

News offers a reality check



Editor reflects about the importance of counting blessings

BY EMILY BATTMER
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When I miss home, it's usually because I miss my family, my bedroom, my two-minute-drive to the mall or Thai food. It can be a huge inconvenience having to drive for three hours to visit my parents, and sometimes, the fact that there's nowhere to get Pad Thai in Kirksville just makes life seem really unfair.

Truthfully though, I'm pretty lucky if those are my biggest worries.

I recently worked at a large, Kansas City-based company as their corporate communications intern. I learned a lot and had the chance to work on some interesting projects, but one task — my least favorite — loomed over me every afternoon. I was charged with sorting through a year's worth of four daily newspapers to find relevant headlines worth saving, for various slideshows and presentations throughout the year.

I often found myself avoiding this work. Compared to more exciting projects I was able to do, skimming articles about financial crises and election coverage seemed boring. I'd rather be writing the news than reading it. Plus, I didn't like the ink that stained my hands.

Talk about first-world problems.

Most people receive the news in small, daily doses. Unless you've spent 40 hours a week meticulously studying newspaper headlines, flipping through journalistic photographs and perusing hard-hitting news articles, you probably haven't felt the rush of all that information hitting you at once.

It is unbelievably overwhelming. It leaves you feeling very small, helpless and fairly certain the world as we know it will crumble at any moment.

Headlines scream with urgency. Photos portray disturbing circumstances from halfway around the world and in our own backyards. Columns and op-ed pieces scold and argue and talk circles around the most controversial issues. We are lucky not to be the subjects of those headlines and photographs, and sometimes we forget that.

A lot has happened during the past year. Many lives have changed drastically. Some have changed so drastically they made headlines, and some of us are completely unaware.

We all know it's rough getting from Barnett to Ophelia Parrish during those 10 minutes between classes, and no one likes having two tests scheduled the same day. But after reading about the turmoil faced by the less fortunate in developing countries and the impact current legislation can have on real people in our own neighborhoods, it's hard to care about whiny Facebook complaints regarding dining hall food.

The next time you think your life is unfair, pick up a newspaper. Educate yourself about what real problems look like. Stay informed and stay grateful. Your own life's headlines are probably far less exciting than the ones being reported in the news.

As I'm sitting here, typing this from the comfort of my bed, I catch myself wishing Forever 21 and spring rolls were a little closer to Kirksville. But I'm also smiling, thankful that's all I have to worry about.

Ag students host banquet



Anna Grace/Index Freshman Kylee Short, left, and sophomore Shannon Heibek get dessert during the Agriculture week banquet Friday at the University Farm. The event, also featured a chili cook-off and dancing.

Actions reveal more than appearances do



BY EMILY WICHMER
Staff Reporter

As college students, we meet new people constantly. Whether it's a classmate you're doing a group project with or a girl you met at a party, we make mental judgments about the people we meet. When we make these judgments, it's important we do so fairly and not superficially.

When we meet someone, most people usually make split-second judgments about them. If they're dressed in designer jeans, we might think they're rich or successful. If they're wearing colorful clothes, we might assume they have a loud and energetic personality. If they're

wearing sweatpants or mismatched clothing, we might assume they're lazy.

These snap judgments aren't always accurate. For example, some of the most hard-working people I know wear sweatpants, and I know plenty of shy people who wear bright clothes. People's appearances don't always give good clues about their character.

Instead of judging people based on appearance, we should judge them based on their actions. Do they speak respectfully to others? If they make fun of their friends or family, chances are they aren't respectful of others. If they dominate the conversation or interrupt others, they probably like to be the center of attention. If they make an effort to include others during the conversations, they're most likely welcoming and friendly.

Actions tell us more about others than appearances. People easily can change their outfits, but it is more difficult to change attitudes and actions.

When I was in high school, a girl in my class had a crush on a boy in the grade below us. She would talk about how good-looking he was and how he had a sarcastic sense

of humor. The only problem was he made fun of everyone's mistakes. Whether you missed a question on a test or forgot a line during the play, he would make you feel terrible about it. The two started dating, but she broke up with him a month later because he treated her the same way he treated everyone else. She expected him to be different toward her because they were in a relationship, but the truth is, it's hard to change habits.

That's not to say people can't change. People can and do change, but changing habits is a longer process than changing your shirt. We develop habits throughout the entire course of our lives and it's not easy to change them. If someone truly is trying to change for the better, we should be supportive and realize their journey to achieving that goal is a long one.

Trust your instinct. If you don't like the way a person behaves, don't give them your complete trust, even if you like their appearance. Beauty only is skin-deep, but actions show what a person is capable of and willing to do. If they don't respect others, chances are, they won't respect you.

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