

## Take responsibility and help save the environment



**Holly Fisher**

This week, winter has come to a close as Kirksville residents begin to wander outside their homes to enjoy the beautiful, sunny weather, but this glorious sunshine comes with a dark cloud looming over it. We are seeing the effects of climate change, and without action, these effects will mean much more than nice, warm days during the end of winter.

During this day and age, it is impossible to deny global warming as a scientific fact. NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a report earlier this year revealing 2015 was the hottest year in recorded history, and 15 of the 16 hottest recorded years have occurred since 2001, according to a January 2016 NASA article. Furthermore, this January was the most “abnormally warm” month ever recorded, according to a February 2016 The Weather Channel article. Considering these records go all the way back to 1880, one thing is clear — the temperature is rising, and it’s rising fast.

Even though the existence of climate change is no longer a question, the degree to which the process is natural or man-made still is debatable — but only to a certain extent. The scientific community has published a very large amount of research about the effects of increased carbon dioxide gas and other pollutants on Earth’s atmosphere. Even if there are some natural causes for the changes we see today, the information we have about fossil fuel emissions and the strong correlation between those emissions and recent climate trends make it nearly impossible to deny human responsibility. And yet, while 63 percent of Americans believe in global warming, only 48 percent believe it is caused by human activities, according to the 2014 Yale project on climate change communication, the most recent survey data.

So there are a good number of people who accept the existence of climate change and there is an even smaller number of people who are willing to do something about it. In the news and current presidential primary elections, there have been a lot of opinions floating around but not all have a positive result. Some people admit humans are the reason for climate change, but because the rest of the world is just as much to blame, they think America shouldn’t be held responsible. Based on the total estimated amount of green-

house gas emissions, however, the United States is second only to China, according to a November 2014 World Resources Institute article. In fact, America alone was responsible for 27 percent of the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide emissions from 1851-2011, according to the same article. That’s more than a quarter of the world’s existing carbon dioxide pollution.

If we aren’t responsible, then who is? We need to accept responsibility for our impact on the environment, and part of accepting responsibility is taking action. We need the government to start funding more alternative energy projects and other environmental policies, but the government can’t do everything. As individuals, we are just as much responsible for contributing to climate change as anyone else.

By now, the “Go Green” message is everywhere. It even seems like we’re being beaten over the head with it at times, but that is only because the message is so important. It does not take a huge amount of effort to be environmentally conscious, and therefore, there is no excuse for not being aware.

The path to becoming environmentally conscious is simple, but sometimes the simple changes seem too insignificant to really make a difference. However, when people all across America put in the effort, the numbers add up. Little things like putting an extra bin next to the trash can for recycling, turning off the lights when leaving a room or cutting down on shower times might seem trivial in the moment, but their impact is enormous. There are thousands of other ways to be environmentally conscious, too. Carpool to save gas, use double-sided printing to save paper, bring reusable bags to the grocery store to cut down on plastic waste — these are the little things that will help save the environment.

So, while it is nice we have had such a short winter and don’t have to spend the next month in three layers of clothing, there are consequences we need to be thinking about. Environmental change is not something we need to leave for future generations. It’s affecting us here and now, and it’s our responsibility to do something about it. Take responsibility, and take action.

*Holly Fisher is a senior English and linguistics major from Elizabethtown, Ky.*

## Feminism is about equality



**Lesley Reno**

Feminism gets a bad rap in today’s society. Front runners of the feminist movement such as actress Emma Watson and singer Beyoncé have tried to dispel confusion and bring a positive light to the topic. Despite that, unfortunately, feminism still is treated like something dirty and even taboo. People don’t understand what the true meaning of feminism is, so they view it as something bad they need to avoid.

I think feminism is one of those words people make judgments about because of what they hear through social media and other secondary sources. Most of the time those sources can be misleading and do not provide a full picture, so to help combat that I am going to address what the word feminism means. Feminism is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. In simpler terms, feminism is the fight for equality among the sexes in all aspects of life. Because people are not aware of the true meaning of the word feminism, there are many misconceptions that come with the word, but there are three that I feel are the most harmful to the movement.

For some reason, people think men who identify as feminist are against their own gender or less masculine. People take the “fem” prefix as a cue only women are allowed to be feminist, and if you are a guy it somehow makes you less manly, which is untrue. Feminism is not a war between the sexes. When a male is a feminist, it does not mean he thinks women are the dominant sex. It just means he advocates for equality, which is something I hope everyone would want.

Another misconception about feminism is that being feminist means you hate men. One word used to describe this misconception is “feminazi.” This is a term used to describe feminists who are

seen as radical or who want superiority over men rather than equality. I am not denying there are people like this out there — because there are — but they are not the feminists they claim to be. Feminism is about equality — not only for women, but for men as well.

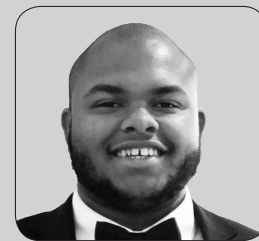
People also seem to believe feminism is only for women’s rights. This is not accurate at all, and I think this is why many people are so willing to view feminism negatively. Feminism is, in fact, a movement for all people’s rights. An example of how it encompasses all genders is how feminism is trying to bring light to the fact men can be and are sexually assaulted and harassed. Also, feminism helps to combat society’s stereotypical view of what being a man means. While it is true women have been at the forefront of the movement, it is actually a movement for all genders. Feminism seeks to balance out the powers in the world so people of all genders are on a level playing field — something that has yet to happen.

Feminism is not a dirty word that should be hushed every time it is said. It is not something that should be swept under the rug and forgotten. It is something that should be taken seriously. Men and women deserve equal opportunities to advance in this world and to make their mark. If you are for gender equality, then chances are you are a feminist, and it is something you should be proud of. So the next time someone starts condemning feminism, kindly remind them what it really means to be a feminist.

*Lesley Reno is a freshman communication major from Renick, Mo.*



### What questions do you have about the voting process?



**Franchot Walker**  
Senior

One of my biggest questions is how are the electoral votes decided? Because it doesn’t always follow the popular vote, and I don’t totally get that all the time.



**Deja Bolton**  
Sophomore

As far as voting, I guess I’d want to know what I’m voting for or what values that person has that I’m voting for.



**Sif Fister**  
Freshman

I guess it would be, what are the primaries for and what do I have to do after I’m registered between now and the election day? Do I have to do anything? Or are there things I could do?



**Casey Whitehead**  
Junior

I’ve always wondered about the local level, what different bond propositions are and there’s certain election seasons that you can do things, and there’s certain election seasons you can’t do things.



**William Briggs**  
Sophomore

More so of who counts [the votes], how are they processed, if the processes are very see through and visible, and so like anyone can go and see how it’s being counted or can understand the process itself. Or if it’s kept quiet and no one can actually see how many votes are being delegated to each candidate.



**Emily Kershner**  
Freshman

Honestly I feel like I’m not very educated about it yet, so just what are the best sources of information? Like where to find information about the people that you’re voting on, and what’s counted as reliable.