

## Has Christmas made us forget Thanksgiving?

2010 holiday retail sales reached almost **\$600 Billion**

On **Nov. 11** **197** newspaper articles covered the raising of the **Rockefeller Christmas tree** **43** days before Christmas

ABC Family's **"25 Days of Christmas"** is scheduled to begin **Nov. 20** **35** Days before Christmas

## Penn State issue reminds us to be courageous



Zach Vicars

We are creating a culture of cowards.

In America today, we have a desperate lack of honest, decent people who have the courage to do what's right — no matter the consequences. Tragically, the heart of the problem lies with men — passive, cowardly men.

Take, for example, the Penn State scandal. In this disgusting story of real-life tragedy and abuse, cowardice abounds. At the center there's Jerry Sandusky, former defensive coordinator and founder of a center for troubled young men. He is accused of sexually abusing eight boys throughout 15 years. If these allegations are true, then there really are no words to describe how despicable his actions were. All we can hope is he is locked away for a long time, he never has the chance to hurt a little boy again, and he somehow finds forgiveness for the sins he's committed.

Then there's wide-receivers coach Mike McQueary, a salt-of-the-earth local boy whose life has been forever altered by one disturbing event. By March 2002, McQueary had secured a job as a graduate assistant with recruitment responsibilities. A former Penn State quarterback known for his quiet leadership and shocking red hair, he had dreams of one day rising to the position of head coach, according to a Nov. 9 New York Times article.

Then, the unthinkable happened. McQueary walked into the locker room late one evening to find Sandusky in the showers, raping a young boy. All his training as a leader, all his hard work as a quarterback never could have prepared him for the decision he would have to make. Be a man of courage and stop the violence, or run and hide?

Unfortunately, McQueary chose the latter.

He ran to a telephone and called his father — who told him to run home. McQueary later reported what he saw to his superior, the legendary Joe Paterno, who then reported it to university officials, including University President Graham Spanier. The Penn State employees are more examples of men who lacked the courage to do what was right. No one reported it to the police. Members of the coaching staff continued to socialize with Sandusky — McQueary even played in a golf tournament and coached a football team with him for a fundraiser. Sandusky wasn't charged until one of his alleged victims had the courage to speak up — eight years later. In response to their inaction, Paterno and Spanier both have been fired.

The truth is these men probably didn't want to take responsibility. They thought maintaining a university's reputation or progressing in a career path was responsibility enough. Protecting the weak and helpless — no matter the cost — was not part of their job description.

My father grew up in an America where you could depend on your neighbor to do the right thing. I can tell you for sure if he had witnessed the crime, Sandusky would not have been left in the shower to hurt an innocent boy. He would have been lucky to spend the night in the hospital. Not because my father is a violent man, but because he has the courage to do what's right, no matter what.

I hope I am willing to take responsibility like that. I hope all of us can learn a valuable lesson from the disgrace McQueary, Paterno and Spanier have suffered at the hands of the media and school sanctions.

As college students, we all are adults. We might not always realize it, but injustice is all around us, and we must make the moral choice whether to do something about it. We all probably know people who regularly cheat on exams, betraying the trust of honest professors. Some of you might know guys who beat their girlfriends or who have forced themselves on a woman. It might not be easy for you to do the right thing, but that shouldn't matter. Take responsibility. Choose courage, not cowardice. Stop injustice. Stop it now.

Zach Vicars is a senior philosophy/religion and linguistics major from St. Charles, Mo.

## Attention: Thanksgiving is next week



Ken Dusold

Walking across The Quad last weekend, I felt an almost queasy feeling. It wasn't anything I had eaten, nor was it the realization of just how much work I have due for classes this week. It was the sound of Christmas music ringing from the Pickler Memorial Library bell tower.

This feeling of disgust did not come from a dislike for Christmas, mind you. Indeed, I love Christmas and all the joyful festivities that go with it ... so long as they're in the later part of December. The sick feeling I felt last weekend was from the fact that it's only the middle of November. It left me wondering: what happened to Thanksgiving?

For clarification's sake, some might be glad to know that Thanksgiving is still an official holiday. On Dec. 26, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law a bill that established Thanksgiving to be recognized annually the fourth Thursday in November. So next week is legally Thanksgiving, despite what the world would have us thinking with the arrival of the Christmas season before Halloween pumpkins have rotted. As a society, we allow ourselves to get caught up in the rush to reach Christmas, and I don't understand

why.

I understand the economics behind the Christmas holiday. Market experts use Black Friday and the three or four weeks of shopping following it to help measure the economy. That's fine, but what about the Thanksgiving industry?

American farmers reaped the benefits of an estimated \$4.1 billion in 2010 turkey sales, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In fact, Missouri is the fourth largest turkey producing state in the U.S. Why not measure the economy in pounds of bird consumed during the last week of November?

During a recession, families are more likely to opt out of the more expensive 26 pound monster that could have taken on Godzilla and won. Instead, they probably will go with a smaller, cheaper turkey.

Of course, airline companies see a big business boom as well during the Thanksgiving weekend. We've measured the economy the last several years by how many travelers there have been before and after that Thursday food-fest. Last year saw an 11.4 percent increase in the number of people traveling from the previous year, according to Forbes.com. If this year boasts another increase, I bet we'll see the media talking about how it's a positive sign for our economic outlook. With an election year approaching, you know either the president or the GOP will take advantage of the travel figures too.

This isn't to say Thanksgiving rivals Christmas in profits made. With almost \$600 billion in holiday retail sales in 2010, Santa Claus still reigns as king of consumerism. But Thanksgiving isn't just ignored on Wall Street nowadays. It's being ignored in our homes.

The cable channel ABC Family has been promoting its "25 Days of Christmas," scheduled to begin Nov. 20, since they stopped showing "Hocus Pocus." I'll have to ask someone in the University's math department to explain to me how you can stretch a 25-day Christmas-movie marathon to fit a 35-day period, because I'm flabbergasted!

A quick Google search shows 197 newspaper articles covering the raising of the Rockefeller Christmas tree the morning of Nov. 11. If you aren't one for reading the Wall Street Journal, then you could have witnessed the raising live on four cable news channels. That was 43 days before Christmas, by the way.

Many radio stations are already playing Christmas music. Some started playing "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" before the leaves on the trees had changed colors. This is insane.

With this list of Christmas-related developments, you can only imagine how taken aback I was last week when I learned Nordstrom, Inc. announced it would not be decorating its department stores for Christmas or offering Christmas sales until Nov. 25 (Black Friday). Nordstrom's reason for this decision is simple: "Well, we just like the idea of celebrating one holiday at a time," according to a sign posted on its store doors.

I think I know where I'll shop this holiday season — of course, not until after Thanksgiving.

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

## What is your favorite Thanksgiving tradition?

"Being with family and seeing my grandparents."

Chris Melvin  
freshman

"Watching football after lunch with my family."

Sarah Burton  
freshman

"Tofurkey. Everyone thinks it's gross but me."

Rebecca Harbison  
freshman

"The giant pumpkin pie my grandma makes."

Christian Huff  
freshman



## AROUND THE QUAD

## Creative advertising strategies better teach boring facts



Lauren Kellett

Attention Truman State students! This is a warning against Missouri's newest invasive species threat — zombies.

Deer hunting season opened Nov. 12. Those eager to participate in the American pastime need to be educated about this new hazard before they head out with loaded guns, but the standard safety guidelines can be boring so creative tactics have been employed. Listen up.

Hunters and campers on conservation

areas always must be aware of the chance of a zombie invasion and have the proper education for what to do should the situation present itself.

The first step is knowing how to identify a zombie. These undead beings will have dull grayish skin, might have open wounds and missing limbs but no bleeding and generally do not respond to verbal stimuli, according to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Oh, and they'll also be trying to eat your brains.

The second step is realizing what to NOT do. Much like the feral hog problem in Missouri, the MDC discourages organized hunting of the living dead, as this can encourage the release of zombie swarms and can disrupt some of the 500,000 living Missourians who enjoy hunting living wildlife. If you encounter a large pack of zombies, run away as fast as you can rather than attempt to fight them. You might run faster, but zombies are relentless pursuers. Get to a car and a safe place.

Now, before you hole up with your friends and family in a bomb shelter for

the next few months, I have a confession to make — zombies are not really invading Missouri. In honor of the beginning of hunting season, the Missouri Department of Conservation put together this clever "Flesh Afield" post to teach about hunting safety in a satirical, humorous way.

The Flesh Afield article gives tips about zombie attacks that relate back to normal hunting regulations. Leave a map with a friend so they know exactly where you are hunting, in case a zombie snatches you. Free-standing tree stands can be toppled by something strong, such as a pack of the undead starving for flesh. "Falling from a tree stand can injure you or make you dead. Falling from a tree stand into the gaping maw of a zombie can make you undead," the MDC oh-so-wisely states.

This is an incredibly clever way to teach boring but important lessons before going into the wild with a gun. Most people these days — especially young college students — seem to think they are invincible. We don't worry too much about the consequences of a good time. It's just part of growing up. But luckily, there are

smart people like the Missouri Conservationists who know how to play on what's popular to get a point across.

Zombies are popular. The blood, the gore, the irony — they are all the rage in our culture, with shows like "The Walking Dead," endless gory zombie apocalypse movies, and Truman's favorite faux-war game, Humans vs. Zombies. What better way to catch the attention of a pop-culture crazed society than with a warning of an undead uprising? It's the perfect plot.

This use of satire to convey a message is a practice I think should be used more frequently. Our generation loves irony, and using this form of persuasion to make a statement is effective in this era. So with that being said, enjoy the opening season, and check out the rules on MDC before you go to prevent an untimely death by means of those already dead.

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