



Falling for Kirksville

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Winter might be coming, but first there is a long Kirksville autumn.

Perhaps the most beautiful season in Kirksville, fall brings out the very best of our small town and Truman State's campus. Aside from football games and tailgating, this college town comes into its own during the autumn months.

Hiking at Thousand Hills State Park or Rainbow Basin is ideal during fall. Not only can students and locals enjoy watching the leaves change colors, but each location has trails for running, hiking and biking. For those of us who prefer more moderate temperatures, this change of seasons means adventuring farther away with more enthusiasm.

This year, don't let the beauty and fun of Kirksville during the autumn go unnoticed.

In town, fall brings life to The Square. The weekly farmers' market, open during weekends, sells the best produce Kirksville has to offer. The food is fresh, in season and locally grown — unknowingly pandering to the locavore populace, those whose diets principally consist of locally grown or produced food. Local honey farmers are a staple, with many offering artisan honey such as orange-flavored, or my personal favorite, cherry-flavored honey.

Sweet Espressions, on the south side of The Square, offers some of the best fall desserts and

coffees in Kirksville. Besides pumpkin sweets and s'mores lattes, the coffee shop sells bags of freshly-made kettle corn. The best time to buy this treat is during October, when the sugar used to make the kettle corn is pink for Breast Cancer Awareness month.

On campus, Truman throws its annual Oktoberfest, taking place this year in the parking lot on Franklin Street south of Centennial Hall and north of Barnett Hall. It is a great time for students to enjoy root beer, popcorn, and other snacks. It is a time to socialize and shop the excellent fundraising and awareness tables Truman organizations set up.

Autumn at Truman also means a shift in events. No longer are the majority of events advertised on The Quad or social media based on being welcomed back or helping new students get to know each other. Now, the Student Activities Board really can shine by bringing a major comedian and concert to campus.

Volunteering in Kirksville is especially pleasant during fall. The local YMCA offers 5K runs for students and locals. Assisted living facilities for the elderly are more than willing to welcome students to play games with their residents. The SERVE Center in the basement of the Student Union Building always is offering new service opportunities indoors and outdoors. Service can also be an active event, the fall months often entail other runs — both 5K and 10K — that benefit various philanthropies. Many of these runs include T-shirts to bulk up the wardrobes of thrifty college students. These runs also integrate students with Kirksville residents.

For this senior, autumn in Kirksville has become the most peaceful time at college. It is when so many of my favorite Truman memories have been made. It is when I rushed Alpha Sigma Gamma service sorority, when I learned to hit my stride academically, and when I got the courage to adventure out of my comfort zone by trying new activities and clubs.

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