

# Graffiti adds to petroglyphs

BY EMILY BATTMER  
Staff Reporter

Carvings like "Ronnie was here" and "2008" are scattered among irreplaceable, 1500 to 2000-year-old animal depictions at the petroglyphs at Thousand Hills State Park.

For decades, park employees and other community members have been working to maintain the petroglyphs, which serve as a rare representation of local Native American culture. Vandalism is threatening those preservation efforts, as well as the cultural and historical value of the petroglyphs.

Native Americans of the Woodland Tradition — nomadic hunter-gatherers who traded pottery and jewelry — carved the petroglyphs into exposed sandstone rock, Interpretive Resource Technician Emily Burke said. They had no written language, so information about their culture had to be passed along orally, which makes the petroglyphs more valuable.

That value doesn't necessarily mean much to vandals, whose work can be seen alongside the ancient carvings.

"There are quite a few 'modern petroglyphs' where people have carved names and little messages around the petroglyphs, sometimes literally on top of them," said Amber Johnson, anthropology professor and department chair.

Graffiti has scarred the petroglyphs site for as long as it has been acknowledged as an official historic landmark. Before its official discovery during 1956 and placement into the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, some people would go as far as to build campfires on the sandstone, Burke said.

The vandalism tapered off after the petroglyph hut was erected during 1990, but a ladder used to clean the petroglyphs still provided easy access to the glyphs for vandals, Burke said. At one point, the destruction was so bad the hut had to be locked up completely.



Vandalism is scattered among ancient depictions in the petroglyphs at Thousand Hills State Park. Vandalism adds archeological update to the site.

The situation has improved recently, but the damage already has been done.

"[A] Steel knife blade does a number on sandstone," Burke said. "This is on the National Register of Historic Places — you can get in a lot of trouble for defacing it."

While vandalism of the glyphs does permanent damage and is disrespectful to the culture, Johnson said in some ways, there is some anthropologic value to the modern carvings.

"It's a shame to have a handful of in-

dividuals deface images that the park and other people are trying to preserve," Johnson said. "I hate to see something that has lasted so long be marred by modern graffiti, but the graffiti is also leaving an archaeological record."

The petroglyphs already have been documented, Johnson said, and the vandalism isn't destroying information content before it can be learned and recorded. It's more of a cultural preservation and heritage issue than a scientific one, she said.

"I am opposed to vandalizing even though I understand people are people," she said. "It's not surprising, but disappointing."

While Chief of Police Jim Hughes does not deal with the defacing of the petroglyphs specifically, he has seen firsthand the effect vandalism can have on a community and said it is a crime the Kirksville Police Department takes seriously.

Vandalism can include everything from graffiti to keying cars to slashing tires, and some acts can cost thousands of dollars to repair. The police department usually deals with a couple of cases a week, Hughes said. Even small acts of vandalism can add up and degrade a community, but vandalism of the petroglyphs does more than that.

"When [vandalism] involves a historical landmark, you rob future generations of the ability to enjoy and learn from that landmark," Hughes said. "It's not a victimless crime. Everyone in the community has to suffer from what a vandal does."

Burke said the vandalism is especially disrespectful to descendants of the petroglyphs' creators. The petroglyphs most likely had ceremonial value, she said. Their creators believed everything, including rocks, trees and animals, had a spirit.

"A lot of people just don't understand the significance," she said. "These have spiritual value for people who are still living. It's similar to breaking into a church or cemetery and vandalizing that."

## Women study in male dominated subject areas

BY ALEX CARLSON  
Staff Reporter

Graduate student Halle Peterman and senior Rachel Walker faced obstacles throughout their Truman State experiences, and not just homework, exams and keeping their GPA on track.

Peterman and Walker have followed their aspirations in the mathematics and computer science fields respectively, two majors that predominantly have been filled with male students. Despite gender barriers, Peterman and Walker have continued to rise against the stereotypes of female college students in the male-dominated math and science majors.

Peterman's interest in mathematics began during high school. Her fascination and skill with math led her to a bachelor's degree in the field at Truman, while continuing to develop the skills needed to become a high school math instructor in the Master of Arts in Education program.

"I started in calculus at Truman and there was a balanced amount of females and males in the class,"

Peterman said. "But in my major-specific classes that were more advanced, there were less females. It's always puzzled me. In my head, math makes sense, and I've always enjoyed it."

Walker's interest in computer science began in fourth grade when she constructed her first computer with inspiration from her two older brothers who received degrees in computer science. She said her computer science experience has had its share of stereotypes, but this hasn't stopped her.

"In general, I think that in the field of computer science, there are stereotypes," Walker said. "The barriers are artificial, but that's no exception to the overall trend of gender bias."

Mathematics professor Pamela Ryan said causes of gender barriers have a broad range, like family responsibilities and societal expectations. Ryan also has heard from other universities that a genetic difference might be a cause, though she said there is little evidence to support that claim.

The Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Math-

ematics on Jan. 27 through Jan. 29 of next year works to fight barriers women in science and math face throughout the region.

Ryan has attended the conference for the past 10 years, helping interested female students go beyond gender barriers and learn mathematics from other women in the field in an informal and nurturing environment. Between one and three students attend the conference each year.

Ryan said the conference is a way for undergraduate women to showcase research they've performed. Events include poster sessions and presentations in addition to talking with male and female math mentors who teach students skills to help them apply for graduate schools.

While cultural expectations for female math and science students in society can be overcome, family responsibilities can be more difficult to adjust to, Ryan said.

A female speaker who appeared at a past conference told students about how she earned a research job. The speaker's husband takes care of the family while she works at the research position.

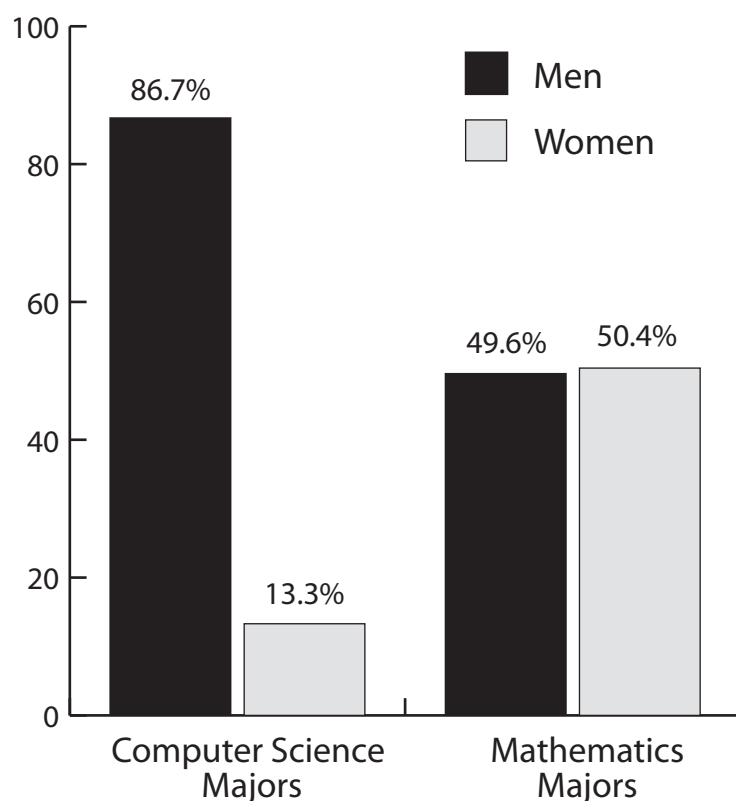
"It seems to me that when both the husband and wife are working at high-power jobs, it may be more difficult to resolve these kinds of issues," Ryan said.

Female students haven't let these barriers intrude on their Truman experiences, but there are ways all students can limit or even stop these intrusions.

**We should notice that the majors are not just men, and we should encourage girls to pursue majors like computer science if they are interested in it.**

— Rachel Walker  
Senior

Men vs. Women  
Majors Participation at Truman



\*Information from Ralph Cupelli,  
Assistant to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

"I think that a lot of it has to do with cultural levels," Walker said. "Socially, we seem to steer women toward communications and humanities. Men could be aware as well of the gender bias. We should notice that the majors are not just men, and we should encourage

girls to pursue majors like computer science if they are interested in it."

More information on the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics can be found at [math.unl.edu/~ncuwm/14thannual/](http://math.unl.edu/~ncuwm/14thannual/).



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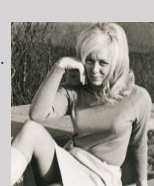
10/28, 4pm; 29, 8:30;



**Tabloid** (doc)

Religious rage. Kidnapping. Dog cloning. Hilarious true story of a beauty queen who held a man hostage.

10/27, 6:30; 29, 4pm



**Tucker & Dale vs. Evil**

Two vacationing rednecks are mistaken for crazy killers in this horror comedy.

10/27, 8:30;

28-29, 6:30; 10/30, 8:30

**The Guard** (comedy)

Brendan Gleason & Don Cheadle. An easygoing Irish policeman joins an uptight FBI agent to crack an international drug ring.

10/28, 8:30; 10/30, 1:30

