



Breaks are for recovery

If you're like many of us here on the editorial staff, you spent the first weekend of midterm break the same way you spent every other weekend this semester — studying. Truman State students often have to lug home laptops, textbooks and lab notes to complete assignments due either during or immediately after the break.

While it's important to stay sharp during time off, we think it's even more crucial that students receive a true break from their coursework. If the University declares a week off from classes, students should not be given additional coursework to complete during the break.

Some might argue students need to continue reading, studying and engaging with course materials during breaks to keep from losing ground in the classroom. While it is important for students to remember what they've learned, it's very easy for them to get burned out when they must constantly be in "study mode." Just as periodic breaks during long study sessions to take a walk, chat with friends or clean up the apartment help students recover so they can jump back into their work, breaks during the semester allow students to take a step back, breathe and recharge before jumping back into their coursework for the remainder of the semester.

A week of break spent focused on academics can negatively impact other areas of students' lives. Students visit with family and friends during breaks, take trips for service and pleasure, and prepare for life after college. A break spent studying can put a strain on family relationships especially when students' parents want to take their child out shopping or plan a family gathering only to find out their son or daughter has a five-page essay they were planning to write that night. Moreover, some family members only can spend limited amounts of time with students due to work schedules.

First-year students might use breaks to catch up with friends at home and take time to maintain relationships with friends who attend different schools. For students who struggle with being separated from close family and friends, breaks are essential times to de-stress and enjoy the company of loved ones.

Many upperclassmen also use breaks to prepare for life after college. The week without classes is a prime time to devote to job and internship searches, corresponding with potential employers and tweaking résumés and cover letters. Breaks give students a chance to put their affairs in order and get organized without the hustle and bustle of classes and projects looming.

If students cannot remove themselves from the academic strains of the semester, the break has not fulfilled its purpose. Ideally, students should be relatively free of academic responsibilities and feel able to pursue interests that often are pushed aside during the school year.

Breaks provide a perfect opportunity for students who are struggling in some of their classes or have gotten behind in coursework to catch up on assignments and readings. This can be a much needed respite, giving overwhelmed students who want to get back on top of things the chance to reset and get a jump-start on the second half of the semester.

However, we realize this might somehow imply sympathy for students who have saved copious amounts of work to complete during the break. Many of us have been there before, but recognize this is not how the course load was designed to be completed, and these work and study habits should not be encouraged. Thus, just as we would implore that professors refrain from assigning work during the break, we suggest students make every effort to complete their work before leaving for break so time off truly will be time away from the academic pressures of college.

Together, students and faculty could make schedules which allow for the completion of assignments before a break and work hard to ensure those deadlines are met, leaving the week open for rest and relaxation. We as the editorial board think this would make breaks more meaningful and restful for Truman students, allowing them to pursue relationships and make post-college arrangements without the strain of academics present during the rest of the semester.

College can change ideals



Trevor Hamblin

College is an experience that changes people. While stating this by itself comes as no surprise, families consistently are surprised by how much their "babies" have transformed after even just a semester away. One of the most important changes is the shift that occurs with one's ideologies and ideas concerning the world after attending college.

It was really jarring when I first returned home between semesters. This was back when there still was high tension concerning the events in Ferguson, and my parents had a significantly different take on the situation than I did. It got bad enough that I now enforce a "no talking about politics" policy with my family.

Much of the difference is caused by exposure to more people with different experiences and viewpoints than my own. Much of my growing-up was spent around people who shared similar views with my parents and I enforced those views, as they were what I had the most knowledge of and experience with. However, now having met many different people, I have a more varied vantage point to perceive the world.

The other major contributor to this ideological shift is the meat of the college experience — classes.

Simply by learning things, one sees the world differently. For example, as a communication major, much of my major-specific classes have focused on redefining what communication and language are, and what they mean.

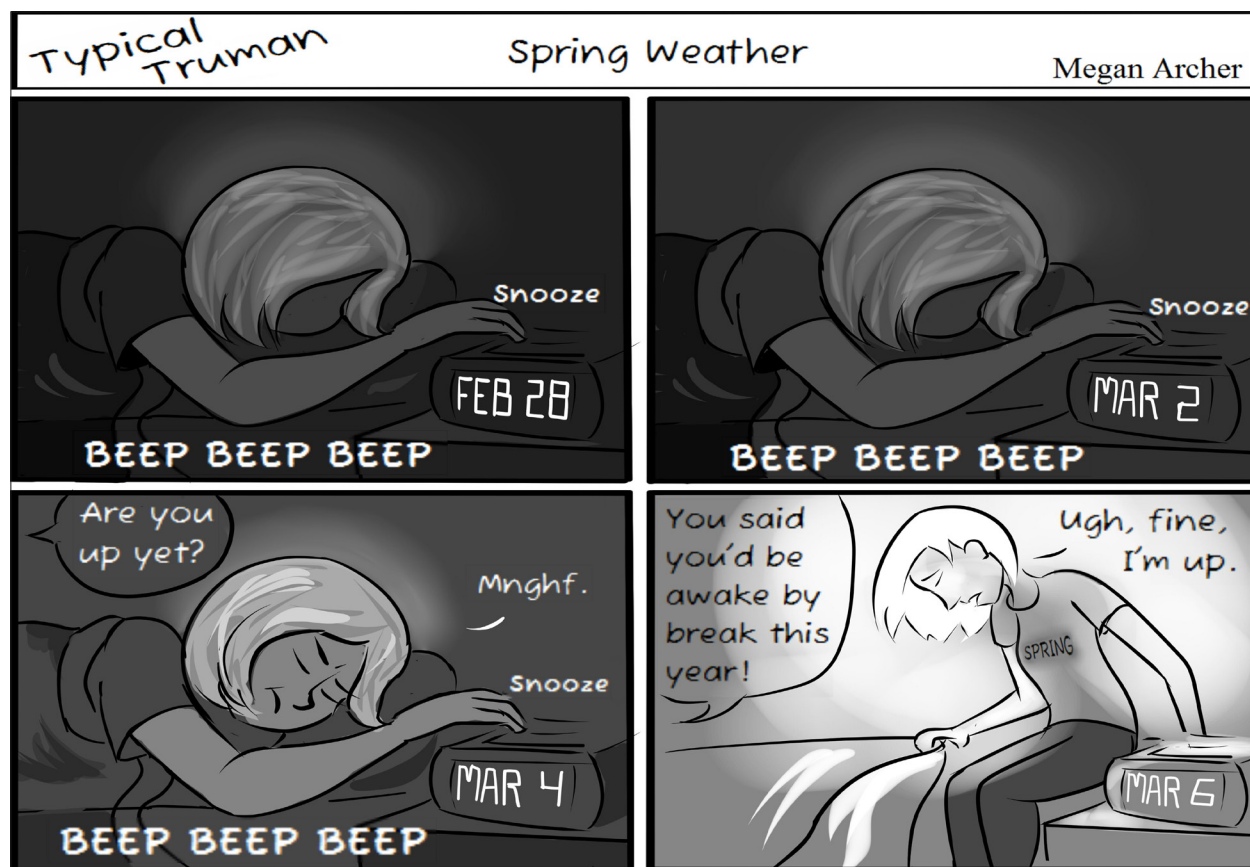
Another contributing factor is that most students find themselves with a new sense of freedom upon leaving the house. I for one really welcomed this particular change. The no-longer constant eye of my family made me a little more adventurous in terms of how I phrase my thoughts and feelings, and in my patterns of speech.

This last factor also can manifest in more extreme ways — the most common one being a rapid turn to partying from a sheltered upbringing. While I have no experience of this firsthand, a sudden change like that certainly would cause a shift in worldview — or, more likely, is the result of a sudden shift in worldview.

Because of these factors, one's relationship with one's parents can be changed irrevocably, and not always for the better. After all, parents instilled their values in us for a reason — they truly believed they were what was best for us. So when we decide to take a different path, it can be jarring for them.

However, positive change can come from these ideological shifts. It's one of the most important elements in discovering who we are as individuals. After all, how we view the world is a very important reflection on who we are. And if we never changed, then how would the world ever change?

Trevor Hamblin is a freshman English and communication major from Moberly, Mo.



Copy chief says goodbye to Index



Andrea Trierweiler

Four years ago, before setting foot on campus for Truman Week, I was hired as a copy editor for the Truman State Index. A post on the Class of 2015 Facebook group led me to apply for the position. I chose to attend Truman for its Master of Arts in Education program, having decided not to pursue a career in journalism, but I looked to continue an activity I enjoyed during high school.

Throughout the past few years I worked my way from copy editor to Copy Chief, taking on weightier responsibilities. Now, poised to graduate at the end of this semester, duty calls — so I am stepping down from the position which has given me so much, to focus on schoolwork. In my final piece for the Index, I want to reflect on some of the valuable experiences I have had during my time working for student media.

As a freshman, joining the copy desk was a way for me to get involved with campus activities. I just wanted to meet others who shared my interests, and I did — my coworkers understood my hatred for comma splices and typos. Having just been released into the scary world of living on my own, I found a place to belong at this University.

Sophomore year brought some new faces to the desk, but I couldn't have asked for a better set of coworkers. We always were there to listen to one another's gripes — roommate horror stories, in my case — as

we slashed out Oxford commas together. One of those coworkers even "rescued" me by asking me to move in with her that spring semester so I could get away from my intolerable roommate. But the best part of that year was going to a journalism convention in New York City, one example of the many great experiences that investing in an organization can provide.

During my junior year, my leadership skills were put to the test when I was promoted to Copy Chief. I had never been much of a leader, but the experience was just what I needed. I got to work alongside my best friend as we figured out how to manage a staff. Our proudest moment was winning a golden trophy from the Missouri College Media Association for producing the best college newspaper in the state. Moments like those made me feel like all the challenges that came with the job paid off.

It wasn't always easy. The staff worked some long nights just waiting on that last story to come in so we could edit it, losing precious time to sleep and do homework. Some days I felt like just a cog in the machine, but seeing that finished product in print every Thursday made me remember how important every Index staffer's role is, from the writers, designers and photographers whose work was showcased on the pages to the copy editors who worked behind the scenes.

When I look back on my time at the Index, I don't think I'll remember the bad occasions, like being forced to work on a snow day or hearing negative comments about the paper around campus. I'll remember the good times, like the jokes, the trip to New York City and the feeling of accomplishment.

So if given the chance to be part of an organization such as student media — be part of it, beyond just earning that résumé line. It truly could impact your life.

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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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