

City ordinances limit growth and common sense



Connor Riley

When I first noticed the kettle corn cooker in front of Sweet Espressions, the café and bakery located downtown, I thought someone's car was in serious need of a tune-up. It was loud and attention-grabbing, and when I realized the noise was not coming from some student's hoopy but from a clever contraption for making sweet popcorn, I was intrigued.

I've never been a kettle corn fan, but when the City decided owner Sarah Mitchell was in violation of city ordinances and had the police order her to cease her operation, I was disappointed.

The police cited two ordinances when asking Mitchell to stop making her kettle corn on the sidewalk in front of her shop. The first, enacted in 2003, states it is unlawful for any business to display or sell goods on public streets or sidewalks inside the city's business district. The other makes it illegal to obstruct city sidewalks as it might pose a threat to public safety.

I fail to see how Mitchell's entrepreneurial endeavor threatens public safety or detracts from The Square. She's simultaneously advertising her product and making The Square a more vibrant place to shop and hang out, which helps Kirksville with its economy and image. Furthermore, a prospective student would rather see an active, lively town than desolate streets and store owners skulking inside their respective businesses.

There simply doesn't seem to be any benefit from the City banning Mitchell's activity, and other citizens of Kirksville, including Missouri Rep. Zachary Wyatt, R-2, and Steve Taylor, former Steve's Garden Deli owner, are siding with Mitchell, explaining that her business practices could benefit Kirksville in many ways.

In addition to being economically unwise, the City's decision to pursue action against Mitchell stinks of pettiness and speaks negatively of the town. Doesn't the Kirksville Police Department have bigger issues to deal with? Instead, the City is fueling the negative stereotype of nosy small-town politics. It's embarrassing.

Whoever decided it was necessary to report Sweet Espressions obviously has nothing better to do than complain about a negligible violation that actually is benefiting the town and should have no influence on the city government's policies.

Isn't the farmers' market every Saturday in violation of these ordinances, seeing as it blocks an entire street for several hours every weekend? Technically, no. Farmers' market vendors are required to obtain permits in order to sell, meaning the City must view this as a benefit to the town.

Sweet Espressions should receive the same treatment. In fact, the City should encourage all local businesses to display their wares outside their shops because The Square often can be empty and a rather unwelcoming locale.

I'm unsure of the logistics, but if the City filed permits allowing merchants to sell their goods in a bazaar-like environment on a daily basis, a new source of revenue would be created for Kirksville. Local businesses could attract more shoppers and the community as a whole could be drawn closer together. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that, and maybe City Council should make a positive impact on the community by amending these restrictive ordinances and allowing Kirksville's business owners to do what they originally intended — make money.

Connor Riley is a senior history major from St. Louis

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Erik Lalonde/ Index

Domestic study exchange would enhance education



Connor Stangler

I spent the first three nights of my spring study abroad semester alone. Before the university's term started, I roamed the cobbled streets of Galway, Ireland, hoping to pass off my isolation as casual, rather than panicking. By April, I had decided my time in Galway had been the best four months of my life.

If it was financially possible for every student to study overseas for a semester, I would argue that such an experience should be mandatory. But because it's not, Truman State should at least expand the opportunities to study somewhere other than here.

Truman should establish an office similar to the Center for International Education that would encourage domestic study as a supplement or complement to studying abroad. The program should include an exchange, so other American students can come to Truman to study. The exposure to some other American regions, schools or student bodies, is necessary not because our own school is insufficient, but because our liberal arts curriculum demands it.

At its core, a liberal arts school advocates breadth and diversity of study. Our various multidisciplinary

graduation requirements are not meant to obstruct our path to specialization in a field or professional development. They purposefully slow us so we can stop and reconsider, from a different perspective, what we had been certain about our entire lives. As we look for intellectual or social stability in college, our curriculum acts to undermine it, to present just one more viewpoint for us to consider.

If Truman's purpose is to turn what is one dimensional into something multidimensional, shouldn't the philosophy apply to all aspects of the college experience? Shouldn't Truman broaden, in addition to our academic and social horizons, our geographic ones? I'm assuming our study abroad program was the tangible answer to those questions. But, as anybody who has been to New York City, Miami, rural Wyoming or Texas can tell you, the differences between Kirksville and those places perhaps are greater than the differences between Kirksville and many study abroad locations.

Sure, linguistic and cultural differences are, for the most part, greater abroad. Nothing can take the place of an immersion program in Rome or Istanbul — it will contort, mangle and thoroughly obliterate any rigid cultural presumptions. If a student has the means to study abroad, he or she should not hesitate. But if students are looking for an excursion into the dialectical or sociolinguistic unknown, they need not seek adventure in the Vietnamese jungles or the Mongolian grasslands. Traverse instead the mysterious seaside towns

of Massachusetts or the quaint hamlets of northern Minnesota. Each will offer a foreign land to explore and a foreign people to get to know.

I realize a student exchange might be unrealistic. Some Truman students certainly would be interested in going to school in San Diego for a semester, trading the possibility of a blustery and snowy winter for the certainty of a term in Eden. But would the students at, say, San Diego State University be interested in coming to Kirksville? Could our otherwise-stellar public relations department sell the prospect of studying in rural Missouri to a student used to an unbelievably sublime climate?

In short, they definitely could. Believe it or not, perpetual sunlight is as monotonous and mind-numbing as perpetual snowfall. Advertise Truman as an escape, as a refreshing alternative to paradise. This is not just the breadbasket of America. We are not culturally poor. We topple your ivory towers and destabilize your regional bias.

For Truman students, remaining within the Kirksville and Truman boundaries for four years is too insular for Truman's professed liberal arts mission. America has so much to reveal. Spending a semester among the Colorado mountains or the Kentucky hills will force you to look beyond Truman. Cultural and educational treasures must not only be found abroad. Sometimes, they're just down the interstate.

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AROUND THE QUAD

Should Truman offer domestic study exchange?



"Yeah, with the budget, we can't offer all the classes other American schools can."

Jose Alonso junior



"Yes, it would be neat to see other areas of the country instead of just outside the country."

Danielle Fraser freshman



"It would be good to learn the culture of areas outside Missouri."

Courtney Pierce junior



"Definitely. It would be cool for Truman students to expand and learn from coastal areas."

Tommy Lentz senior

Society values wealth, forces "average" dreams



Molly Skyles

I enjoy my middle class lifestyle. I probably never will land a job making millions, and my actions won't lead to TLC demanding the rights to my life story. No, I'll lead an average, respectable life eating off-brand toaster pastries instead of pâté and driving a Toyota instead of a Rolls Royce, and that's OK.

An Oct. 1 New York Times column entitled "Super People" discusses how generation Y pushes ourselves to the achievement limits and are destined to make it big. While I don't disagree, there is one tiny detail that mustn't be overlooked in the effort to achieve this greatness — money.

The definition of greatness is not universal, but it's pretty obvious money and success are synonymous in this

country.

Call me a pessimist or a cynic, but without a background chock full of private preparatory schools, trust funds, vacation homes and servants, your chances of striking rich are less than hopeful.

Maybe it's because the apple really doesn't fall far from the tree. When a person has led a privileged lifestyle, chances are he or she will do whatever it takes to obtain the financial stability to uphold the standards of living how they are used to. The same applies vice versa — someone from a blue-collar background might think life solely is about making ends meet, luxuries aside.

Ivy League universities and other elite institutions' standards are partly to blame for this mindset. The upper echelon of higher education accepts less than 1 percent of the U.S. college-age students. With colleges giving less in scholarships each year because of financial cutbacks, it is next to impossible for any "average" person to attend these schools.

Bill Gates, one of the world's wealthiest people, attended Harvard. Not to say he didn't work hard to reach the top, but Gates led a pretty privileged lifestyle. His father was a prominent lawyer, his mother served on the First Interstate BancSystem and United Way board of directors, and his grandfather

was a national bank president. Prior to Harvard, Gates was enrolled in an exclusive preparatory school in Seattle, which had the funds to purchase an early computer from which he first learned about computer programming.

It would be nice to think that there is no connection between Gates' wealthy adolescence and his current successes, but it's hard to deny the obvious relationships — if it weren't for his expensive prep school, he might not have become interested in computers, which might have kept him from being accepted to Harvard.

There are examples of determined individuals who climbed their way up the corporate ladder, going from nothing to garages filled with BMWs, but this is no easy feat. Maybe that's my problem

with the wealthiest of the wealthy in this country — their billions usually are just handed to them. Meanwhile, we average folk have to take out an arm and leg worth of loans to even think about applying to an Ivy League school, and even then, the odds are against us because we haven't had the opportunity to spend our summers volunteering at a Haitian orphanage or building houses in Honduras. Sorry, I'm not fluent in three other languages. I spent my summers bagging groceries making barely minimum wage instead, but we common people are no less able.

What kind of message does this send to lower income children? Should they give up their dreams? Adair County has one of the highest poverty levels in Missouri, yet these children are not unworthy of greatness. No one is. But, the obvious connection between wealth and success might stop these children from even trying.

It's sad that our society is so dependent on the size of one's income, yet this isn't going to change. With the questionable economy, the high breadwinners are going to continue to soar while we middle income people will stay the same — respectably but painfully average.

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