

Our View

Contributing to a community is rewarding

At Truman State, one of our greatest strengths is our sense of community and each of us needs to consider what we can do to support it. In light of the recent changes to Truman's faculty health care policy, we wanted to reflect on the importance of that community taking care of its own.

As the late John F. Kennedy famously stated, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." This is applicable to any community we are members of. As individuals, in whatever team or community we might be involved with, we have a responsibility to support the members of the community supporting us. This sort of sentiment is the fundamental "glue" of any community or team. If any individual in a community won't make this commitment to the community, the team cannot function. This leaves the individuals who remain committed to their community unsupported by the group they devote their time and frustrations.

As members of the Truman community, we should have an obligation to ourselves. Each of us has the opportunity to become a part of a tight-knit group of our choosing that works together for a common cause. And better yet, we have fun doing it.

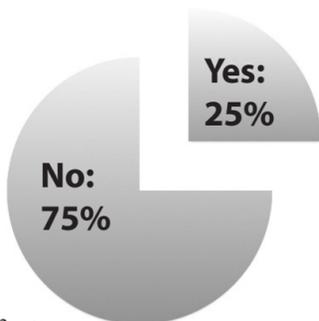
As members of the Index editorial board, we understand the personal rewards of contributing to such a community. We are mutually invested in one another. We rely on each other and it's the only reason we survive. This, in and of itself, is a rewarding experience.

When a community ceases to take care of its members, the members no longer benefit. The incentive to contribute to the common cause is lost, and the community falls apart.

Professors at Truman aren't here to just work a day job they don't truly care about. They're committed to the education of their students and each other. Similarly, we Indexers aren't just here to produce a newspaper. We're here to mutually benefit one another and the University community. In a way, we're a family, and we do what families do best — we take care of each other.

Web Poll

Are you participating in this semester's game of Humans versus Zombies?



*out of 12 votes

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Corrections

- Last week's story "Scaring for charity" on page 9 incorrectly stated that the proceeds from the haunted house and hayride went to Rural Advocates for Independent Living (RAIL).

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email index.editor@gmail.com, call us at 660-785-4449 or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo., 63501.

Letters to the Editor

Creating dialogue about food and farming

Most people are now at least three generations removed from the farm. And that equates to a growing disconnect between those who raise animals and crops and those who eat the food these farmers produce. So, last Monday, I joined students, faculty and community members in the SUB for a movie screening and panel discussion about agriculture and raising livestock. The movie was thought-provoking and the panel full of individuals from across the agricultural spectrum. The evening began a great conversation which I hope will continue with local farmers and consumers. I was enthused by the interest shown by the university community on Monday night.

The best advice of the evening was to get to know local producers, and when you have questions about food or farming, don't hesitate to take those questions directly to local farmers and ranchers. In line with continuing valuable conversation among farmers and families removed from the farm, I want to share the following ideas about my farm with you.

Cattle create protein using grass in pastures. My husband and I raise cows and calves, and our two young boys, on my century family farm southwest of Kirksville. Our farm consists of 350 acres of predominately grass, interspersed with forested areas and a few acres of row crops.

We look at our fields as natural solar panels. The grasses are efficient at converting solar energy and our cows serve as the harvesters. That relatively low-value grass meets nearly all of our cows' nutritional needs. The calves born annually stay on our farm for about one year, before we sell them to another individual who feeds them to a weight they are ready to enter a feedlot and consume a more nutrient-dense diet. Even at the point feed is hauled

to the animal, a calf continues to transfer crops' solar energy into protein we then consume as beef.

Cattle farmers and ranchers value continuous improvement. We put great thought and much work into the management decisions we make for our farm. Cow comfort and health is a top priority, for if our animals don't do well, neither will our farm business.

Most of our farm was first purchased by my great, great grandparents. They did a good job taking care of the resources over the past century, but we are always looking to improve. We have built new ponds to help control erosion on steep slopes and fences to better manage the cows grazing. We select cows that are best able to utilize the typically abundant forage resources we have in the Midwest. Not every farmer is the same, which means families have choices. We enjoy eating the meat produced by our family. We haven't sold directly to consumers because of the tremendous effort involved in direct marketing. While farmers adopt ever-changing technology to improve herd health, reduce fuel and fertilizer use and farm smarter, it is still people like Patrick and I who are raising food.

While farming today looks different than it did when my grandpa was working this farm, it is still American families that are raising our food. There are cattlemen and women who market beef from local farms, and that is a great thing. We are just as proud to market our cattle in a more common manner throughout segments of the beef community, knowing our beef will turn into the delicious, nutritious steaks, burgers, roasts and more that become options in restaurants and our local meat case.

Ashley McCarty
Adair County resident

Cartoon

By Megan Archer



Manners matter during debates



Jeremy Busch

America tuned in to watch the debate between presidential candidates Barack Obama and Mitt Romney on Oct. 15. It was a crucial battle, during which they tried to sway the swing voters. They fought the entire debate, but unfortunately the major battle was not about the issues. It was about manners.

The debate was sloppy, poorly kept on track time-wise and not very enjoyable to watch. The two presidential candidates constantly interrupted not only each other but also the moderator. A mocking tone was an underlying theme, as if the competition was to annoy the opponent rather than dominate the arguments. I was hoping for a quality debate, one with enough legitimacy to gain votes. However, I was disappointed.

As I watched the debate, I could not help but wonder what happened to the value of chivalry. Now, I know this is politics. A dog-eat-dog world where only the toughest survive. However, the presen-

tation of disrespect that both candidates showed devalues their characters. Their rudeness overpowered any arguments they made.

Candidates must realize their target audience is alienated when they act so rudely.

Public speaking is a delicate art in which one must balance the issues with a sophisticated style. If one of these lacks, the piece is ruined. Without a doubt, there is great importance in being polite during political communication. Ironically, most politicians do not act this way. One example of this is during political advertisements. The majority of commercials tear down opponents with half-true statements with the sole purpose of creating a scandal. This creates a bad environment where negativity overpowers positivity, diminishing the value of the issues. If advertisements were positive, the issues would be explained much better.

At the moment, politics across America are not in a good place. Politicians act to benefit themselves instead of working as a team. Instead of doing what is best for America as a whole, they rudely battle amongst themselves to do what is best for their political affiliation.

Being disrespectful has followed suit, with a lack of chivalry. The negativity in all aspects of politics is shameful. We are supposed to be united as a nation instead of torn apart as groups. What I think needs to be advocated in politics is a return to a "gentleman's pursuit," where the races for positions still are competitive but respectful. I do not want to know the half-true claims about the actions of an opponent.

I want to know what they can do for America and why they deserve my vote.

From an outside perspective, my view seems childish. There is a small chance politicians would change the way they have been acting. Put that aside for a second and think of the possibilities that would come with it. Instead of being annoyed from the interruptions and evasive answers to questions, people would actually enjoy the debate. There would be no frustration or screaming at the TV. We might actually enjoy politics if interactions were respectful.

The way an argument is expressed completely changes the way it is perceived. Being polite, respectful and listening to your opponent actually increases positive views of a candidate. Instead of fighting fire with fire, bringing a polite outlook changes everything. There would be no dirty politics, political scandals or unnecessary fights, only quality arguments giving America a taste of who might soon govern.

Politics are a crucial part of democracy and should be conducted respectfully. Good arguments and maintaining the "gentleman's pursuit" not only improves the quality of the debate but also hopefully the appeal to the general audience. Politics should return to this and we will see an improvement during the future.

Jeremy Busch is a freshman communication major from St. Louis, Mo.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

Letters Policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Letters containing personal attacks will not be published. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. They must be submitted by email to index.opinionseditor@gmail.com or on our website at www.trumanindex.com. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. No individual may submit more than one letter a week. No political letters will be accepted or published.

Advertising Policy

For up-to-date information on current rates or to inquire about the availability of classified ads in the Index, contact our advertising department at 785-4319. Our fax number is 785-7601, or you can e-mail us at tsu.indexads@gmail.com.