

Activity	Price
Archer's Hunting	\$19.00
Fall Firearm Turkey Hunting	\$13.00
Firearms Any-Deer Hunting	\$17.00
Spring Turkey Hunting	\$17.00
Migratory Bird Hunting	\$6.00
Small Game Hunting	\$10.00
Fishing Permit	\$12.00
Trout Fishing	\$7.00
Hunting and Fishing	\$19.00

## Stereotyping shows lack of awareness



Laknath Gunathilake

Social media was abuzz when Nina Davuluri, Miss New York and a woman of Indian descent, was crowned Miss America Sept. 15. Some Twitter users questioned how a foreigner could win the title.

My purpose is not to justify the crowning of Davuluri as Miss America. I have neither the expertise nor the aesthetic aptitude to judge a beauty pageant.

My concern is regarding the stereotyping of individuals, in this particular instance, the stereotyping of people from South Asia or their descendants.

Some called Davuluri Miss Arab. Others were concerned that Davuluri had potential ties to a terrorist organization. A tweet read "Congratulations Al-Qaeda. Our Miss America is one of you." Others were concerned Davuluri was crowned Miss America so close to the 9/11 anniversary. A similar comment read, "9/11 was 4 days ago and she gets miss America?" Many thought the title should have been awarded to Theresa Vail, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl from Kansas.

As a South Asian person, I have encountered similar thoughts and remarks.

I was born and raised in Sri Lanka, a small, tear-shaped island located below the Indian subcontinent. Before I came to Truman State, I was used to eating rice and curry three times a day. I would sprinkle massive amounts of chili flakes on a Philly cheesesteak and cover scrambled eggs with hot sauce to compensate the lack of flavor. A friend of mine once suggested I use my rather unusual tolerance of spicy food for a socially beneficial cause. He suggested I enter a jalapeño eating contest to raise money.

Sometimes it's fun to be stereotyped. My roommate's brother thinks my real name is "Raj" — an inference he has drawn from the "Big Bang Theory" TV series — and considers "Raj" to be a generic name used for all people within the region. One has to admit most South Asian names are stupidly long and difficult for the average American to pronounce. In fact, most of my professors find it an excruciating task to pronounce my last name.

Other times, being stereotyped can lead to discomforting experiences — especially if you are the only bearded South Asian on a long-distance flight. One time, I was sitting next to an old lady who kept suspiciously staring at me every time I reached for the overhead compartment. It was only after I struck a conversation with her that she realized I wasn't a Middle-Eastern fundamentalist planning to blow up the plane. I couldn't blame her for what she thought. After all, she was responding to the cultural stereotype that a brown-skinned guy with a rather conspicuous beard is more likely to be a terrorist.

I think a liberal arts education should foster understanding between people to go beyond a prevailing stereotype. Having been at Truman for more than two years, I've realized the high level of cultural tolerance within this community. Truman has a considerable group of students and faculty from around the world. Various cultural and student organizations exist to represent their interests and promote diversity.

The fact that an intercultural perspectives course is a curriculum requirement shows the importance placed upon cultural diversity here. The best way to overcome our cultural bias and promote understanding is to interact and socialize with people who are different, weird and maybe don't share the same interests. What better place to do it than college?

Hateful remarks against Davuluri might have been a result of low cultural tolerance on the part of the individuals who made such comments. Perhaps they were responding to deep-rooted prejudices against a certain stereotype. Such individuals clearly need some form of cultural education.

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

## Birders should contribute



Conor Gearin

As a state with prime bird watching areas and a large number of avid bird watchers, Missouri should consider creating licenses for bird watchers to generate revenue from bird watching. This would supplement revenue streams from hunting and fishing licenses, the traditional bases of conservation funding.

Bird watchers, hermit-like enthusiasts waiting for hours to spot a rare bird through binoculars, are not our mental image of a hugely productive economic group. But in reality, they do spend a lot of money. They are one of the primary users of the nation's natural resources, and they buy plenty of equipment and gas during their pursuit.

As an amateur bird watcher myself, I visit state-managed parks and conservation areas to look for birds several times a year. Some might argue bird watching doesn't use up natural resources as hunting does, and therefore shouldn't require a fee.

However, I am able to see these birds only because the Missouri Department of Conservation has kept these lands open and managed them in a way that makes them good habitats for migratory

and year-round bird species. I and others like me ought to share the responsibility of funding Missouri's conservation efforts.

A 2011 survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found 46.7 million people identify themselves as bird watchers — the majority of the 71.8 million people who reported they took part in a wildlife-watching activity. These wildlife-watchers collectively spent \$55 billion, with each person spending an average of \$717 on equipment alone.

Clearly, bird watchers who are willing to pay to get the right equipment would not be stopped by a wildlife watching license that cost about the same as a hunting or fishing license. In Missouri, a hunting and fishing permit costs \$19, according to the MDC.

"Bird watchers will spend money and I think they're happy to and willing to, if they know the money is going right back to conserve," said Jason Lusier, Truman State biology professor.

According to the MDC's 2011-2012 annual report, Missouri wildlife conservation programs receive 59 percent of their funding from the conservation sales tax. This takes one-eighth of a cent out of every dollar of sales tax revenue and uses it to fund the MDC.

However, the second biggest revenue source is the sale of hunting and fishing permits. Nineteen percent of MDC's funding comes directly from license sales. Another 15 percent comes from two federal programs that reimburse states based on the number of hunting and fishing license-holders they have. Together, these sources make up 34 percent of MDC's revenue.

The MDC reports there are 2.2 million wildlife watchers in Missouri, compared to 1.7 million hunters and fishers. If Missouri required a license to use state parks and conservation areas for bird watching and wildlife watching activities, it seems possible the state would see a significant increase in money for conservation.

Other states have permit programs designed to broaden the base of funding for conservation Missouri could use as a model. Virginia has required people to purchase an access permit to access wildlife management areas since January 2012.

After losing significant funding, Washington needed to find a way to keep its parks open. The state solved the problem by creating the Discover Pass during 2011, which is now required to access state-managed lands.

In Missouri, loss of state funds currently is not a problem, since the MDC makes up only 1 percent of the state budget. This means revenue from the licenses could go toward developing wildlife education programs and funding conservation research.

Broadening the base of conservation funding in Missouri to include wildlife watching will allow bird watchers to put money back into the system for the conservation programs from which they benefit, just like the hunters and fishers who have supported conservation since its creation.

Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.

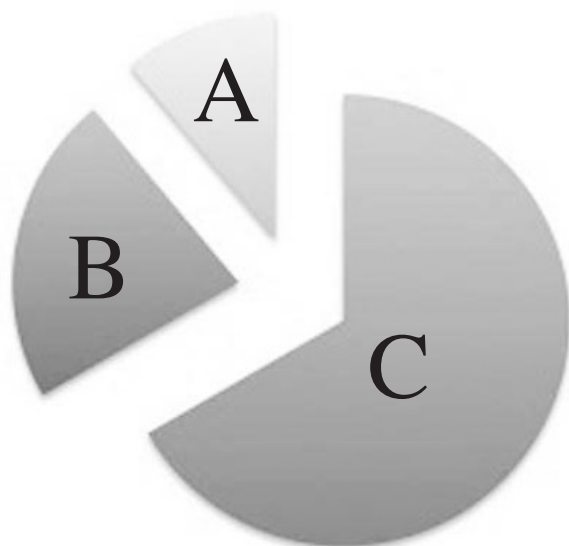
## Web Poll

Does having a pet improve your quality of life?

A. Yes: 11%

B. No: 22%

C. There are no pets at my current residence. 67%



Out 18 of votes.

## Owning pets benefits students' health



Andrea Trierweiler

My roommate doesn't pay rent. She doesn't clean up after herself, she insists I prepare food for her and she's a lazy bum who sleeps all day. She always wants to play when I want to sleep, and she leaves hair all over the furniture. Despite these characteristics, she's the best roommate I could ask for.

During June, I adopted my "roommate," a calico cat named Emma. I never realized how difficult it would be to leave my dog and three cats behind when I came to Truman State — no longer could I come home to my animal companions, who would

comfort me during days filled with poor test grades, parking tickets or roommate issues. After two years of on-campus living, I decided to seek a pet-friendly apartment so I could get a cat.

At first I was unsure if adopting a cat was a good idea, considering my academic responsibilities and the financial concerns that come with being a college student. But it turns out there are many benefits to pet ownership.

According to WebMD, owning a pet reduces anxiety, lowers blood pressure and decreases the chance of developing depression and heart disease. In fact, pet owners live longer than people who don't own animals, according to WebMD.

Furthermore, owning a cat or dog can reduce stress levels and feelings of loneliness, issues college students might face, according to a May 2013 USA Today article.

Dog owners in particular get a boost in physical health. Since weight gain is a common fear among college students, taking

dogs for walks or runs provides a way to exercise, according to the USA Today article.

Owning pets also can be a conversation starter that leads to more friendships, and taking care of pets benefits college students by providing more structure to their hectic daily lives, according to a May 2012 U.S. News article.

While most colleges do not allow animals in residence halls, some schools make arrangements so students can bring their beloved pets to college with them. Stephens College in Columbia, Mo., allows dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, rats, mice, gerbils, sugar gliders, guinea pigs, lizards and birds in some residence halls, according to stephens.edu.

The school also has a day-care to look after dogs while students are in class, and allows students to foster pets through a partnership with a local no-kill rescue organization, according to stephens.edu.

As Truman does not allow pets other than fish and small amphibians in campus housing

facilities, according to the Residence Life handbook, Truman students must live in pet-friendly off-campus housing to own anything that doesn't require a tank. For this reason, it can be difficult to find a place to stay with a pet, but it's not impossible.

Pet owning is not for everyone, of course. Before adopting or bringing a pet from home to college, you must consider if you can support an animal. Food, vet bills and pet supplies potentially can accumulate — owning a dog can cost anything from \$300 to \$2,520 per year, according to an April 2012 Fox Business article.

Owning a pet also requires a time commitment that could be difficult to handle. Pets need attention, and dogs must be walked. Young animals especially require more attention because they have more energy.

Finally, owning a pet must be taken seriously. Unfortunately, colleges tend to find more abandoned pets on campus at the end of semesters, according to the Fox Business article. Owning a

pet is not a temporary situation — adopting an animal means providing it with a loving home for the rest of its life, not just until you graduate.

For me, the pros trumped the cons. I knew when I adopted Emma I was signing a 15- to 20-year contract. I don't know where I'll be after five years, but wherever I go, I'll take her with me.

It's true that sometimes she keeps me awake at night because she plays with her toy mice while I try to fall asleep. No, I don't like cleaning up her hairballs and yes, pet food and cat litter are additional costs that must be factored into my college student budget. But when my cat greets me when I return from a long day of class or curls up with me and purrs while I'm working through homework, it's all worth it.

Andrea Trierweiler is a junior Romance language major from Columbia, Mo.