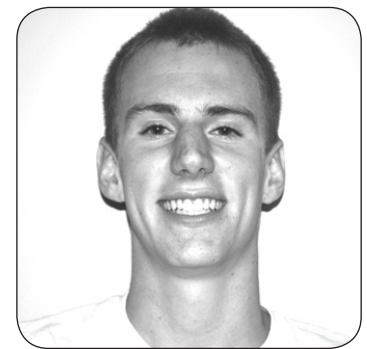


## Memorial for 9/11 victims is too costly



John Brooks

Do you remember where you were 11 years ago when more than 3,000 Americans lost their lives during the horrific events of Sept. 11. As time passed, the healing process began, and as part of this process, a memorial currently is being constructed at the site of the World Trade Centers in New York.

This memorial is projected to cost more than \$60 million a year to maintain and operate, as well as more than \$700 million to build, according to a Sept. 9 Associated Press article. Other memorials are much less costly. The reality is that this memorial is costing too much and likely is overdone.

It's certainly true that the circumstances behind the 9/11 memorial are different than the ones in other places. For one, the risk of a terrorist attack in New York is much higher than in Hawaii. For this reason, the \$12 million per year for security costs, according to a Sept. 9 AP article, does seem justified, but not to the extent that the museum itself will not be able to cover these costs. Admission to part of the museum is projected to cover some of the yearly operating costs, but the additional money has to come from somewhere. At a time when our economy continues to limp along, with unemployment at World War II levels, basement level interest rates and nearly universal poor job prospects, such luxuries are difficult to justify.

The unfortunate reality is that memorials like the 9/11 one don't even come close to being able to heal the wounds caused by people determined to inflict pain and suffering. No matter how grandiose the memorial, the fact remains that many people lost their friends and family members that day, and a fountain that costs \$5 million a year, according to the article previously mentioned, can't change that.

I've been fortunate enough to be able to visit several memorials during my life. Of the ones I've seen, two truly made me empathize and commemorate with those affected: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France.

The Vietnam Memorial has a statue of three soldiers, a section for women who served and an engraved wall with the names of those who died in the war. This memorial cost \$8.4 million at the time, or just under \$18 million adjusted for inflation, according to a 2007 USA Today article. It's simple and to the point: Don't forget us. Don't forget what happened.

There's beauty in simplicity. At the Normandy memorial in France, I remember my dad telling me, "that's the most serious I've ever seen you." The memorial there consists mostly of a large, open field with 9,387 graves signified by white crosses, according to the American Battle Monuments Commission website. It's simple, beautiful and painful. To me, these two memorials are nearly perfect examples of carrying on the memory of history.

I worry, too, that if we begin spending large amounts of money on memorials, it's possible designers will try to outdo one another. I'm not advocating a slippery slope fallacy. I'm merely suggesting that it's possible for the true focus to be lost when large amounts of money come into play.

Memorials are a difficult and emotion-ridden topic. But the cost of the 9/11 memorial — brought on to a certain extent by the expense and depth of the memorial — approaches the kind of fiscal irresponsibility that ruined our economy.

Memorials should serve as a tasteful reminder of sacrifices made, lives lost and the terrible nature of war and humankind. When money is involved, people will be working to get their hands on a chunk of it. Keeping memorials simple will ensure they are not abused, and that the focus stays on enshrining into public memory the events that transpired. To spend massive amounts of public money for memorials is irresponsible, risks making memorials into grand displays and twists attention away from where the focus should be: the event and people intended to be memorialized.

John Brooks is a sophomore English major from Columbia, Mo.

## Women's rights are at risk



Dan Mika

The Missouri House voted to override Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of SB 749 last Wednesday, according to a Sept. 13 St. Louis Post-Dispatch article. This bill would have given businesses the ability to deny healthcare coverage of contraceptives to their employees due, in part, to employers' religious beliefs, counteracting a clause in the healthcare reform law that passed two years ago. The objective of the bill was to protect business owners who practice religions that don't support the use of birth control. But by doing so, the Missouri Legislature has put the rights of business owners above the rights of employees.

The GOP's push to prevent women from getting affordable healthcare has set an unfortunate precedent across the nation. State legislatures in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Texas are all proposing bills similar

to SB 749. If they pass in these other locations, it could lead to a federal push to deny women access to affordable birth control.

This bill has been hailed as a way to protect Missouri businesses from what Republicans see as an obstruction of civil liberties. But what about employee rights? What about the rights of an atheist who works for a Christian hospital or a shelter supported by an Islamic group? With this law, our hypothetical atheist will have more difficulty getting birth control because it conflicts with her employer's religious beliefs. By securing business owners the right to observe their religion, the Missouri legislature has effectively removed that right from the individual.

Of course, one could always resign from the job if they have serious objections to their bosses' political or moral stance. But in the desert that is the current job market, leaving a position that offers insurance is perilous. Why should we trust our managers to make moral decisions? They're entitled to their personal beliefs. But then again, so is everyone. We can vote out our representatives in government if we don't like them, but we can't vote out the people in charge of our places of work.

When the Pilgrims sailed across the Atlantic to settle America, they landed knowing their government wouldn't force its religious beliefs on them. The First Amendment has continued that tradition of religious tolerance up to today, but this bill

challenges that tradition. Allowing companies to choose whether they cover birth control gives them religious freedom, but it denies employees the same rights.

Most of all, this bill seems to be a rebellion against the federal healthcare bill, commonly referred to as Obamacare. Out of the 104 Republican members of the State House, 102 voted to override the veto, according to a Sept. 12 St. Louis Post-Dispatch article. The other two abstained from voting.

I know GOP members aren't typically fans of President Obama's policies (Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell once noted the GOP's first goal ought to be making sure that Obama doesn't get reelected to a second term) but obstruction tactics like these are childish. They also pose a direct threat to the health of Missouri's women.

Denying women insurance coverage for their birth control is sexist and dangerous. If a woman decides she isn't ready to have children, she shouldn't have to pay more than \$100 a year at minimum or suffer because of her bosses' beliefs. Lawmakers have to stop thinking that the rights of business owners are worth more than the rights of women, or the rights of women across the nation will be in danger.

Dan Mika is a freshman communication major from Mt. Prospect, Ill.

## How should teachers be held accountable for student success in secondary education?

"Teachers should be held responsible in the sense that they have to be able to teach their students the best they can with the resources they are given."

Kasie Garcia  
Junior



"If the parents care about the education then the student will do well. Teachers and parents need to work together. You can't hold teachers entirely accountable."

Liz Martchink  
Senior



"Being more involved in student interests is equally important to test scores. You can't judge someone based only on test scores."

Chrissy Ahlvers  
Junior



"There's only so much you can do to motivate a student. Teachers need to be protected to allow themselves to do their jobs, however, it's important for students to be protected, as well, from bad teachers."

Colin Teberg  
Senior



### AROUND THE QUAD

## Addiction to fact-checking hurts democracy



Connor Stangler

Every time I laugh at "The Daily Show," I'm actually crying. Journalists today love pointing out the flaws of our political system. For John Stewart and the like, it's a way to entertain the audience. For daily newspapers and political websites, it's a way to base our discourse and elections on fact. The idea is that this will make us better voters living in a better system.

However, despite our best intentions, our attempts to make a more perfect democracy, improve the quality of our leaders and foster an educated populace have, in fact, undermined our ultimate goal. The effort to achieve the ideal state has only given rise to the cynical state. We believe

that if we expose someone for his or her true colors, if we uncover the political, the manipulative and the deceptive, then we can renew our trust in the system.

As the media scrapes more and more mud from the surface of our institutions, we grow weary of the endlessness of it. We're disappointed to find that no person and no party are wholly clean. We have to choose the lesser of two despicable evils. Eventually, the voter will figure out that they don't have to do anything.

Why rush to engage in civic life when there's nothing but disappointment there? Obama lied five times during his campaign speech today, and Romney lied twice. Obama mischaracterized our economic recovery, Romney mischaracterized his time at Bain Capital. John Stewart made Obama look like a slimy traitor, Stephen Colbert made Romney look like a spineless criminal. Still want to vote?

Journalists find themselves slowly pushing an enormous boulder up a hill just to find that when they think a cleaner and more honest election lies just over the top of the hill, the boulder rolls back down. The reporters and muckrakers themselves never seem to tire of the process. After all, it is a business.

But for the spectators, those of us who endure the articles and shows that detail

exactly how wrong our politicians are, the struggle is no fun to watch. Our democracy isn't just a sitcom, but rather something we must sustain in order to sustain ourselves. It is tied to our every priority, tradition and obligation as Americans. Ultimately, our disappointment can have dangerous effects on our commitment to the system.

The perpetual lost cause is courageous and needs to be fought, but we've overlooked the hopelessness of it and what that hopelessness inspires. Human nature never stops disappointing, and we can't help but tire of rooting for the losing team. For our legislators, presidents, mayors and councilwomen to be able to govern, they must have the faith of the American people. Through our confidence, we grant them the ability to make our laws.

If disillusionment replaces trust in American politics, then we can no longer dream like we once did. We'll be too skeptical of government solutions and too suspicious of whoever is on the ballot.

The greatest problem also is the greatest irony. The media dedicates themselves to exposing the truth, but politics actually survive on lying. To create the mythology of a better country, we have to bend reality. We have to be lied to, and most of the time, we like it.

Obama swept the country off its feet during 2008. The mirage of success actually inspired us to get off our couches and join. We had to believe in order to fix the country, and, if we needed to, look past some of the details to have faith.

But can we actually advocate lying? There must be a balance between a fascist takeover built on deception and a democracy that's eating itself from the inside out. We must have faith, but it can't be blind. We must have dreams, but they can't be harmful. The fact-checkers have to be diligent, but they also have to moderate in their obsession with the details. A free press is necessary for the survival of a democratic nation.

If we lower our standards, if we don't point out the errors, if we allow falsehood to triumph where truth should, then we will return to an age where political ignorance was blissful and dangerous.

I would rather have a watchdog than a lapdog, but unless we're careful, too much truth will leave us, and our democracy, empty.

Connor Stangler is a senior English and history major from Columbia, Mo.