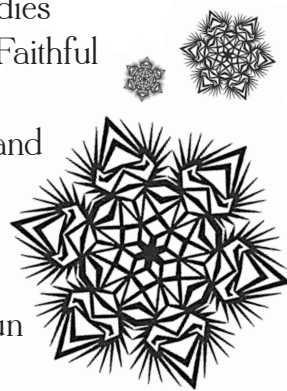


From the *desk* of the *Editor*

Our View

The Index's Holiday Playlist Picks

1. Carol of the Bells
– Trans-Siberian Orchestra
2. Happy Christmas (War is Over)
– John Lennon
3. Please Come Home for Christmas
– The Eagles
4. All I Want for Christmas is You
– Mariah Carey
5. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
– Barenaked Ladies
6. O, Come All Ye Faithful
– Twisted Sister
7. Winter Wonderland
– Bing Crosby
8. Blue Christmas
– Elvis Presley
9. Run Rudolph Run
– Chuck Berry
10. Baby It's Cold Outside
– She & Him



Welcome the holiday cheer



Emily Battmer

As I type this with sparkling red fingernails, a tray of holiday cookies to my left and a pile of newspaper-snowflakes to my right, my mood, much like my holiday Pandora station, can be described with one word — jolly.

Yes, my ugly Santa Claus sweater might be tacky and cliché, and you can only listen to so many Mariah Carey carol covers during one sitting. But at the end of the day, Kirksville is a little brighter with a few festive lights strung around The Square, and finals week is a little less stressful when you take time to curl up on the couch with a cup of cocoa.

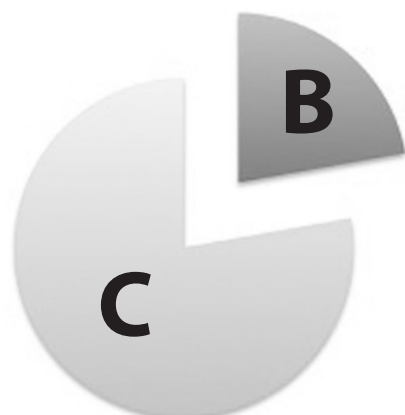
As the semester comes to a close, it is easy to become overwhelmed with so many projects, papers and presentations coming due. It is important for stressed students to remember all they have to celebrate. Regardless of your beliefs, take time during these next few weeks to reflect on all you have to be grateful for — your friends, family, education — and allow yourself a few of the season's simple pleasures to celebrate. Brave a walk in the cold to see some holiday decorations, indulge in a seasonal treat — hello, Starbucks' peppermint mocha — or take a break from studying to check out Netflix's selection of classic holiday movies.

I still have a couple of papers to write and presentations to prepare for, along with a jam-packed finals week. But with all the excitement of the holidays to look forward to, it is almost impossible not to feel chipper. So amp up the volume of your favorite holiday tunes, wear that ugly sweater with pride and remember if you're decorating, gaudier is better.

Emily Battmer is a senior communication major from Kansas City, Mo.

Web Poll

How knowledgeable do you feel about how the Affordable Care Act Affects you?



A: Very knowledgeable, 0%
B: Somewhat knowledgeable, 20%
C: Not very knowledgeable, 80%

Out of 10 votes.

Letter to the Editor

Rape prevention should focus on perpetrators

It is time to have a serious discussion about rape. The recent [ed. — November 14] opinion article "Discussing Rape Prevention" makes bold statements regarding how rape prevention is handled by our society. I disagree strongly with the statement that "strategies that target only the perpetrators of sexual assault will never fully prevent such crimes from happening." Is it not true that stopping rapists from raping will thus stop rape? Claiming that there is nothing we can do as a society to stop bad people from doing bad things is extremely disheartening and needs to be discussed.

The comparison of breaking and entering houses as a metaphor for rape makes valid points. If people do not want their valuables stolen, they should lock their doors to prevent it. But you cannot lock up your body like you would a house. Rape is not like breaking into a house.

Rape is like a terrorist attack.

No one pointed at America after 9/11 and said, "Why didn't you try to stop it?" No one watched as the plane crashed into the building and wondered, "Didn't you know that this could happen to you?" No one looked at the crumbling Twin Towers and thought, "You should have known better."

But, most importantly, no one stared into that pile of rubble and said, "Oh well, that's just how it is."

No one would dare see the wound on the surface of America and accuse us of being ignorant, or of not being preventative.

Yet, there are so many ways that we could have prevented being the target of a terrorist attack! We should have been less involved in foreign affairs. We should have had stronger defenses and a more active watch for things like this. Maybe we even should have had a neighboring country with us to watch out for us and keep us safe.

It is unfortunate that bad people do bad things in this world. It is unfortunate that terrorists exist and that they commit horrible crimes against innocent people. But America is currently fighting against terrorism. Time estimated as of 2011 that our government spent 5 trillion dollars fighting the War on Terror. That is 5 trillion dollars spent trying to stop bad people from doing bad things.

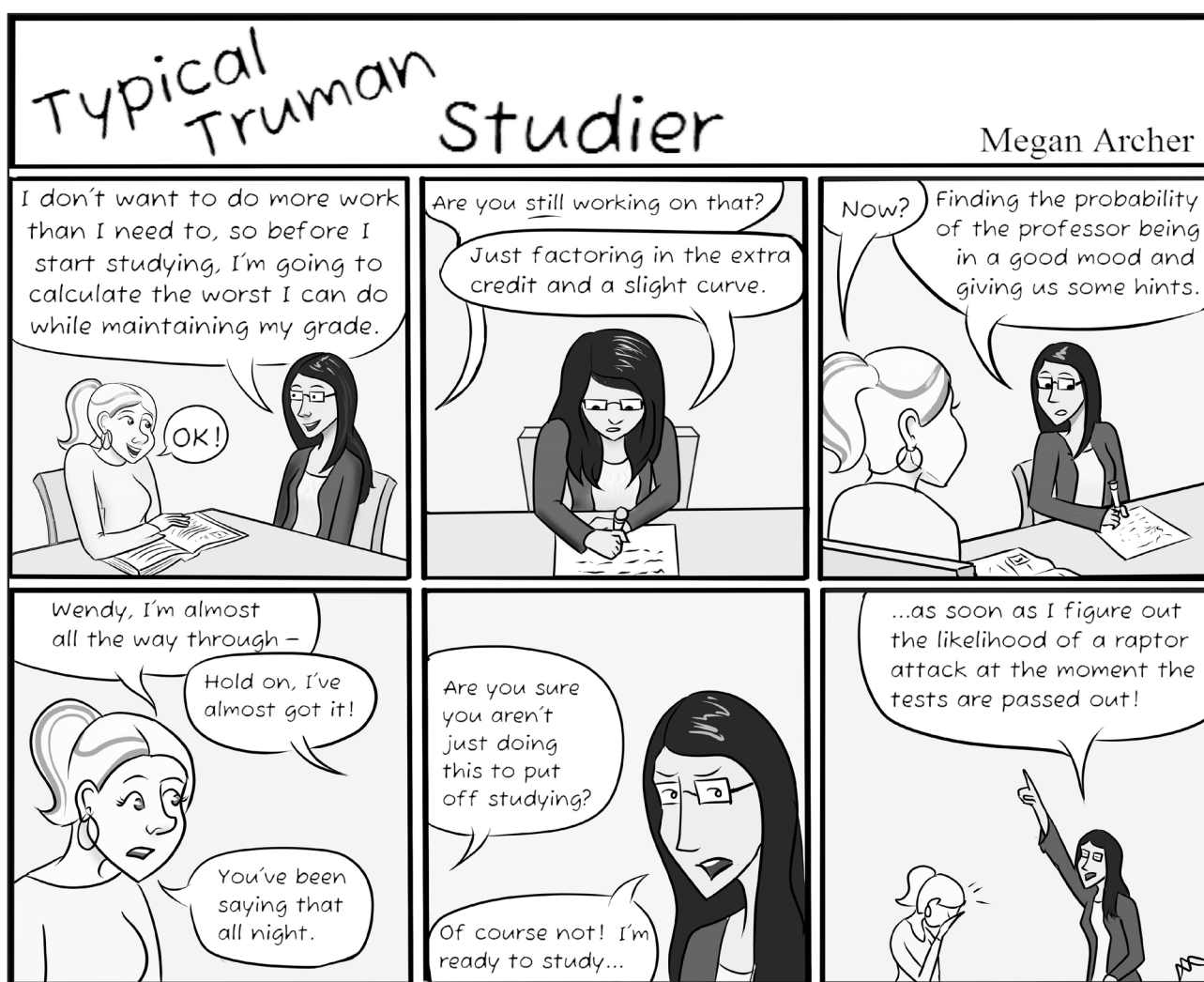
Is this not similar to trying to "target the perpetrators of sexual assault"? Why should we not focus just as much, if not more, attention on those who actually rape people than those who happen to be raped? Why can't we use buzz words like "rape culture" to refer to a society that sees little need in stopping the "bad people" who actually commit crimes rather than telling people how to not be victims of crime?

Prevention cannot stop everything. It will be a long time before America rids itself of terrorism. It will also be a long time before America rids itself of its rape culture. And until that time, trying to stop the bad people from doing bad things would seem to be the best preventative measure.

Ingrid Roettgen
Truman State sophomore

Contact

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please email index.editor@gmail.com, call us at 660-785-4449 or submit a letter via our website tmn.truman.edu/theindex.



GPA scale lacks accuracy



Laknath Gunathilake

While it's certainly true C's get degrees, those striving for academic excellence at a highly selective public school like Truman State would hate to walk away with a measly grade point average at the end of their college career.

Let's admit it. Although we often falsely console ourselves by saying "Oh, grades don't really matter," or "My GPA isn't everything," better grades lead to better jobs.

Unfortunately, the current measurements for student grades do not provide as much motivation to succeed as they could.

I'm certainly not a statistician, but my understanding of the GPA scale used at Truman raises concern about its ability to accurately depict student performance.

Universities commonly use several different grading scales. Truman uses a traditional, whole-letter grading scale system. An A is given if a student's grade percentage is between 90 and

100 percent, while a B is given at the range of 80 to 89 percent and so on.

One of the problems associated with the whole letter grading system is its lack of differentiation when assigning a final grade. When the final percentage each student earns is converted to a letter, it masks any difference between the final score achieved by students within the same letter grade range.

Although the final letter grade two students achieve might look the same, that comparison could be misleading if one student achieved a significantly higher percentage than another, for example a grade of 89 percent compared to a grade of 81 percent.

This problem of grade distortion and lack of differentiation within the range of a letter grade is the justification for some universities to use a plus-minus grading scale. Using this system, a grade of 89 percent would earn a B+ instead of a simple B. Such grades would be worth correspondingly more GPA points, in this example 3.5 points for a B+ instead of 3 points for a B.

According to a case study conducted by Andrew Bresette at Berry College in Georgia, student motivation dwindles as they realize their performance is less likely to improve their grade with a traditional A-F system which has a 10 point spread. However, with the implementation of a plus-minus scale, the gap between grade levels become smaller and students are motivated to

increase their grades with extra effort toward the end of the semester.

According to research conducted at the University of Cincinnati, U.S. universities using plus-minus grading scales has increased from 24 percent to 56 percent during the last 20 years. The University of Missouri-Columbia, Washington University in St. Louis and William Jewell College are a few of the universities throughout Missouri currently using the plus-minus GPA system.

I'm not arguing Truman should transition from the current whole letter grade scale to a plus-minus scale overnight. But it's certainly worth the consideration to assess some of the costs and benefits of transitioning to a plus-minus scale throughout several years. Not only would such a move increase incentives for students to work harder, it also would provide a more accurate description of student performance.

Truman attracts the best and brightest — having a system that accurately reflects student performance is imperative for the school as a whole. With more and more schools transitioning to plus-minus grading systems, it's certainly worth a dialogue about the potential costs and benefits of implementing such a system. After all, academic incentives translate to better performance of students and the school as a whole.

Laknath Gunathilake is a senior political science major from Colombo, Sri Lanka

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 e-mail to index.opinionseditor@gmail.com or on our website at <http://tmn.truman.edu/theindex>. 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 per week.

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