

Letters to the Editor

Make students aware of crimes

Like every other student, I recently received an email from DPS regarding reports of sexual assault both on and off campus. Having spent the past three years volunteering at Victim Support Services, the domestic violence center in Kirksville, I am well aware of the statistics, tips, and consequences that come with sexual assault. I have had too much training and too many middle of the night phone calls at the crisis line to take reports like that lightly. I also personally know too many people who have been victims of sexual assault to think that there is no chance sexual assault could ever happen to me. However, DPS's email and "helpful" tips are just another bias that our society has when it comes to rape and sexual assault as they make it seem as if the victim is at fault by offering tips to prevent being a victim, as if the person has a choice.

Although the email did not outright say the

victim is at fault for the assault, it is implied by the safety tips given to help people avoid assault. It almost seems as if it is saying that had the victim followed these tips, he or she would not have been assaulted. After all, if you are drinking at a party and find yourself being dragged home by another person, you clearly could have done something to change your situation and prevent yourself from being prey, right? Sure, you could have made different choices, but just because you choose to drink or dress a certain way does not mean you choose to be sexually assaulted.

So yes, these are great tips, but they are not the only tips that need to be given. Where were the tips urging people to pay attention to what his or her partner wants? Where was sexual assault delineated so that people know what is a crime? Perhaps tips such as "Know that it is a crime to have sex with someone who under the influence of drugs or alcohol and is unable to express consent" and "Know

that it is a crime to force another person to have unwanted sexual contact" should have been on the list. Awareness should not be spread so that people have to live in fear and feel guilty if they are unsuccessful at warding off sexual assaults, but rather so that people know the laws and how others deserve to be treated and respected.

Amanda Robison
Truman State sophomore

A Small Hypocrisy

Something I've noticed about Truman is that they seem to care about our safety an awful lot. They don't want us to drink, need all our organizations to fill out hundreds of forms regarding liability and often send us emails about how leaving our bikes chained to lamp-posts is a huge hazard.

I was thinking about this recently as I

locked up my bike. I was taking off my helmet, like I always do, and looked around. The majority of people weren't taking off their helmets ... because they weren't wearing them!

I thought surely with all the harping about safety the University does there has to be a rule or suggestion somewhere that helmets are a necessity. But there's not. Despite mentioning bicycle registration, obeying traffic regulations, nighttime riding equipment and bicycle parking in the Student Handbook, there's no regulation about wearing a properly fitting helmet.

I know it looks dorky. I know people want to fit in. And many people ride their bikes without protection. But, we go to Truman State University because we've got brains. It's time to start encouraging people to protect them.

Sierra Horton
Truman State senior

KTRM will not change format

In last week's Index, KTRM was a hot topic on the Opinions page. The premise on which all three letters were written is, however, incorrect.

KTRM is not now — nor ever in the foreseeable future will be — a Top 40 pop station, nor was there ever any intention to turn KTRM into a Top 40 pop station. Top 40 death metal maybe, but pop, never. You can never have too much Cannibal Corpse, that's my motto.

The rumor of KTRM's putative switchover comes instead, I would guess, from discussions about how to distinguish the format of our sister online stream, KTRM-2, a matter as yet undecided.

This year, because of record recruitment and a third straight semester of 40% growth or more, we at KTRM added another opportunity for students to get on the air. KTRM-2 is currently available online at our website, ktrm.truman.edu, and is home to over 30 DJs, about a fourth of all on-air students. As station manager, my number one priority is to make sure that everyone who applies through our website and wants a show at their student radio station can get one — no exceptions. So far, we've been able to meet that goal thanks to KTRM-2.

I am very pleased that KTRM is home to students who possess such passion, people who are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that what they love isn't taken away from them.

Student media in general, in fact, are home to many passionate students who, perhaps, go unnoticed. The Index, for example, is not published at the last minute by a team of students who couldn't care less about the quality of its content. On the contrary, just as at KTRM, in the pages of Detours magazine, and on the air at News 36 television, the product is put together by students — and students only — who often prioritize their work here above any other thing they do.

This misunderstanding and ensuing letters have touched many students who don't work at KTRM, but who listen to it frequently. Because of this episode, I've gotten to hear from many of them, something for which I am very grateful.

In this time of shrinking budgets and increasing demands, I hope the passions engendered by a phantom format change burn just as brightly when faced with continued cutbacks that already have seen everything we do in student media get smaller and more difficult. And most unfortunately, the compensation to the students who do all the hard work continues to shrink to almost nothing.

So I encourage the students who work in these media, listeners, readers, viewers — everyone who cares about and partakes in our student media here at Truman, to tell us your opinions about what goes out over the air, or in print, or on television. Write a letter to the Index, or News 36, or Detours. Post on our Facebook walls or tag us on Twitter (@ktrm_fm), or send me an email at ggw7774@truman.edu.

The "teachable moment" from the Switchover That Never Was is not some lesson in PR, but that there are always passionate people behind every organization, and no matter how that passion is manifested, that passion is always to be appreciated.

Geoffrey Woehlk
Truman State senior
KTRM Station Manager

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.

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 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.

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.

Invertebrates and Water Quality

Macroinvertebrates are animals without a backbone and are visible to the unaided eye.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates are collected to assess the quality of water in creeks and river basins.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates are at the base of the food chain in aquatic environments, making them an accurate indicator of a stream's ability to support aquatic life.

Several factors are used to determine water quality, including the number and variety of macroinvertebrates collected.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates include insects, worms, mussels and crayfish.

*according to www.usgs.gov

Protect our streams



Conor Gearin

I often have referred to small streams as 'sewage creeks' or 'drainage ditches.' I know I am not alone — many people my age do. But almost every stream, no matter how tiny, has a name. The stream running through Truman State's campus is called Bear Creek, and according to the Missouri Department of Conservation, it is an important habitat threatened by human misuse. Understanding the issues surrounding vulnerable urban streams is the first step toward rehabilitating them.

Within our campus, Bear Creek flows behind Centennial Hall and crosses Franklin Street to cut through Red Barn Park. At first glance, it might seem insignificant. However, look closer and you will notice schools of small fish in the stretch in Red Barn Park.

Biology professor Jason Luscier said his Introductory Biology I class found snakes and frogs in the creek during a wildlife collection lab. But you also will notice thick mats of algae,

particularly in Red Barn Park. All along the creek, there is dramatic erosion.

According to a 2010 Environmental Protection Agency report, Bear Creek exhibits many of the characteristics of a eutrophic stream — a body of water getting too many nutrients from human-generated waste and fertilizers.

When nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus reach high levels, they become harmful to the community of aquatic organisms. They cause algae to multiply and consume the dissolved oxygen, or DO, available in the water. Aquatic animals like fish and invertebrates need this oxygen to survive, so the aquatic community cannot reach its full potential when DO becomes low.

The EPA has labeled Bear Creek an impaired stream since 2002 because of low DO levels found downstream from Kirksville. One of the main causes of pollution the 2010 report identified was storm runoff carrying pollutants from Kirksville urban areas, including Truman's campus.

Biology professor Cynthia Cooper leads a Stream Team that monitors Bear Creek within Truman's campus. She said low DO levels are not as much of a problem on campus as they are downstream. However, she rated the water quality as of Sept. 16 in Red Barn Park as "poor," based on the health of the invertebrate community.

Though the pollution of Bear Creek comes from a variety of sources, we should take better care of our stretch. Earlier this month I fished

from the creek an unused aerosol can of insect repellent. What we allow to enter the water in our stretch of the stream affects conditions downstream. If we could at least stop the frequent student littering and try to remove trash when we see it, it would be a noticeable step forward.

However, much more ought to be done. Luscier said the erosion along Bear Creek is because of a lack of good plants along the banks of the creek, which is known as the riparian zone.

"I've thought from day one that it would be great to use Bear Creek as a living laboratory to demonstrate the importance of riparian vegetation," he said.

If Truman employees planted appropriate riparian shrubs and herbs along Bear Creek, it would improve erosion control, the quality of the riparian habitat, and the beauty of the stream. It might help prevent grass clippings, which contribute to the overgrowth of algae, from ending up in the stream.

The most important thing to do is educate ourselves about the issues regarding urban streams and recognize their importance as habitat. Public understanding of the importance of our streams is the essential first step to accomplishing meaningful change.

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

Cartoon

By Megan Archer

