

## OUR OPINION

## Sochi sideshows upstage events

If Beijing was the darling of the Olympic ball, then Sochi is the ugly stepsister.

China showed the world what the Olympics and the opening games could be and became the benchmark for all games to follow. Our imaginations were delighted by wonderful spectacles and the warm hospitality of the eastern nation.

In contrast, Russia has been the black eye the rest of the world is currently tolerating. Stories of half finished hotels with poor amenities are only the beginning of the reports circulating the globe.

Social media is accusing Russia of a variety of atrocities.

The most sensational is that thousands of stray dogs around the area of the games were killed. Another story said a whole building was leveled because it may have housed terrorists seeking to harm athletes and attendees of the games.

Perhaps the most random story of Russia's Olympic persona claims that many of the guest rooms were decorated with photographs of a

shirtless Vladimir Putin. The New Yorker reported that Putin dismissed the claims and called the guests "babies who cry."

Russia was granted permission to host the Winter Games this year based on the assurance the country would invest a sizable amount of money in preparation.

Politically, this takes Putin down a notch in comparison to the recent upswing he had been enjoying. Prior to the Olympics, there were many on Facebook who said Putin would be a better president than Barack Obama.

Most of the world is probably secretly just hoping a terrorist attack does not happen and that the KGB doesn't abduct any civilians.

Perhaps Putin is right. The world in many ways has become soft and the Olympics are not about the biggest budget, the biggest presentation, or even the biggest ego. It's about showcasing the best athletes in the world.

If everything else is falling apart around them, maybe their performances will seem even more spectacular than usual.

## '20/20' special draws ire from conservatives

Republicans again attempt to conceal the truth to meet their agenda, outraged that television network ABC would reveal a darker side to guns and gun ownership.

A 20/20 special that aired on Jan. 31, titled

"Young Guns," has sparked fire and attack from many conservative media outlets including the National Rifle Association's (NRA) radio show, according to an article on [mediamatters.org](http://mediamatters.org). The special, hosted by Diane Sawyer, revealed the dangerous truth about guns and children in America.

During the special, Sawyer reported some alarming statistics, one being that 1.7 million children in America live in homes with unsecured and loaded firearms. This alone reveals where many people's priorities lie, but when the NRA and other conservatives lash out for ABC running such programming, it diminishes any doubts.

After the Sandy Hook shooting on Dec. 14, 2012, attempts were made to put tighter restrictions on gun ownership. The time had come for the

gun issue to be discussed, but the NRA said it was too soon, very common words for them in the wake of any shooting. The fact is, sweeping the truth under the rug does not alter it later, it only shows how much one group wants others to forget so they can baptize them in lies all over again. If the truth is never revealed, it never has to be discussed, and the recent 20/20 special only further proves their desire to conceal the truth.

According to an article on USA Today, guns kill twice as many children as cancer, and in 2010 alone, firearm injuries for children and teenagers was three times that of U.S. soldiers injured in the Afghanistan war.

In the end, this brings up an important question: Which is more important — guns or children? The answer is obvious when it comes to these hypocrites. Family values are what make up the Republican Party, but close examination reveals the façade these values conceal: for the love of a destructive weapon they would gladly sacrifice the safety of their families. The fetus they so valiantly fight to protect loses its value in the wake of its birth, becoming a child that is worth less than a cold weapon of death.



Jesse O. Walls

## Snow day challenges

I sat up in bed, grabbed my buzzing phone, and saw the ALERT for a new voicemail. "Who calls so early?" I thought as I checked the message.

"Hello, school parents. Due to the hazardous road conditions, school will not be in session today." The time was 6 a.m. My brain went from sleep to overdrive in a matter of one minute and 17 seconds.

The weather has been crazy recently. (Can I get an amen?) Each day last week posed the question of whether our campus would be in session. It was also uncertain if area secondary schools would be open. For Missouri Southern students who are parents, not only are we thinking of our assignments and teachers, but also those of our kiddos.

Thirty-four percent of Southern's students are non-traditional, according to Dory Quinn, Project Stay director. Not every

non-traditional student is a parent, but several are. A non-traditional student is defined by MSSU as anyone over the age of 25. MSSU does not collect data on the number of students who are parents.

The phone call I received that morning from my son's school came as a surprise. The night before, we thought school would be in session. In fact, his school's social media announcement included a midday note that classes would probably be held. However, at almost literally the last moment, when the school buses tested road conditions, the grave importance of student safety rose to the surface. We live in a community near Joplin and many of the families in the district live on rural roads.

So I jumped out of bed, winced as I stepped on a Lego, quickly dialed my backup babysitter, woke my sleepy kiddo earlier

than usual, got us both ready, and then took his backpack out of the car, grabbed my backpack, checked for my homework, realized I left my homework stuck in the pile of textbooks that I had fallen

asleep reading the night before, ran back inside to grab the paper, and then drove on those treacherous roads to drop him off early so I could try to make it to class on time.

My suggestion to fellow parents is to have a plan in place long before you need to implement it. Have a backup childcare plan. Have a backup for your backup. You might check with YMCA facilities for a Snow Day program.

A good thing to put into



Liz Spencer

practice is to touch base with those backups when the weather is uncertain just to give a heads up to the provider or facility. If you are not a parent, keep these tips in mind if you become a parent someday; meanwhile, realize that being a backup provider is a great opportunity to help another student out or to make some cash.

Sitting in class on that fateful morning, I pulled my notebook out of my backpack and, alas, a little sock bearing the words "Future Lion" slipped out along with it. In spite of the confusion and conflict of the unexpected snow day, I was reminded once again just how important it is for me to set a good example for my little lion cub. No matter how challenging it gets, I know that finishing my degree will not only help me attain my dreams and goals, it will help him see the value of staying in school — no matter what.

## Truth about a modern day role model

Have you ever wondered about that rainbow car in the parking lot? What is it? Pop-Tart? Cat? The result of Skittles that weren't properly digested? No! In fact, it is the Nyan-Car! The eight-bit half pastry, half feline trailing rainbows, more popularly known as Nyan-Cat, is the image stretched across both sides of the little light blue car. Nyan-Cat is an animated gif that went viral on the Internet back in 2011.

"The Pop-Tart Cat animation was posted on the daily comics site LOL-COMICS run by illustrator Chris Torres, also known as prguitarman, on April 2nd, 2011," reports the website [knowyourmeme.com](http://knowyourmeme.com). "The original drawing was based on his own Russian Blue cat, Marty, and was drawn after receiving two separate



Ana Warner



ANA WARNER/THE CHART

The Nyan-Cat is suppose to spread smiles and happiness, says car owner Ana Warner, junior graphic design major.

suggestions for a cat and a Pop-Tart during a Red Cross charity drawing event on Livestream."

Now, why in the world would someone have something so flashy on their car? Well, the owner, AnaMarie Warner, will gladly tell you why, as I just so happen to be her! After all the doom and gloom following the Joplin tornado on May 22, 2011, I wanted to do something that would make people smile, something that could possibly brighten someone's whole

day. At the time, I was working at a vinyl and graphics shop called Sik Design. While working there, I had full access to some of the scrap pieces of sticker vinyl. Thusly, before I had Nyan-Cat on my car, I actually had Rainbow Dash's "cutie marks," the little symbol on the rump of the My Little Pony character.

After a few months, I decided it wasn't big enough — not happy enough. It needed to be something that would almost wrap around

the car. Mind you, I'd come up with a plethora of ideas before finally picking one. An ocean of calligraphy-styled magikarp, a Pokemon from the popular TV show Pokemon, swimming across the sides? A gigantic heartless symbol from the video game Kingdom Hearts? Not flashy enough! Finally, I decided to stick with the initial idea of rainbows from the previous decal and go with Nyan-Cat. After all, after the storm comes the rainbow.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Cool depends on who's looking

**Robin Douglas**  
Coordinator of Testing Services - Distance Learning

When I was in college in the 90s, we wore high-waisted jeans and actually thought they looked good. Every woman's, blouse, T-shirt, and jacket had shoulder pads and we thought we looked cool. We wore tight stretch-stirrup pants ... and we thought we

looked cool. We had loud car stereos and Walkmans and we wanted everyone else to think we were cool. Our parents told us we weren't cool, but they weren't cool so we didn't believe them.

Every generation grows up and realizes that the clothes they wore, the TV shows they watched, and a lot of the music they listened to weren't actually that cool, and they realize

that they should have listened to their parents.

There are a few things I know for sure in my old and wiser years: you should always moisturize, use sunscreen, be polite, and keep the volume of your earphones and ear buds at a reasonable level. Why would you think that your teeny tiny eardrum will not be damaged beyond repair if you have your volume

turned up so loud that everyone around you can hear your music?

Here is some free, great advice from one ex-cool person to this generation: You don't look cool with loud music blaring, and if you keep listening to music on volume 11, you won't be able to hear anything by the time you are 50; and never, and I mean never, wear acid-washed jeans.

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