few years. The foremost variable underlying the problem seems to be the media, which have helped foster what one can find much more often in modern everyday life.

Take the Susan G. Komen for the Cure case: Ellis and millions of people like her undoubtedly have stopped donating to Komen following the organization's decision to stop giving money to Planned Parenthood during January. Although Komen quickly changed its decision and continues to donate to Planned Parent-

hood, those who have stopped donating apparently haven't forgiven the foundation. Their reasoning is convoluted. Komen was accused of turning its back on women's health. To punish Komen, millions of people have decided to do the same by threatening the foundation's ability to continue fighting breast cancer.

The Oxford Dictionary defines "hypocrisy" as: "the practice of claiming to have higher standards or more noble beliefs than is the case." I'm confident people consider themselves principled when they stand up for Planned Parenthood by refusing to give a dime to Komen or even repost the "Kony 2012" video. By doing so, they reveal themselves to be nothing more than charlatans — even if they harbor good intentions.

To be clear, spreading word about "Kony 2012" has raised awareness — like Komen — of a previously little discussed or relatively unknown topic. Of course, Joseph Kony isn't closer to being brought to justice today than he was March 4 (the day before the video was released). Yes, what is happening to children in Uganda is horrible. But how quickly will the public's attention switch to some other, more pressing humanitarian crisis as it has done so often to the genocide and malnourishment witnessed in Darfur?

To be fair, we are all human. Sometimes our biases get the better of us. Thus, when Democrats accuse Republican-affiliated SuperPacs of helping GOP candidates buy election victories during the presidential race, someone quickly can point to the more than \$700 million spent by President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign.

Hypocrisy even rears itself in millions of American kitchens whenever a father tells his teenage daughter to beware of boys. Unless dad spent his more formative years locked in his bedroom, he likely was one of those boys with whom he hopes his daughter doesn't spend

time. But the increasing level of hypocrisy pervading society today — which runs parallel to the expansion of media — is worrisome.

Perhaps it's partially hypocritical of me to espouse my views about this topic in a newspaper, so I'm claiming my humanity as reason for temporarily practicing what I'm criticizing. The media is responsible for bringing to the public's attention that which is considered most newsworthy or essential to public knowledge. Of course, media organizations are businesses with profit-seeking investors. The best way to compete on television is by airing the sensational or shocking.

We might claim to be disgusted by what we see on the tube, but the ratings often show we watch anyway. During the days following Komen's original announcement regarding its decision to cease providing funding to Planned Parenthood, news networks and websites spent many hours and pages discussing the firestorm resulting from it. This is interesting, considering the "firestorm" was taking place predominantly on news networks and their online counterparts. People reacted to the news' focus on the subject by becoming angry at either Komen or its detractors. And yet I wonder how many people, prior to its announcement, knew Komen was giving money to Planned Parenthood. Probably few ... or at least it likely didn't matter to most. But the media spoke, and we listened.

The most logical solution to the problem would require news organizations to put journalistic ethics ahead of money-making. Unfortunately, I don't think this will ever happen. After all, I might be a hypocrite, but I'm not without reason.

Ken Dusold is a senior political science major from St. Louis

Cultural events enrich college experience



Bob Overmann

The creases of my hands fill with sweat and my molars nervously attack my gum. The nine of us stand in silence, attempting to mentally process the simulated suicide of the soldier struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder before moving on to what awaits us in the next room. Would we bear witness to simulated domestic violence? Would we be exposed to the horrors of religious persecution?

Those who attended the Tunnel of Oppression on Centennial Hall's fifth floor were forced to step into the shoes, living rooms and uniforms of those experiencing basic violations of their human rights and living through various daily hells.

The Tunnel of Oppression and other valuable student-led cultural and social programs should be taken advantage of whenever possible because these experiences offer depth and contemporary context to classroom learning.

As a resident of southeast Missouri, culturally enriching experiences tend to be few and far between for me. For many at Truman State, that might be one of the most beneficial aspects of college. I'm always surprised to see so few students interested in these cultural events. Admittedly, during high school, I wasn't particularly involved either, but after entering college, I made a personal decision to make more of what my school had to offer. Since I made that decision, I think I've become more culturally rounded. The Tunnel of Oppression is a perfect example of what Truman offers for cultural enrichment and education about international issues.

I know the difficulty of tearing oneself away from a computer or Xbox for a few hours, but it's worth it. The Tunnel of Oppression helps students understand issues they haven't encountered, or have no basis of comparison. The fact that we haven't been exposed to these other social issues doesn't affect their importance. Issues such as human trafficking, the coerced military service of children and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are serious human rights violations. Regardless of future plans, there are upsides to being informed about world issues.

Additionally, more culturally educated individuals tend to be more compassionate and thoughtful of others. For instance, one room of the exhibit was devoted to making attendees aware of the hurtfulness and derogatory implications of ignorantly using the word "retarded," dubbed the "r-word" by the exhibit. This is a small step we can take to respect the rights and feelings of others.

Experiencing some of these cultural exhibits might give us insight into things in our life we have difficulty understanding. For instance, many might know someone with PTSD, and have gained a better emotional understanding of the disease's horrors. Others might know someone who has fallen victim to a child predator or experienced domestic violence. The Tunnel of Oppression, along with other social education programs made available to students, help us empathize with people in difficult situations.

I appreciate the Residence Hall Association's and Student Activities Board's work to provide these culturally enriching experiences to Truman students. Students, I promise that if you choose to take advantage of these opportunities, you'll come away with a better understanding of the world in which we live. If you are particularly interested in visiting the Tunnel, it is offered annually. During the meantime, turn off the TV and find an event that piques your cultural interests.

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

What do you think about conceal and carry gun laws in Missouri?

"Anyone should have the right. It's our freedom as Americans."

Anne Kramer
senior



"It's good for protection, and it's a freedom. But I respect the other side, and limits are important."

Sarah Reddekopp
junior



"I think it's OK, but I'm not knowledgeable on the specifics of the law. It is a right, though."

Zach Webber
senior



"If you pass a background check, you should be allowed to conceal and carry a gun."

Kim Baker
senior



AROUND THE QUAD

Presidential candidates need campaign length limits



Garrett Kelsey

Imagine you're driving home from work, and you turn on the radio to hear an attack ad by the most recent presidential candidate.

At this time of year, this isn't uncommon. If you're like me, you become irritated and change the station. It seems the presidential campaign for new candidates begins the moment the newest president is sworn in.

Every four years since the induction of the Constitution during 1792, we have had elections for the president. More often it seems that presidents who are running for

re-election drop everything to do so. This means we have half a leader of our country every time an election rolls around — The same can also be seen throughout the Senate and House of Representatives.

When presidential elections come around, I get anxious remembering that every time I watch TV or turn on the radio, I'm going to have to hear candidate A tell me why he/she is superior to candidate B. Wouldn't it be nice if these elections were less frequent, or perhaps different?

Imagine for example, if the term for each presidency was eight years and, when elected, you serve one term and cannot run for re-election. This might seem like a long time to have one president, but statistically speaking, 21 presidents who ran for re-election won their second term, according to 270towin.com. Is it necessary to waste so much time and money on this in such a short span of time?

There are, of course, other ways this could go. What if we simply didn't allow presidents to be re-elected? While it might seem like a short amount of time to hold office, it would mean that while the other candidates squabble to take the current

one's place, he or she could be working instead of dealing with petty political disputes. Our country needs the attention of its leader, especially right now.

Another option to consider is to limit the amount of time candidates spend campaigning. If we were to limit it, we can almost guarantee that more can be done during the meantime. At the least, we can be sure our leaders have their minds solely focused on doing the job we elected them to do in the first place.

A good example of this can be seen in France. In France, official election campaigns start only two weeks before Election Day. There also are strict regulations for advertisements as well. The law states paid commercial advertisements, affixing posters or giving badges to anyone is illegal until three months before the election date.

While it's not perfect system, the election laws in France are effective. Maybe we should take some tips from our oldest ally. If I only had to deal with irritating negative advertisements and commercials for three months every four years, I don't think I would mind so much.

I'm not saying any of these suggestions would be superior to the current system, but this shows that other possibilities are out there that should be acknowledged.

Increasing the restrictions placed on electoral candidates seems to be a good idea. Instead of whoever has the most money or party support, we can limit the campaigns to the individual merit of the candidate, which could benefit the country as a whole.

As technology grows more and more, I think we will see even longer campaigns than we see now throughout the future. At this rate, it seems we'll hit a campaign singularity, where the campaign for the next presidential candidate begins during the campaign for the current candidates. For the wellbeing of our country, something — whether a change in term length of a limit to campaigning — needs to be done.

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