



Reactor lot spat lingers among fans

Some annoyed area is off-limits.

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, September 12, 2009

The University of Missouri decision to close Reactor Field to tailgaters has sparked complaints and protests from students and fans.

Jordan Paul, president of the Missouri Student Association, isn't optimistic the fuss will reverse Mizzou's decision to use the field for media and staff parking. Administrators, the MU Athletic Department and the MU Police Department opted to close the field to tailgaters because of rowdy and illegal behavior from large crowds gathered there.

Paul is working with administrators to find alternative solutions. He has met with MU Chancellor Brady Deaton and Vice Chancellor Cathy Scroggs to discuss several scenarios. They include:

- Allowing tailgaters to use the Hinkson recreation field behind Memorial Stadium on game days. The practice fields off Providence Point Drive, would be a secluded choice, "so it wouldn't become the face of the university," Paul said, referring to image concerns about Reactor Field.

Paul said administrators expressed concerns that tailgating on the fields could cause messy situations for club sports wanting to use them after game day.

- A second option would include raffling spots in general admissions lots to students and organizations. Paul envisions students being allowed to buy parking passes for specific spots for an entire season. Allocating spots at various lots also would prevent the crowd-control problems at Reactor Field, he said. "Students would be more diffused, not in a mosh pit situation," he said.

- A third idea is for the university to sponsor tailgate events, bringing in music, food and drinks for students who could walk to the tailgate sites from on-campus housing or nearby parking garages. One concern Paul has, though, is administrators might overregulate activities, such as capping the number of drinks each student could purchase.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said Deaton, Scroggs and Paul have formed a "working group" to discuss options.

It's clear from online petitions that many students and fans prefer that MU administrators reopen Reactor Field to tailgating.

More than 1,800 people had signed an online petition by yesterday opposing the decision and asking for tailgating alternatives should Reactor Field not reopen. MSA's Facebook group, Rally For Reactor, had more than 3,600 members yesterday. Another Facebook group — "Give Us Our Tailgating Back" started by alumna Logan Carter — calls for fans to boycott MU games. The group had 180 members yesterday.

"If you are like me and think it's stupid, join the group, don't buy tickets and go enjoy the games at a downtown bar, someone that likes you having a beer or six or sixteen," the page says. "The only way the athletic department changes is if it hurts their wallets."

Paul stressed that Carter's initiative is separate from MSA, which continues to encourage MU fans to attend games.

Administrators in the Athletic Department said they're aware of complaints but not any attempts to boycott games.

"We would hope their decision to attend the game wouldn't be based on a policy change that affects less than 5 percent of the game-day parking availability," said Whit Babcock, senior associate athletic director.

Athletic Department spokesman Chad Moller said it would be a "shame" if students decided not to support the team because of the parking lot issue.

"Our students have been unbelievable in the way they've supported our team the last several years," he said in an e-mail. "They've absolutely helped give us a huge home-field advantage. If people don't want to be here for the game, then all we can do is be grateful for the thousands of students who will be here cheering like crazy for the Tigers."

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.



Tailgating finds rhythm without Reactor lot

By Janese Heavin

Sunday, September 13, 2009

Claire Butler was a little disappointed she didn't get to tailgate at Reactor Field on the first home game of her freshman year at the University of Missouri.

11-year-old River Sparks of Savannah relaxes in a car trunk at a tailgate event Saturday at the Phi Kappa Psi lot before the University of Missouri football game.

The Columbia native has been attending Mizzou football games since elementary school, and she was hoping to experience the legendary party spot that was shut down by university higher-ups.

Just as well. Hanging out with sorority sisters on a grassy spot outside the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity house off Providence Road proved to be fun, too, she acknowledged.

A calmer side of tailgating was on display yesterday afternoon on the fraternity's lot, a "family-friendly" pregame destination. The \$20-per-vehicle parking spot provided a shady park-like setting for multiple generations.

Butler and her friends arrived at 11 a.m., six hours before the Tigers played Bowling Green.

Along with MU junior Kaitlyn Link and her mom, Becky, as well as junior Reanne Simmons and her mom, Marca, Butler used afternoon tailgate time to catch up on how the semester is going.

But they were adamant that they were just as enthusiastic about the Tigers game as the men folk.

"The football team is amazing," Kaitlyn Link said.

"I love the game, the pregame, the whole thing," Marca Simmons said. "For me, it's the memories" of her college days at MU and memories in the making.

Tom Blumer, an alumnus and Columbia native, was making tailgating memories tossing a football with his 8-year-old daughter. Blumer, who lives in Lee's Summit, usually enjoys pregame activities in a Tiger Scholarship donor lot, "but we can get more family members in here," he said at the Phi Kappa Psi location. "It's really nice. This is family time."

Tailgating also attracts Missouri's elite.

"I plan to tailgate with the folks from the attorney general's office near the stadium," said Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster, caught on campus before the game. "I'm pretty excited. ... The first thing I did was buy a new gold shirt and contribute to the financial well-being of the university."

Tom Williams, joined by four sons, made game day seem downright patriotic.

"No matter where you go" to tailgate, "it's so much fun," Williams said. "It's the atmosphere, the camaraderie. Everybody has the same goal, to focus on relaxing and see that MU does well. We work all week. This is the time to relax, and I can't think of a better way to do that."

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MU research could help dieters

Sunday, September 13, 2009 | 6:23 p.m. CDT
BY The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Research from the University of Missouri offers the promise of turning off food-induced happiness — something that could help dieters.

Assistant professor of psychological sciences Matthew Will determined that deactivating an area of the brain that regulates emotion stopped rats from eating, even though they seemed to want more food.

He told the Columbia Daily Tribune, "It short-circuited the last switch that would cause them to consume what they're craving."

Will says the research shows that two different brain circuits control a rat's motivation to seek and to consume.

The research indicates that food euphoria is similar to a drug addiction.

Will says the study could lead to further research.



Research offers sign of a binge trigger

Rats seem to like but lay off eating.

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, September 12, 2009

Advertisement

Dozens of weight-loss formulas boast that they make dieters feel full faster, but most do nothing to shut off the brain's cravings for a third slice of pizza. And none target the sense of euphoria one feels when biting into that pepperoni-and-cheese combo.

A new study from the University of Missouri might hold the key to turning off food-induced happiness. Researchers found that when a specific area of the brain is shut down, cravings remain but willpower prevails.

Matthew Will, an assistant professor of psychological sciences, determined that deactivating the so-called basolateral amygdala — which regulates emotion — stopped rats from eating, even though they seemed to want more food.

"After they finished the normal amount they would eat, they kept seeking more," Will said. "They would continue to go back for more and continued to approach" the food, "so the craving continued, but they didn't eat a thing. ... It short-circuited the last switch that would cause them to consume what they're craving."

That essentially means two different brain circuits control a rat's motivation to seek and to consume, Will said.

The methodology isn't applicable to humans, but just as well: Imagine how annoying it would be to watch a loved one return to the refrigerator over and over but refuse to eat anything.

Instead, the study provides insight into why humans overeat, said Kyle Parker, a graduate student who assisted Will.

"It just gives us a better understanding of what's going on in our brains — why we binge eat ice cream when we know we're not hungry, but we know it tastes good, so we continue to eat it," he said.

While some drugs being tested or now on the market might target cravings, this particular research indicate that food euphoria is similar to a drug addiction.

“We’re afraid” binge-eating “is becoming an addiction,” Parker said. “That’s what we’re trying to show: that it’s an addictive behavior rather than just consuming food because we need it. We taste to feel good, just like any other drug.”

The study should lead to further research, Will said.

“OK, we have a model. Now we should be able to see what in the brain is driving this craving and how different that is from what’s driving the consumption,” he said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Tiger fans react to new \$3.5 million scoreboard

By Tanya Ortiz

September 13, 2009 | 3:06 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Many Tigers fans were pleased to see — and hear — what the new scoreboard at Memorial Stadium had to offer.

The scoreboard made its debut at Saturday's football game against Bowling Green. Fans, ranging from first-timers to those who have attended games for 15 years, had many good things to say about the stadium's new addition.

"The scoreboard enhances the fans' experience because the video is of much higher quality, and the sound system is awesome," Sean Hirshberg, 20, said. "Games have always been fun, but this will make it more enjoyable."

Hirshberg, who has attended MU football games for four years, said he liked the way the scoreboard was designed.

"It really fits Faurot Field. It doesn't look out of place," he said.

Jeff Levinson, 21, has attended games for three years. He said the scoreboard says a lot about what the university thinks about its football team.

"It shows that the university is dedicated to the football team and the athletic department," Levinson said.

Almost three times bigger than the old scoreboard, fans said the screen's size made it easier for them to see, regardless of where they were sitting.

"The numbers are very bright and clear," Eric Schwarz, 30, said. "You can read them from every angle."

Dawn McWilliams, 50, of Kansas City opted to watch parts of the game from the live screen.

“The camera crew is doing a good job at getting all the action,” McWilliams said.

For Joe Land, it was hard to remember what the old scoreboard looked like, but he said the new one was crystal clear.

“I wish my TV was that good at home,” said Land, 50, of Tulsa, Okla.

While many were happy with the size of the screen, some thought it could have been even bigger.

Andrea Swinea, 23, said she wished the screen would have used more of the space that was dedicated to advertisements. Throughout the game, eight small screens bordering the larger, live coverage screen flashed different advertisements.

“The ads are distracting,” said Swinea, who has been attending games for three years.

Jason Williams, who has been coming to MU football games for 10 years, had a different take on the advertisements.

“I like to see who’s still making money in Columbia,” Williams, 36, said. “... It’s got to pay for itself somehow.”

Cindy Hazelrigg, a longtime Missouri fan, said the scoreboard — with its \$3.5 million price tag — was “an outstanding investment.”

“The sound is perfect,” Hazelrigg, 31, said. “We can hear everything very clearly. We love it.”

MU graduate student Erin Emerick, 22, said she thinks the university spent too much on the scoreboard.

“That money should be put towards the students’ education,” Emerick said.

New mid-campus residence halls in high demand

By Kaylee Nelson

September 14, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **The three newest MU residence halls**, Galena, Hawthorn and Dogwood, have proved to be popular living choices not only for new students but returning students as well.

“It’s right in the middle of everything,” sophomore Alex Beech said. Beech is a resident of Hawthorn Residence Hall. “You don’t need to drive anywhere, and the rec center is right next door. It just made sense.”

Construction of the residential halls began in summer 2007 and was completed in time for the start of this semester. Ripe with that new-building smell of fresh paint and flooring, the halls have a mixture of single, double and double-suite rooms on each of the four floors.

Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life, said the original concept “was to continue to diversify the types of housing options that are available to students.”

The three halls are named for Missouri’s state flower, state tree and state mineral.

They work together almost as one living community. One front desk, in Hawthorn, serves all three dorms, and Hawthorn also has lounges and smaller study rooms on its main floor. But Hawthorn is the only one of the three without computer labs and laundry rooms.

Community bathrooms, which were not part of the last round of residence halls, are back.

"We started hearing from students that an additional challenge is trying to create that sense of community — that's what draws them back," Minor said. "And so we said let's go back to something we do know that helps, which is community restrooms, but let's do it in a nicer furnishing."

Fewer students are sharing the bathrooms. "Say in Gillett, you've got maybe 25 people who are sharing a restroom, but in the new facilities that number ranges anywhere from 15 to 18 people," Minor said.

Although there is no official count yet of the breakdown of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors living in the new halls, many returning students are calling them home. Ryan Cahill, the community adviser of Dogwood's first floor, said his floor has 10 sophomores, seven freshmen and four juniors.

Robert Kiser, one of Cahill's residents and a sophomore who lived last year in the off-campus housing provided by Residential Life, said he wanted his chance to live on campus and signed up for Dogwood as soon as he could.

"I had to take a shuttle every day. It was not pleasant," Kiser said. "I wanted to be as in the middle of campus as possible."

Freshman James Condry said he's glad to live with students older than him.

"I'm from Dallas, Texas, so I didn't know a soul coming up here," Condry said. "They showed me around and showed me how stuff works, good places to eat and guided me through."

Galena, Hawthorn and Dogwood have the same initial cost for students as other newly constructed residential halls, including Center, College Avenue, Discovery and Excellence, except the new ones have a \$200 surcharge because all three are open during academic breaks. The annual rate for a single room, which does not include a meal plan, is \$6,995, and for a double or double-suite room is \$5,740.

Minor thinks the three new halls, which are part of the \$360 million Residential Life Master Plan, respond directly to students' needs as expressed to Residential Life.

“The only thing we conceived that we weren’t able to achieve were connecting bridges between the three buildings,” Minor said. “The budget was just too high, and it was one of the things we had to eliminate.”

The residence hall next in line in the Residential Life Master Plan is the Hudson/Rollins renovation, which is scheduled to be finished by next fall.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

No. 9 in '09: Columbia named the ninth-best college town

By Virginia Pasley

September 12, 2009 | 4:49 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Columbia is the ninth-best college town in America, according to an index that ranks college locations by, among other nontraditional criteria, the number of coffee shops in the area.

The American Institute of Economic Research has released its College Destinations Index, a list of the 75 best college locations in the country. The institute does not arrive at these rankings by interviewing students or visiting classes, but by studying government documents that detail the number of new businesses in the area, for example. In addition to observing the number of coffee shops, the institute looks at cultural outlets and how much the city spends on research and development.

Among "college towns," or cities of fewer than 250,000 people, Columbia was ninth on the list. No other city in Missouri was included in any of the rankings. Ithaca, N.Y., home to Cornell University and Ithaca College, was No. 1. Nearby Lawrence, Kan., was 14.

Lorah Steiner, the executive director of the Columbia Convention and Visitor Bureau, reacted positively to the news.

"We love that because it brings a lot of positive attention to the community," she said.

However, Steiner said that such lists need to be taken "in perspective because the ranking criteria changes every year."

The top-ranked location among "major metros," or cities of more than 2.5 million, was New York City. Among "mid-sized metros" — cities with populations between 1 and 2.5 million — San Jose, Calif. was No. 1. "Small cities" were those with 250,000 to 1 million people, and of those, Boulder, Colo., was the winner.

The institute studies sources such as the U.S. Census in order to rank the cities by 12 criteria, including student diversity, cost of living, earning potential and unemployment rate.