

## Our View Ferguson needs help

In light of the events in Ferguson, Missouri, during the Thanksgiving holiday, many in the Truman and Kirksville communities are looking for ways to make sense of the situation.

As an Editorial Board, we would like to encourage everyone to join the conversation. The issues of police militarization, race relations, profiling, race discrimination, distrust of law enforcement and others that have risen to the surface during the Michael Brown case still are very much alive in our society and need to be discussed.

However, as with any conversation, we encourage you to keep an open mind and respect others' voices and opinions. Many have been quick to form opinions and make judgments about the Ferguson community, its residents, Ferguson and St. Louis County police forces and protestors — both peaceful and provocative.

We urge you to reach out to your friends, classmates and co-workers and have those conversations even if they are difficult. Be especially mindful of those who are from St. Louis — many Truman students have ties there. Ask them how they are doing. Many St. Louisans still are in a state of shock and will appreciate your support — a kind listening ear can be more meaningful than a friend on a soap box.

However, we would like to remind readers that what this community needs right now — more than opinions or louder outside voices — is helping hands.

There are many ways to get involved. We suggest donating food items and personal hygiene products to the food bank, making online monetary contributions to local nonprofit organizations such as I Love Ferguson or Reinvest North County or, best of all, volunteering time to help local nonprofits and charities reach out to community members.

The most important thing to remember is the need is there, so all one needs to do is reach out to those who are struggling, whether as a friend or an anonymous donor. Give back. Get involved. Join the conversation.

## Appreciate short stories

Long live the short story.

Forgotten about in high school literature classrooms, unloved by the general public and dwarfed by its literary cousin, the novel — the short story is terribly underappreciated. If you want to explore what the genre has to offer, Hunter S. Thompson's "Screwjack and Other Short Stories" is a collection of surrealist short stories that is original, raw and absurd.

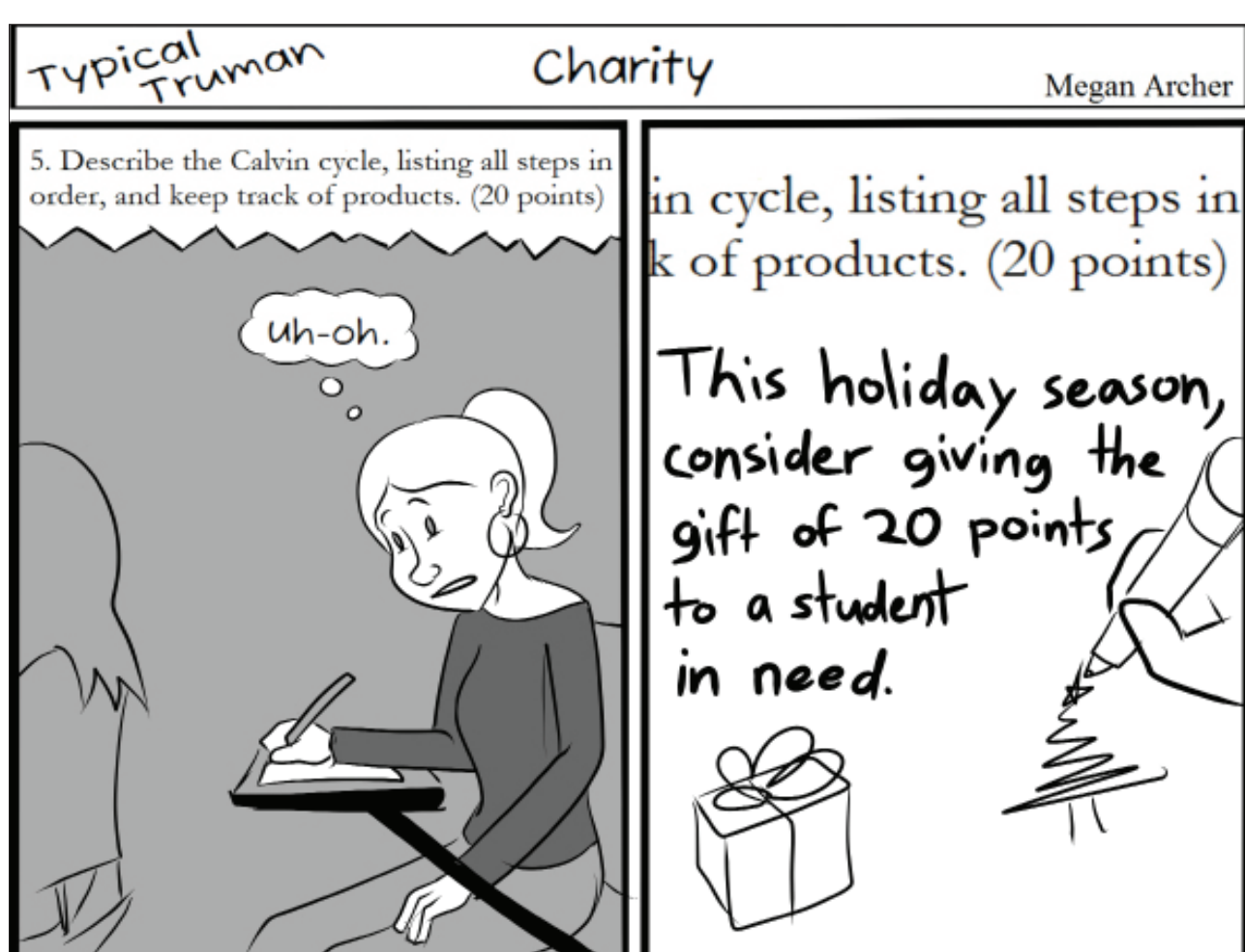
The collection's first story, "Mescalito," is a poetic stream-of-consciousness narration of Thompson's first mescaline experience. Struggling with writer's block in a Los Angeles hotel room during winter 1969, Thompson penned journal entries that vacillate between absurd, paranoid delusions and insightful, gonzo takes on American culture during 1969. The story is seriously disjointed, but it feels rushed enough that it's okay if something doesn't make sense. I'm somewhat surprised the anti-drug crusaders haven't seized on this story, because Thompson's sensory descriptions put the reader in his shoes during his drug-induced psychosis. It's humorous, but is surprisingly unnerving.

The second, "Death of a Poet," is much less disjointed. The story is only three pages long and is not for the faint of heart. Within it, Thompson travels to Milwaukee to meet an old friend with a gambling habit and a propensity for beating his wife. In a search for a bottle of whiskey in the man's trailer, Thompson finds himself face-to-face with a naked blow-up-doll that the man uses as a punching bag to keep from beating his wife. When the police arrive during Thompson's visit, the scene gets violent.

The last story, the eponymous "Screwjack," details the narrator's salacious relationship with a cat named Mr. Screwjack. The interspecies love story is poetic, and the narration feels so genuine you'll find yourself in the awkward position of feeling sympathy for the narrator as he describes his sexual relationship with a cat. However, the relationship has its problems and the narrator decides to try to kill the cat. In a struggle for its life, the cat narrowly escapes its lover's vise-like grip around its neck.

The collection's absurdist stories are a quick, riveting read — you'll even find yourself okay with how revolting and twisted the stories are, because you've probably never read anything quite like them. It's the perfect antidote to the short story's fall from grace.

*Robert Overmann is the Editor-in-Chief, and is a senior English major from Cape Girardeau, Mo.*



## Holiday giving is easy



Natalie Carbery

Finances can be tough for college students. Between rent, books and groceries, it can seem like the bank is always empty. However, spare pizza money or extra change left behind in pockets can go a long way to making the holidays a little brighter for families at home as well as in the Kirksville community.

Adopting the needs of an underprivileged child this Christmas is an easy way for a student or family to make a difference in the lives of the many children who will go without food or gifts this holiday season. It can be heartbreaking for a child to wake up to an empty stocking and a bare Christmas tree. It is even worse for children to go hungry.

One of the easiest ways to give is to clean out the kitchen. There are many nonperishable food items that won't be consumed by Christmas that could better serve the Kirksville food pantry. Canned soup and vegetables, pasta and other food items can be donated to Hope's Kitchen, Kirksville's very own pantry, which accepts donations year-round. Donations to Hope's Kitchen can be made at Mary Immaculate Catholic Church at 716 E. Washington St.

Donating toys is another way students and families can make a difference.

The Kirksville Fire Department is running their own Adopt-A-Child Program. To adopt a child, one simply has to visit the Salvation Army at 1004 W. Gardner.

The children range from infants to age 16 within the Kirksville community.

According to the Kirksville Fire Department's webpage, many of the gifts come with a \$25 limit, which makes donating a smaller feat for students. Teams of five students could have a drastic impact on a child's Christmas morning without a detrimental impact on one's bank account.

The act of giving and shopping for donations can serve as a bonding activity among many different clubs and organizations. Picking out gifts for the children can be fun and heartwarming.

Families in the Kirksville community with the means to give can make a difference by helping build up not only their own community, but assisting their neighbors, classmates and coworkers this holiday season.

Beyond helping the children and families of Kirksville, adopting a child for the holiday season brings people together.

If financially able, students should bring their generosity home with them to their own communities and encourage their own family and friends to give whenever they can.

This year, keep the holiday spirit in mind and make a family's holiday brighter by giving what you can — food, gifts or time.

*Natalie Carbery is a junior creative writing major from Chicago, Ill.*

# Volunteering can be rewarding

Of people who have volunteered during the past 12 months...

## 96%

say volunteering enriches their sense of purpose

Source: [unitedhealthgroup.com/-/media/uhg/pdf/2013/unh-health-volunteering-study.ashx](http://unitedhealthgroup.com/-/media/uhg/pdf/2013/unh-health-volunteering-study.ashx)

### Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the academic 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.

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