

Create your own life adventures



Emily Wichmer
2015-16 News Editor

Well, this is it. I've cleaned out my desk. I've logged out of my social media accounts — after a few too many Facebook hacks from officemates throughout the years. And now this is it. It's time to fit my farewell to the Truman State University Index in a mere 800 words.

I could spend these words gushing about this publication, about the lessons I've learned, people I've met and experiences I've gleaned.

But I won't. Instead of focusing on the past four years, I want to focus on the future. Because the fact I'm currently having to face is I'm graduating in two weeks and have no set career plans. And it might come as a shock to hear I'm all right with that.

Unlike many of my fellow seniors who have jobs lined up, are planning trips to Europe or are celebrating acceptance letters from graduate schools, my life post-undergrad seems up in the air. I haven't even begun to apply for jobs.

Now, in the interest of full disclosure, I still get people who make excuses for my lack of a career. See, I'm getting married this summer to my absolute best friend and moving to Washington D.C. But before you groan and write me off as one of those hated people who has their life together and posts engagement photos on social media, let me just say that getting married does not mean I have my life together in any way.

I'm leaving my family and my friends, and I'm moving to a place where the only person I know is my fiance and his cats. Beyond deciding who I get to annoy for the rest of my life, I have no set plans. And yet I'm okay with this because, well, not knowing is part of the adventure.

There seems to be a large group in our society who thinks the phrase, "I'm not sure what I'm doing after graduation," translates to, "I'm a huge deadbeat." I mean, they've had four whole years to figure out what they want to do with their lives. How could they not know?

The answer is it's absolutely possible to not know. In four years I've barely had enough time to figure out what the heck a W-2 is. And if someone wants to explain it again to me, please do — asking for a friend. We spend "the best years of our lives" in a place far away from home where we're expected to learn about science, math, history and English, plus real-life skills like doing laundry, paying bills and dealing with roommate drama. And on top of all that, we're supposed to stop in our tracks one day as if we'd been struck with a sudden moment of clarity and realize we're meant to become a playwright for a British musical, or a martial arts instructor dedicating their life to teaching kung fu to polar bears so they can combat global warming.

Kudos to you if you have figured out your life goals. But to insist everyone has to figure out their plan in four years is not realistic. The trouble with college being labeled as "the best years of your life" is it sets up any time after as a huge letdown. In reality, it's only the beginning. Our education gives us the tools we need to experience the real adventure — becoming the person you want to be to make your mark on the world. For some people it takes years to find their true calling. For others, it takes nearly a lifetime. And others lose sight of that adventure and settle for something they don't love.

If you never lose your sense of adventure, you'll never settle. My parting words to you all are to never settle. You can bide your time in your retail job if it's getting you to your next big step, but never lose your sense of adventure. If that means having your relatives throw their hands up in despair at your lack of a career, so be it. Take the time you need to get your feet firmly planted so you can find your adventure.

I want to write. I want to travel. I want to meet new people and learn new things. And I never want to stop learning. I'm ready to put myself out there and find my own adventure.

So cheers to the Index, and to the readers who have managed to stick with this column to the 800th word. Here's to your own life adventures — and may you never know what you're doing next.

Emily Wichmer is a senior French and communications major from St. Louis, Mo.

Build memories, not a résumé



Rose vonHatten
2015-16 Copy Chief

"You know what would be fun? If instead of 'passive voice,' we wrote 'zombie attack.'"

I have a whole notebook full of quotes as strange and hilarious as this one, carefully transcribed around notes about what time people arrived and left, names of staffers, logs of edits. When I leave the Student Media Center as the copy chief for the last time this week, I will take that log with me. No, it's not because I want to know the exact amount of name checks each one of the hardworking copy editors have done, though I am proud of their hard work. Recorded in those pages are countless memories — sass, wordplay, humor, personality.

My choice to join the Truman State University Index sophomore year is one I do not regret. While I've been a communication major from the time I filled out my very first college forms, it took me much longer to work up the nerve to apply to be an Index copy editor. I've known since high school that editing was a path I wanted to pursue, but I also can be an incredibly shy person in unfamiliar surroundings. When I finally did apply, I discovered something entirely unexpected — a second home and family.

Two months after the Index hired me, I found out I was going to be the 2014-15 assistant copy chief. Many months later, the copy chief said I'd been selected because I was so gung ho about getting the position. I was so passionate about editing and the Index that I, the newest member of copy desk, leapfrogged staffers who had been there for years to earn the position and won "Fastest Ladder Climber" at the year-end banquet.

While I knew the Index would look good on a résumé, that's not why I joined or stayed. Initially, I wanted to see what being a copy editor was really like and I figured it was also high time I joined an organization. But as I started to make friends, have work stories

to tell and become a part of copy desk jokes, I realized this office was where I belonged, among people who understood my zeal for journalism.

All of this was possible because of one thing — passion. I cared about and enjoyed what I was doing, so I was willing to put more effort in and, as a result, went farther faster. This is something I want to stress to all the students like me who worriedly look at their résumés and wonder if they've done enough. At the end of the day, it's about quality, not quantity. Don't just do something because you think it will look good on a résumé. Be somewhere because you want to be there. Do something because it makes you happy. Truman State is stressful enough without adding time-consuming activities you don't enjoy.

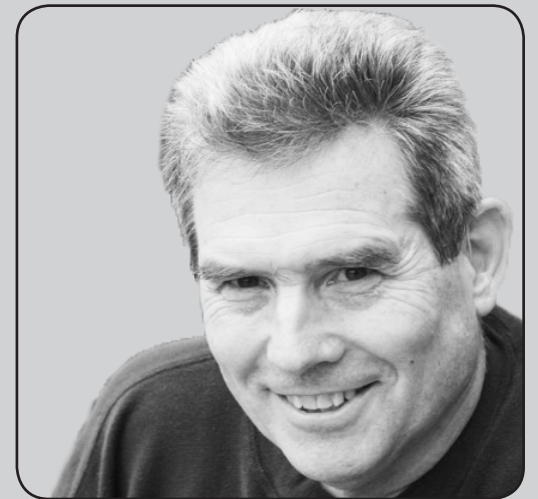
Build memories, not résumé lines. When I look back at my time here, what I'll remember is junior year, when my roommate nearly ran down the editor-in-chief at 4:30 a.m., because he'd run onto the road in front of our car to catch a ride home. I'll remember sophomore year just after I joined, when senior Meg Robison — my successor as copy chief — and I figured out we'd actually met years before at a birthday party, and I was so relieved to even kind of know someone there. I'll remember the nights last semester when Meg Robison and I couldn't stop geeking out about Shakespeare or some musical or some edit. I'll remember the way any time someone said "Hey now," three different staffers would chime in with three different songs. I'd start singing "Hey now, don't dream it's over," from Crowded House's "Don't Dream It's Over." Freshman Molly Thal, assistant copy chief, would become Hilary Duff, singing "Hey now, this is what dreams are made of" from "What Dreams Are Made Of." Senior Umme Arif would sing "All Star" by Smash Mouth, belting "You're an All Star, get your game on, go play."

Working late into the night to put out a weekly paper has been a small price to pay to be part of this family, and it has been an absolute pleasure to serve as copy chief. No matter where I end up, part of my identity will always be "Index staffer," in the same way I still define myself as a swimmer, homeschooler and proud St. Louisan. To everyone who makes this paper what it is, from the fearless editors-in-chief I have worked under, to the passionate and funny copy editors I have worked alongside, to the hardworking section editors I have wrangled edits with, I have just one thing to say — thanks for the memories.

Rose vonHatten is a senior communication major from St. Louis, Mo.



What advice do you have for graduating seniors?



David Gillette
Economics professor

While mine still continues, I hope your time at Truman has been equally as enjoyable as mine and wish you all much success. That said, the advice Laertes received from Polonius when departing for Paris seems appropriate.

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Keep the campus dialogue going, stay critical and informed about Truman's student media



Dan Mika
Contributing Writer

If I had to describe my time at Truman State, and more specifically the Truman State University Index, I'd go with this — "I walked in a dumb freshman and left a White House correspondent."

I'll get to that "White House correspondent" later. For now, I'd like to talk about how much this newspaper has meant to me these past four years. I promise to keep the sugary-sweet thank you's to a minimum.

I walked into the Index's office in 2012, wearing a dark suit as I headed across the hot, dry, 90-degree August day. I immediately realized I was overdressed when everyone in the office was wearing shorts, but I didn't care when they said I could write for the opinions section. I went back to my dorm, smiling like an idiot and sweating underneath my cheap, slightly-too-small suit.

A few weeks later, I switched to the features section. Alumna Emily Battmer had to cut the first story I wrote for her because — and I cannot stress this enough — it sucked so much. It sucked so badly that much of the original story we printed out for editing was indecipherable because of all the ink on it.

But I slowly began to improve and moved to the news section, where I worked as an assistant editor my sophomore year. I liken it to owning a 1960s Ford Mustang — it was a lot of hard work and I got a lot of headaches while working there, but I'd defend it to the death if anyone tried to mess with it.

The next two years were a blur as I jumped around from the Kirksville Daily Express to an internship in the Missouri Senate and to this point in my life now. And though it's occasionally drained me of my time and will to survive, I can't imagine being where I am now without having printed my words on the paper you're holding.

That leads us to today. As you read this April 28, I'm in Washington D.C. for the first ever White House College Reporter Day. While you're reading this paper somewhere on campus, I'm wandering around the West Wing and preparing to ask Josh Earnest, White House press secretary, a few questions in an upcoming briefing. And even though I'm technically only a White House correspondent for one day, I'm still forever grateful for all the incredible lessons I learned because of this paper.

So, as I prepare to buy my graduation robes while holding back an anxiety attack, I have one

last request for you, the readers of this paper — keep talking about what is in the paper. Does what you read make you mad at the University? Good. Talk about it, and demand better from your school. Does what you read make you mad at the Index? Awesome. Send in a letter to the editor, or better yet, join the paper and ask the hard questions this University needs to answer.

To paraphrase my dad, who escaped Soviet-era Poland to come the U.S. — you can love your University without loving the people that run it. And that's what I ask of you now — to contribute to a greater conversation about how this place can get better. Because this isn't the president's University or the faculty's. It's yours. And ultimately, you have the power to change it.

Dan Mika is a senior communication major from Chicago, Ill.