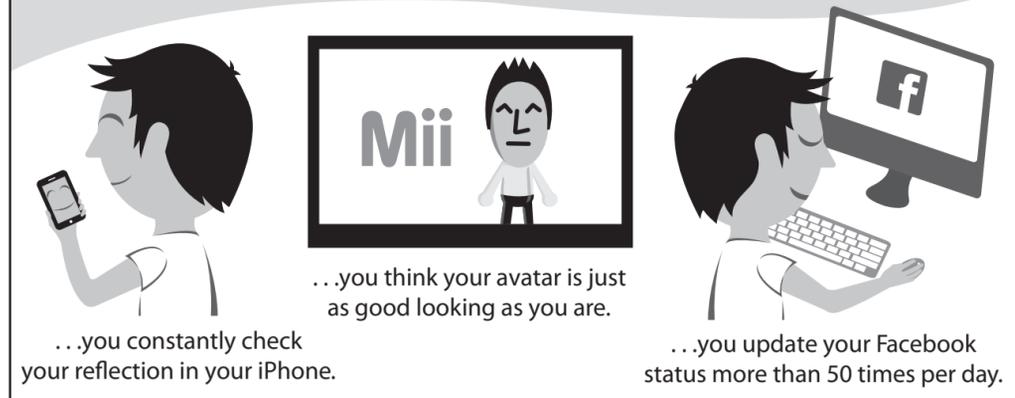


You know you're a narcissist if. . .



Student Senate's plans prove unnecessary



Connor Stangler

There are times when the ambitions of Student Senate outrun its better judgement. And recent external affairs plans have done just that. It seeks to cure the perceived lack of democracy with an excess of it.

This plan would place a non-voting Truman State student representative on the Kirksville City Council. Student Senate has done commendable work to improve this school: It has proposed a resolution, which could give same-sex partners the same health care benefits as current faculty couples enjoy, and it has called for the overdue implementation of wet tailgates. This proposition, however, leaves me wondering whether Student Senate now is searching for problems to fix in places that clearly are unbroken. I have three questions for our Truman assembly.

First, do we need it? There isn't an enormous democratic deficit we must erase. So does the Kirksville City Council not faithfully represent our interests? I don't think the governing body suddenly has grown careless of the needs and opinions of the Truman student body, a large source of business revenue and a crucial part of the city's identity. Student Senate isn't protesting "Taxation without Representation," it's protesting "Representation without Representation." They would rather represent themselves than leave it to those who already do.

Maybe I'm overreacting. Maybe this idea actually is admirable. Placing a student on the City Council could democratize the decision-making process and, at the very least, diversify the Council's discussions. A spot at the table could close the gap between Kirksville's ruling oligarchy and those of us who obey its dictates. The public demands a voice, and our republic so far has failed to allow us one.

The problem is we do have a voice. Just like Student Senate, the City Council opens the gallery to the public. Any concerned citizen, curious taxpayer or interested students can attend the meetings, speak their mind and participate in the democratic process. What benefit would our non-voting privileged position on the Council afford us that a seat with the general public could not? Even if the primary responsibility of the Truman representative was to deliver and gather reports, I have no doubt the Council would be happy to solicit occasional briefings from students, and I have even less doubt that Student Senate would be willing to send a member to the Council meetings to collect intelligence.

Second, do we deserve it? I already admitted Truman brings a lot to the city: revenue, prestige and its own personal "Harvard." But it seems like we've let our municipal influence go straight to our heads. Although we might think otherwise, "Truman" is not synonymous with "Kirksville." There is a distinct community with distinct interests and concerns outside of the University. In spite of our tendency to appear larger than the city itself, the Council is neither beholden to our interests nor does it have an obligation to give us special rights. A.T. Still University's interests are not any less deserving of representation than ours, but they are not forcing their way onto City Council. People from any other influential faction in Kirksville are no less significant, yet will minority associations lose the right to representation while we gain it? To assert so would obliterate any collective Truman humility and only aggravate the relationship between the students and the city's permanent residents.

Finally, and no less important, do we want it? I have attended one City Council meeting during my time at Truman. The members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of paving gravel roads and what to do about the current sewer problems. I do not mean to lessen their significance because these issues are immensely important to Kirksville's residents, and these are the kinds of problems the Council deals with monthly. Would a Truman student provide expertise or sage advice? Perhaps some would, but not often enough to warrant our presence on the Council. They quickly would realize their irrelevance.

Truman students still can be active and involved members of this community, but they don't need a Senate resolution telling them so. There is no democratic deficit and thus no reason to resolve a phantom one.

Connor Stangler is a junior English and history major from Columbia, Mo.

Technology encourages narcissistic behavior



Molly Skyles

I had a grilled cheese sandwich for lunch yesterday. I can't stop watching "30 Rock" reruns. I wish it wasn't getting cold out — I'm not ready for the Kirksville winter.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, because I can.

Narcissism has become a way of life. It now is socially acceptable to spew out every thought that crosses your mind. Most of the time, these humdrum ideas are not worthy of public display, but you probably are unaware because updating your Facebook status about your favorite type of cheese is a full-time job.

Doctors at psychologytoday.com call narcissism an epidemic resulting from Botox, plastic surgery and the ability to change or improve your outward appearance at the drop of a hat. While I don't have a Ph.D. under my belt, I beg to differ.

Narcissism might not always have been this extreme, but people have been changing their appearance since the dawn of time — foot binding in ancient China, stretching the neck with rings in parts of Africa and Asia, early tattooing dating back to the fourth or fifth millennium BC and even Adam

and Eve, who used leaves to cover their natural nudity. The real cause of this "narcissism epidemic?"

Technology. I'm not innocent here. I check my Facebook several times a day and only let the most flattering pictures stay on my profile.

When you get past my narcissistic hypocrisy, think about it. You talk on an iPhone and listen to music on an iPod while surfing the web on an iMac. Notice any similarities here?

The iMac was the first Apple product to use the signature "i" in its name. Apple executive Ken Segall first named the product in 1998, according to a 2009 interview on cultofmac.com. Segall's rationale for the "i" was so people would know the Mac was to be used for the Internet. However, when the brand grew, it became more of a means of identification and ownership. Essentially, an iPod or iPhone should be considered an extension of yourself, a part of you.

Apple isn't the only company with a narcissistic marketing campaign. Nintendo's Wii video game system allows players to create a Mii (pronounced "me") avatar, which can be made to look exactly like you. You then use your Mii to play the Wii games.

Yes, this is all completely rhetorical, but a name can say a lot. Attaching these first person pronouns to such arbitrary items gives them a higher level of importance and encourages the narcissism to grow. While it might be just an avatar that plays tennis and hula hoops, it's called Mii. It's personalized but not human, so it can be made perfect. This avatar is a representation of you, created by you,

meaning it can look as thin, tall or physically fit as you choose.

Facebook is no different. What was once a tool to connect with old friends now is merely a means of displaying how great you are. With the ability to update your status from anywhere, Facebook fuels this narcissism by telling people it's OK to enlighten the world about exactly "What's on your mind."

When I start reading a Facebook status from someone I haven't seen since high school that details the specific shade of gray paint in the dentist's waiting room and that she hopes she has no cavities, something's wrong, and maybe with me. No, I don't care about your dental hygiene, but what compels you to post it for the world to see? And even worse, what compels me to read it?

Maybe it's a way to force people to acknowledge you or just an attempt to relate to your peers on the most mundane level. Or, maybe the sickening interest in reading and posting statuses merely is due to boredom. Regardless, narcissistic absurdity is socially acceptable.

On a larger scale, narcissistic tendencies could detract from truly important things, but to be honest, it's mainly just annoying. No one cares what I did last weekend, but if you dare ask, I'll tell you the whole story.

Molly Skyles is a senior communication major from St. Louis

AROUND THE QUAD

Should the University accommodate for same sex relationships?



"Yeah, there should be more living options available."

Kim Miller senior



"Yeah, all students should be treated equal."

Charley Sword junior



"Yes, there is no reason not to."

Stephen Reed sophomore



"They do for married couples, but I understand that multiple facets need to be considered."

Devin Heier junior

PETA's animal rights promotions misguides and offends



Connor Riley

"Every living being has the right to lead a productive and happy life free from oppression, injustice and the threat of tyranny," said Shamu, the killer whale who currently is imprisoned at the amusement park SeaWorld and being forced to perform in shows for tourists several times a week. At least that's what the nuts at the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals dream would happen.

PETA has filed a lawsuit in federal

court against SeaWorld for "enslaving" the five killer whales that perform in the three parks SeaWorld operates in San Diego, San Antonio and Orlando, Fla., respectively, according to an Oct. 26 article by CBS News. PETA is basing its lawsuit on the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.

Excuse me for attempting to recall the world to sanity, but this quite possibly is the dumbest of many dumb publicity stunts PETA has attempted since its inception in 1980. Just to clarify for everyone: Animals are not people. I know your dog loves you and your cat can tell what you're thinking, but I don't think Congress had Ole Yeller in mind when it put an end to one of the worst crimes in the history of mankind.

Don't get me wrong, I think animals should be treated with respect and people guilty of animal cruelty are some of the lowest life forms on Earth, but PETA completely has missed the mark on this one. They've neglected, quite conveniently, to mention the incredible amount of good that organizations like SeaWorld do, such as protecting endangered species

or rehabilitating animals that have been wounded by careless human activity. Aquariums and zoos also allow us to gain an appreciation of nature we never could attain from watching Shark Week on Discovery Channel.

More importantly, PETA is one of the most underhanded and sophomoric organizations that has blessed us with its presence. It's pretty difficult to offend me, but some of PETA's ad campaigns bother me to no end. This is particularly true of their latest ad, which consisted of a shark swimming through the ocean with a bloody human leg hanging from its mouth. The caption read "Payback is hell, go vegan" and was released only days after a Florida man was nearly killed by a shark while spear fishing.

To explain, PETA spokeswoman Ashley Byrne told the Huffington Post that "unlike these carnivorous animals, we have the choice to be kind every time we sit down to a meal and can choose a healthy vegan diet," implying humans are acting immorally when we consume meat and meat is unhealthy.

Personally, I find veganism to be one

of the most opulent practices on Earth, and its practitioners the most self-righteous. It is in many ways a first-world luxury because only in a place like America do we have the freedom to choose from such an incredible amount of ingredients, while people in less developed countries depend on meat as a resource for survival, but I guess the geniuses at PETA never thought of that because they were too busy trying to create the first international animal congress or whatever.

The simple fact is, PETA and similar groups are misguided and really should concentrate their efforts on pursuing more rational ways to accomplish their goals, because I want to follow an organization that uses Pamela Anderson as a spokesperson about as much as I want to eat a bean curd patty.

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