Landlords must pay taxes for renters to get credit

COLUMBIA, Mo.

Missouri tax officials are warning people who live in rented housing that they do not qualify for a tax break unless their landlords pay property taxes.

Low-income disabled people and senior citizens are entitled to a property tax credit on their state tax returns of up to $750 for renters and $1,100 for those who own their homes. The amount of the tax credit depends on the real estate taxes paid or rent paid and total household income. The Missouri Revenue Department says that tax credit requires that renters' landlords pay property taxes.

That means, for example, that renters living in public housing do not qualify for the tax credit.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported Monday that state tax officials say there now is greater recognition that the law requires landlords to pay property taxes for renters to get the tax break.

Brenda Procter, a personal finance specialist at the University of Missouri, said the eligibility interpretation for earning the tax credit is new. Procter said it could leave thousands of low-income and disabled people living in tax-exempt housing without money that they have relied upon in the past.

"The news of the change came as a shock to many," she said. "There needs to be some kind of stopgap solution this year to ease the transition for low-income and elderly people who have been blindsided by this new interpretation of the law."

But Revenue Department spokesman Ted Farnen said nothing has changed. He said that in 2009, the department processed 260,130 applications for the tax credit and issued refunds in 219,711 cases.
"It's always been the law," Farnen said. "It's fair to say more people who are helping prepare tax forms and some of the people applying for the credit have greater recognition that this has always been the law."
On-Demand Body Parts: Inventing The Bio-Printer

A medical invention currently in development may one day be able to create new organs, right there in the hospital. The 3-D bio-printer takes cells from a patient's failing organ and "prints out" a new organ — almost like a 3-D ink-jet printer. Guy Raz explains how the device works with the man who developed the prototype, Gabor Forgacs.

View Transcript

GUY RAZ, host:

We're back with ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from NPR News. I'm Guy Raz.

(Soundbite of printer)

RAZ: Your typical ink-jet printer can produce a lot of things, from documents to decent photos, but a scientist from the University of Missouri thought the mechanism behind them could actually do something a lot more complicated.

Gabor Forgacs thinks they could print our organs, as in human organs, and he's built a high-tech printer to do just that. Here's how it works.

Dr. GABOR FORGACS (Scientist, University of Missouri): You scoop out cells from the patient.

RAZ: So if you want a new heart, some cardiac cells, if you want a new stomach, some stomach cells, and so on. And he takes this cluster of cells.

Dr. FORGACS: That may contain anything between 10 to 30,000 cells.

RAZ: And he mixes it into a liquid, something Gabor Forgacs calls bio-ink, and just like in the printer connected to your computer, this bio-ink shoots out of a cartridge. And it's printed, dot by dot, onto a gelatin-like sheet of paper, or what he calls bio-paper.

Dr. FORGACS: It is a material that mimics what we have in our body between the organs, that surrounds the organs. It's called the extracellular matrix. Cells love it.
RAZ: And when placed together on the bio-paper, the bio-ink, those cell clusters, starts to fuse and form shapes, but at this point, the printout is still two-dimensional. So another sheet of bio-paper is layered right on top with another cluster of bio-ink.

The principle is a little like building a skyscraper. You start with the bottom level, then build up.

Dr. FORGACS: Then imagine that comes the second story, and then comes the third story.

RAZ: And on and on until you have something that starts to look like an organ. Forgacs' printer is connected to a computer that then directs how those layers should be shaped, a predesigned scheme a little like paint-by-numbers.

Dr. FORGACS: And that scheme you can get by taking an X-ray or a CT image of the organ, and you try to repeat the outline of the organ. Of course, it's very complicated, but we have now the precision to place the cells according to this scheme and end up with a three-dimensional object.

RAZ: The layers of bio-paper between the cell clusters eventually melt away as the cells start to fuse.

Dr. FORGACS: They fuse both in the plane, so a circle will turn into a little doughnut-shaped object, and they also fuse in the third dimension. So imagine that if you put circular arrangements on top of each other, the stories are like circles, then eventually they fuse and you get a cylinder.

RAZ: And those cylinders are what Dr. Forgacs is on the verge of perfecting right now. He and his team are close to printing out human blood vessels.

Hearts and livers are still a ways away. The first step is to implant these printed blood vessels inside a human body. But how would those printed organs know how to function?

Dr. FORGACS: When we are in embryo, you can ask the same question: how does the embryo know how to form those complicated organs? These are the product of evolutions of many, many millions of years. They know what to do.

RAZ: Now, whether Gabor Forgacs' science can mimic evolution is still a question. The 3-D bio-printer is a long way from showing up at your local hospital, but he thinks human testing can actually begin fairly soon.

Dr. FORGACS: In the next five years there will be a great breakthrough.

RAZ: In the meantime. Forgacs and his team at the University of Missouri are experimenting on rats. They've already implanted some with nerve grafts created with the bio-printer. Transcript provided by NPR, Copyright National Public Radio.
Researchers Say Collaboration Is Key To Success In Research And Marketplace

KANSAS CITY, MO. (kcur) - Scientists and business people are sharing research among institutions and across disciplines. That was the message at this week's Life Sciences Summit sponsored by the University of Missouri campuses.

Collaborating is already happening. Working together has produced some tremendous breakthroughs in animal and human health.

Biologists are growing cell tissue outside pigs, for example, and replacing that new tissue in the animal. The new tissue will regenerate into new organs. The research has huge implications for human organ transplantation.

There's also hope similar work will reduce health care costs.

Wayne Carter, Vice President of nutrition with Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc. in Topeka, says the National Bio and Agri Defense Facility, or NBAF, is a good example of how animal research could help humans.

"Through vaccinology, the development of vaccines, obviously this links into NBAF, (we) understand the impact of individual nutrients on gene expression and take that learning and apply it to humans."

Gary Forsee, President of the University of Missouri, said the region's multi million dollar animal health and life science expertise has already brought thousands of new jobs to the area, and will continue to attract new, high wage jobs.

Venture capitalists at the summit expressed interest in the life science industry, but acknowledged these are difficult times to attract investors. © Copyright 2010, kcur
Nixon's budget

A very good job

By Henry J. Waters III

Monday, March 15, 2010

On rare occasions when a state is faced with devastating revenue shortfalls, the chore of crafting painful spending cuts falls primarily to the governor. No legislative body could make the terrible choices without leadership from a single-minded chief executive.

This year Missouri and other states are faced with unprecedented money shortages. Tax increases are off the table, leaving the governor with the unenviable burden of telling scores of program proponents theirs will help bear the brunt.

Gov. Jay Nixon has done a very good job of facing up. This not to say all will agree with his choices, but without much political rhetoric or fanfare he has made the budget balance.

If a bias can be seen, it is in favor of public education at all levels. Beyond that, he has distributed the pain rather evenly, meaning he has hurt almost all programs beyond normal imagination.

Most of his cuts will stand, but one destined to be denied is his elimination of Access Missouri college scholarship money for students wanting to attend private institutions. A move already was under way to equalize these grants, changing the current law, which provides more money for privates based on their larger tuitions. Even that move was destined for rough going.

Aside from the fact private schools enjoy substantial support among state legislators, a reasonable case can be made for supporting grants to private schools with public funds because private schools grant many diplomas that otherwise would have to be given by public schools underwritten by taxpayers.

When I became a member of the Stephens College Board of Trustees some years ago, I learned a number of states provide outright funding for private colleges and universities. In Missouri, the tactic has been to grant scholarship money to students and their families, who then decide where to enroll, keeping the state from making that choice and, not incidentally, out of the most serious legal challenges. Courts have decided as long as students decide where to spend the money, the state is not responsible, for instance, for directly funding religiously oriented schools.
That's the argument used by private colleges in support of current law, which grants as much as $2,150 per student attending four-year public institutions and a maximum of $4,600 for privates. Our own Sen. Kurt Schaefer has introduced a bill equalizing the potential grant at $2,850 beginning in 2014.

Moreover, Nixon has proposed eliminating popular Bright Flight funding for use at private colleges. If Access Missouri cuts to private institutions are a dog that won't hunt, as described by Rep. Chris Kelly, elimination of Bright Flight money is a dog that won't even get out of the pen to sniff for a trail.

Despite disagreement with a particular item in Nixon's round of cuts, he deserves high praise for his overall budget-balancing job. When state spending can be increased again, we will be forced to go slow. If we are wise, or lucky, we will maintain some of the savings and efficiencies made necessary during the current exigency, a potential silver lining, however faint.

HJW III
Energy sources will run out

Coal, oil and natural gas are some examples of nonrenewable energy.

Nonrenewable energy is the type of energy source that cannot renew itself quickly, so it will run out at some point in the future.

Some examples of nonrenewable energy sources are coal, natural gas, uranium (for nuclear power) and oil.

Oil, or crude oil, or petroleum, can be refined into several types of fuel, including gasoline, diesel, and propane. It is a crucial source of power for the world and is in high demand.

The easiest sources of oil were used up long ago, so today it is very expensive to locate and extract new sources of oil.

*At our current pace, people will use up the world's supply of oil, but exactly how long that will take is difficult to say, according to University of Missouri Geological Sciences Professor Michael Underwood.*

"It comes down to how much it costs," Underwood said.

*In other words, when it costs too much to produce the oil, then we have effectively run out of it. And, as Underwood pointed out, it is hard to know how those economics will play out.*

"The profit angle changes from day to day," he said.

For example, in 2008, the price of a 42-gallon barrel of oil was selling for as high as $147. A few months later, after the start of a global recession, it had dropped to $33. Today it is about $80 a barrel.

It is also difficult to know how much more oil the U.S. could produce. Controversies surround the possibility of more off-shore drilling or drilling in the Arctic wilderness, Underwood said no one really knows how much, or how little, oil can be extracted from those areas without drilling.

There is no way to know exactly how much oil is enough. Underwood said that when projections of oil usage were made in the past, they failed to include the increased use of countries like China and India.

Oil is considered nonrenewable because it takes millions of years to produce.
The gasoline in your car today started out millions of years ago as plant and animal life that was preserved under a layer of silt and water. Heat and pressure eventually converted the material to petroleum. If even more heat and pressure was applied, it became natural gas. This is why oil and natural gas -- as well as coal -- are often called fossil fuels.
MU student wins Change.org competition

By Lauren Rauth
March 15, 2010 | 7:43 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA -- An MU sophomore wins Change.org's competition, "Ideas for Change in America," for his idea to legalize marijuana.

Spencer Pearson is one out of the 10 winners. His idea will be shared with members of the president's administration, and Change.org will launch a grassroots campaign to advance his idea.

Pearson personally saw the medical benefits of cannabis for a family member.

"Once you see it first hand, it solidifies the impact," he said.

Pearson said it is sad that people who use marijuana for medicinal purposes have to live in secrecy and fear.

"To find a natural substance that alleviates the pain but are unable to tell their doctors about it, it's sad," Pearson said.

This first-hand experience helped encourage his passion for the idea.

Larry Talley, a member of Texas Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, works with Pearson.

Although the two have never met, their separate ideas brought them together. Pearson's idea was to legalize marijuana for recreational use, while Talley's idea was to legalize marijuana for medical use. After the first round of voting, Change.org contacted Pearson and Talley about their ideas. The decision to combine the two helped streamline the voting.

"We've had a lot of support; there are a lot of people on board," Pearson said.
Pearson, a psychology major, used Twitter, Facebook and High Times magazine to quickly spread the word of his idea.

"It's unreal," Pearson said of winning. "I had a strong feeling we would finish at the top, but it's a great feeling to actually be at the top."

The prize for Pearson and Talley is a conference call with the directors of Change.org to discuss the launching of a grassroots campaign. They will weigh the arguments for the idea and take the ideas to a member of the Obama administration. A video interview with the administrative member will be posted on Change.org.

Pearson believes the Web site allows people to be more involved in politics.

Pearson said he did research on drug policy in the United States as well as the history of Prohibition. He studied publications from economists about the impact illegal drugs have on the economy.

Pearson said he believes policies that put marijuana users in prison are a big waste of money. But, he wants to find policies that work.

"I'm very passionate," Pearson said about the legalization.

The use of marijuana for medicinal purposes is legal in 15 states and the District of Columbia, but Missouri is not one of those states. However, marijuana use is still illegal under federal law.

Change.org sponsors the Top 10 Ideas for Change in America. "Ideas for Change in America" is a crowd-sourcing competition that empowers citizens to identify and build momentum around a diverse range of ideas that address the challenges the country faces, according to the Web site.

During the six-week voting period, over 100,000 people from all over the country voted in the competition, according to a Change.org press release.
Players need respect for flag and anthem

Monday, March 15, 2010

Editor, the Tribune: When I attended the University of Missouri basketball game against Texas, I noticed that the Texas players and their coach (to the person) placed their hands over their hearts and stood at attention during the playing of our national anthem.

On the other hand, the MU players (and their coach) stood up but generally disregarded the presentation of the colors and seemed impatient for the start of the game, looking around and generally ignoring what was happening.

Is this a team decision? How does this look on national television? Do they really appreciate what they have?

Am I the only one embarrassed by this behavior?

Carlyle Foley

804 Locust St.
Meat That's Really 'Well' Done

FOXNews.com

Going against the grain, U.S. Wellness Meats says its grass-fed steaks and chops can fight heart disease and cancer, as well as hunger.

Everyone seems to want everyone else to eat healthy food these days, whether it’s the First Lady encouraging us to make better choices, companies supplementing food with omega 3s, cities banning trans fats, posting calorie counts, or taxing soda. A New York City assemblyman is even proposing a law banning “the use of salt by restaurants in the preparation of food” fining violators $1000. The most effective way to change the way we eat, however, is probably to just let the markets, decide...the farmers and super kind.

Education is vital in altering our eating habits, but so is taste. If you make better food that also tastes better, people will find it and buy it. That’s the driving philosophy of U.S. Wellness Meats, a cooperative of Midwestern farmers who say their grass-fed beef is the key to better health.

“Grass fed beef contains CLA,” says Wellness’ founder, John Wood. “Conjugated Linoleic Acid. It helps you lose weight, battle certain types of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and its greatest natural source is grass-fed beef.”

Carol Lorenzen, PhD who teaches “Principle of Meat Science” and “Meat Investigations” at the University of Missouri, says CLA is indeed abundant in grass-fed beef. “Because of the grass, there are higher levels of certain fatty acids as opposed to grain fed beef. Some studies show that fatty acids like CLA reduce weight and aid in prevention of heart disease,” says Lorenzen. She also compared cooked samples of grain-fed beef and Wellness’ grass-fed beef. Dairy products from grass-fed cows also contain CLA, she says.

Donald C. Beitz, Distinguished Professor of Agriculture at Iowa State University who teaches Animal Science, Biochemistry and does nutrition research, also tested Wellness’ meats and also found more CLA. The secret he says is in the rumen.

The rumen, one of the cow’s four stomachs, is a fermentation chamber for producing CLA, explains Beitz. “Twice as much CLA is produced in the rumen with grass than with feedlot or corn, so more of it is absorbed into the bloodstream and transported to muscle and adipose tissue.” Beitz found that grass fed beef also has more Omega 3 fatty acids, the healthy fat found in fish. He says some studies uphold CLA’s health improvement properties while others are less conclusive.
Wood says he’s living proof CLA’s benefits. “I feel better at 57 than I did at 47. We ate grass fed beef in the 40s and 50s and were healthier and thinner than we are now.” A fifth generation cattle farmer, Wood raised cattle conventionally growing animals on pastures, feeding them grain in confinement for their final four months then selling them off for harvesting. “Never occurred to me that there was a better way to farm than that,” he says. A holistic land management seminar in 1993 opened his eyes to farming cattle the way his grandfather did. Ammonium nitrate, he says, changed farming after World War II.

Post-World War II the ammonium nitrate surplus leftover from weapons production was “turned into nitrogen-rich fertilizer,” he explains. “Corn yields exploded and the price fell out of the corn market.” Then, he says, someone figured out that cows would eat a whole lot of corn. The paradigm shift towards grain-fed cattle began in 60s and solidified in the 70s. The seminar pointed out that grass-fed beef is better for land, the animals, taste and “my bottom line,” he says. “The Good Lord put cows on earth for one thing. To forage.”

He harvested his first grass-fed animal in 1997. The slaughterhouse shocked him by grading the meat “Choice” (meats are graded Prime, Choice, Select, Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter and Canner). “I said, ‘you’re looking at the wrong carcass.’ It just didn’t make sense.” He wrote it off as an interesting experience. When he replicated the results in 1998 and 1999 and found out about CLA he decided to change things up.

The Woods, the Suters, the Leesers and the Crums, all fourth, fifth and sixth generation Missouri and Illinois farmers formed Wellness Meats, selling only direct-to-consumer. Their website went up Election Day 2000, a day that was almost as bad for them as it was for Al Gore. “We had 40 orders. Only one from a person we didn’t know.” That’s when they realized it was going to be a long, hard haul. They got a break with a 2003 New York Times mention and a bump when Mad Cow stories peaked in 2004 because grass-fed cows don’t get the disease.

Wellness Meats had “stellar growth” this past year, says Wood, pointing that they’re one of the five percent of companies that increased Fed Ex volume in the last 18 months. He attributes it to the “‘know where your food comes from/know your farmer’ trend. It’s a thriving niche in this economy.”

They sell meat by the piece (there is a minimum) and while they raise their cattle on organic principles the meat isn’t technically ‘organic.’ The private certifier who runs Missouri’s organic certification, says Wood, wants 3% of the gross income of the preceding year to maintain an organic license. “We say, ‘No, thanks.’” Wood says his beef is superior to organic beef anyway, which lack his CLA and omega-3s. They also offer grass-fed lamb, bison and goat, grass-fed butter and cheese and free-range poultry, all sourced through a group of like-minded farmers, as well as honey, organic nuts and other wellness products.

Wood is “a farmer to my roots” and now his daughter who works with him in marketing and his son, majoring in agri-business, intend to join the company. “These days, farm kids leave. I’ve got two of my kids coming back to work and live in a rural community with a sense of purpose. And that’s not the usual thing. I couldn’t be more proud.”
Some groups that receive Missouri taxpayer money lobby against open records

NO MU Mention

Journalism professor Charles Davis mentioned on Pg. 3. but not identified with MU.

By Michael Sewall
March 16, 2010 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Every year, the Missouri Municipal League holds four to five training sessions to teach thousands of city employees statewide how to comply with the state’s open records Sunshine Law. Every day, the league fields a few questions on the subject.

"We’re the strongest proponents of the Sunshine Law," said Gary Markenson, former executive director of the league.

The Municipal League is a statewide organization of all Missouri cities that focuses on educating city employees through trainings and conferences. Cities use taxpayer money to pay membership dues to the league.

It is one of several groups that receives taxpayer money through membership dues and lobbies for legislation that would restrict public access to information. These groups — including the Police Chiefs Association, the Association of Counties and the County Collectors Association — have lobbied in favor of closing tax, assessment and investigation records and against increased penalties for violating the Sunshine Law, a law that requires public government bodies to make certain records and meetings open and available to the public.

Most of those groups’ officials said they lobbied for the bills that would have limited the Sunshine Law to help protect citizens’ right to privacy, whether that meant closing
police records so addresses are hidden, responding to public concerns that tax information was available or keeping heavy fines from being levied.

Open-records advocates say the groups' concerns can be a double-edged sword in regard to balancing personal privacy and public transparency.

No one tracks the total number of Sunshine Law requests filed annually in the state, according to the office of the Attorney General, which enforces the law and hands down opinions interpreting it. But individual agencies often track the requests they receive. For example, Columbia Police Lt. Ken Hammond said he received 30 open records requests from November through January.

Media organizations frequently request records; the St. Louis Post-Dispatch files several hundred a year. Last year, the Post-Dispatch filed hundreds for a single investigation that highlighted how poor record-keeping and failure to punish drunken drivers let chronic offenders keep driving. That led Gov. Jay Nixon to propose an overhaul of the way drunken drivers are prosecuted, punished and treated.

But Jean Maneke, a Kansas City attorney who specializes in the Sunshine Law, said a common misconception is that it's just a "press law." Citizens often use the law, too, Maneke said.

One of those is Columbia resident Traci Wilson-Kleekamp, who has frequently requested records. She said it's important for more people, especially journalists, to file requests. She started using open records while living in Los Angeles when a large chunk of a park across the street from her home was fenced off.

After requesting documents to uncover what was happening, she said she found the city government had falsified documents and lied about public meetings to secretly get a 911 center built in the park.

"Making those requests taught me that you can't really trust everything the government says," Wilson-Kleekamp said. "Open records is the one tool we, as the public, have to keep government honest."
A 2007 study of state open records laws by the coalition and the Better Government Association ranked Missouri No. 42 overall, based on criteria such as response time and penalties for violating the law.

"(Missouri law is) OK, nothing to be embarrassed by," said Charles Davis, director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition. "But with a few simple fixes, it can be so much better."

Davis said some of those fixes would have come from House Bill 316, which sought greater compliance with the Sunshine Law by increasing penalties for violating it and would have required the public be notified earlier about meetings.

The Missouri Municipal League and the Association of Counties lobbied against the bill, citing concerns that fines were too high and that the extended public notice was too great. Although defeated last session, the bill has been reintroduced as HB1445 this legislative session.

Other examples of proposed legislation that would close records or limit the Sunshine Law from the past two legislative session include:

- SB66, which would have limited the public's access to financial interest statements from individuals such as public officials and candidates for elected office. Those with operating budgets more than $1 million are required to file financial interest statements, but this legislation would have made it $2 million. The Missouri Municipal League lobbied for it, citing inflation as the primary reason for the legislation.
- HB62, which in an original version of the bill included an amendment that would have kept the public from seeing any records regarding internal police investigations unless wrongdoing was found, and would have allowed that the reason for the information to be closed as a personnel matter. The Missouri Police Chiefs' Association lobbied in favor of this bill and this specific amendment to make sure "the facts are obtained, not allegations," Police Chiefs' Executive Director Sheldon Lineback said.
- HB1034, which would have closed county assessment records for police officers and their "immediate family," defined in the bill as parents, siblings, spouses, children or dependent relatives. The Police Chiefs' Association lobbied for it to protect officers from possible retaliation.
• **SB1253**, which would have restricted the commercial use of property tax records, meaning that taxpayers would have less access to see who pays taxes. After receiving some complaints from taxpayers that their information was available online, the County Collectors Association lobbied in favor of it.

Markenson said even though the league trains city employees to handle the Sunshine Law, it can be complicated for them. Rep. Tim Jones, R-St. Louis County, has introduced a bill for the second time that would have increased fines for violating the Sunshine Law.

Markenson said heavier fines for violating the law, even inadvertently, could turn away people interested in being elected officials or volunteers.

"There are so many little traps you could fall into and forget to do," Markenson said, but acknowledged that city employees should be following the law. "Most of the time it's a technicality."

Mayor Darwin Hindman said he supports such lobbying by the Municipal League because the public is kept in mind even when the league's objective is closing records.

"At some point, there has to be a limit to the Sunshine Law. The question is, where do you draw the line?" Hindman said. "I think it's very appropriate for municipalities to deal with the legislature for issues they think will affect municipalities. When they make decisions, they're generally looking after the taxpayers."

In the 2008 Association of Counties' 990 tax form, the organization said one of its primary purposes was representing the "best interests of counties at the state legislature to improve services to the taxpayer and citizen." But whether it is in the public's best interest to support legislation that could close records is a debate that Dick Burke, executive director for the Association of Counties, said hinges on how one would define "reasonable" closure.

"It is a fine line to walk," said Daryl Duwe, a lobbyist who represents the County Collectors Association. "I'm certainly not interested in closing records that don't need to be closed, but it's something people need to consider with a lot of information over the Internet."
Maneke said she doubts the public is considered when records are closed.

"I don't think it's in the citizens' best interest. The public has concerns about what happens in their local community, and if they don't know about it, you don't get the public's opinion in decisions," Maneke said. "People are elected to represent the public, and it's their responsibility to listen to the public and then make decisions."

Open records advocates and citizens such as Wilson-Kleekamp challenged the fairness of closing records and meetings to taxpayers, who fund the public entities — such as cities, counties and police departments — that these statewide groups represent.

"It's public property. The public should have the right to know," said Harry Gallagher, a lobbyist who represents the Missouri Press Association, among other groups.

For example, the city of Columbia pays the Municipal League $9,688 in membership dues, and the Boone County Commission pays the Association of Counties $10,250 annually, according to city and county offices. Because the league is not a public institution, it is not required to release the amount of dues collected in a year.

Although this money isn't specifically listed as a source of revenue for lobbying, officials said it often goes into one big pot that is eventually budgeted for lobbying or educational expenses. Additionally, these groups' executive directors receive salaries for their work, and part of that includes lobbying and educating representatives.

All of the bills analyzed by the Missourian failed in the General Assembly in 2008 and 2009, and all but HB316 would have closed certain records. The General Assembly is already considering at least six open-records bills this year.
31 students from around the state of Missouri have been awarded prizes in the fifth annual COMP (for “Creating Original Music Project”) contest, sponsored by the University of Missouri School of Music and the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation.

The funding comes from an annual $50,000 gift from Dr. Jeanne Sinquefield and the Foundation. The purpose is to encourage elementary, middle and high school students in Missouri to write original musical works, and have that music performed.

More than 100 students entered compositions, with first-place, second-place and third-place winners named in eight different categories.

The winning works will be performed at the Creating Original Music Project Festival in the Fine Arts Building at the University of Missouri’s School of Music on Saturday, April 17 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Both the composers and their music programs will receive cash prizes. Winners at the high school level will receive a scholarship to attend Mizzou’s high school summer music composition camp.

This year’s categories and winners include:

Elementary Song with Words
1. April Fun, by Samantha Hite, Reeds Spring Elementary, Highlandville;
2. Roses in the Winter, by Alicia Flavin and Marley Wurzer, Lee Elementary, Columbia;

Elementary Instrumental
1. The Cat and Mouse, by HyunJun Yoo, Fairview Elementary, Columbia;
2. JJ Jam, by Jonathan Padgett and Jack Roth, Reed Elementary; Ladue;
Middle School Pop
1. Dry, by Tanner Qualls, home school, Lee’s Summit;*
2. Lies, by Isaac Baker, Austin Culbertson, Ross Menefee and Nick Roberts, Lange Middle School, Columbia;*

Middle School Fine Art
1. The Escape by Night, by Nick Funke, Rockwood South Middle School, Fenton;*
2. A Distant Folk Land, by Mingu Kim, West Junior High, Columbia;*
3. Childhood Memories, by Alice Ann Yu, Smithton Middle School, Columbia.*

High School Fine Art
1. Clarinet Quid Libet, by Alexander Blank, Webster Groves High School, Rock Hill;*.HS
2. String Quintet, by Grant Bradshaw, home school, Columbia;*.HS
3. Winter Sunset, by Victoria Yu, Rock Bridge High School, Columbia.*.HS

High School Pop
1. Bullet, by Mitchell Kilpatrick, Truman High School, Independence;*
2. Light of Day, by Taylor Qualls, home school, Lee’s Summit;*
3. Unsure, by Eric Geil, home school, Grandview;*

High School Sacred
1. Star Breather, by Anna Martin, Providence Fine Arts Center, Florissant;
2. Who You Are, by Holly Morris, home school, Lee’s Summit;
3. Dance for the King, by Katie Benjamin, Providence Fine Arts Center, Florissant.

High School Other
1. Journey of the Leaves, by Christopher John Poetz, home school, Eureka;

*Repeat winners; HS — attended High School Summer Camp for Composition
Each student who applies must have the signature and sponsorship of his/her school’s music teacher. Community agencies, churches, after-school programs, private teachers and other musical mentors may sponsor their young musicians in partnership with the student’s school music teacher.

Levels of competition and accepted categories of music (e.g., fine art, popular, sacred and others) are based on the student’s grade level. More information is available online at http://web.missouri.edu/~umcasmusic/www/COMP/k-12.html.

The C.O.M.P. program is part of the University of Missouri’s New Music Initiative, a diverse array of programs intended to position the school as a leading center for music composition and new music. The initiative is a direct result of a $1 million donation by the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation.
Tags: classical music, COMP, Creating Original Music Project, Jeanne Sinquefield, Sarah Bryan Miller, Sinquefield Charitable Foundation, University of Missouri School of Music
Cotton ball incident should not be swept under rug

By Ryan Beck

Published March 16, 2010

Just more than three weeks have passed since the "cotton ball incident" appeared in headlines. Now that initial reactions have cooled and the facts are breaching the surface, I feel it is necessary for the student body to make a collective stance on this issue. I ask all of you to hear me and join me in my position.

What happened was a disgusting act of ignorance, and the perpetrators should be and will be punished, but the extent of punishment is central to the many issues. For MU to completely cut ties with the accused is wrong. Both men have been enrolled at MU long enough that to write them off as bad apples is irresponsible. These men do need to change, but something else needs to change as well. MU is not directly responsible for any one student's actions, but when it comes to racial insensitivity and acts that walk the line of being hate crimes, something internal needs to be done.

A simple apology cannot change what happened that night; expelling the accused won't change it either. To truly prevent things like this from happening again, the university needs to mandate a class that deals directly with race relations in America. General education requires American history courses, but surveys of American history are bogged down with historical figures and dates and lack the intellectual critical application that is needed to ensure everyone attending MU understands actions in reference to other races and cultures, as well as their own.

After some research in the MU Archives, you will find parts of this campus were built and maintained by the hands of enslaved people. What's happened in this nation and around the world is irreversible. To combat the acts at the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center with anger is wrong. Initially, I wanted to throw the book at the accused because of how ignorant and stupid those acts are. But after contemplating this action in the grand scheme of things, I could only feel pity and shame. It is more of a challenge to forgive and educate people of small minds than to blindly punish and ignore them.

To cast off this hatred to a dark corner of life will only sew a seed that grows without light. We cannot ignore these acts, we cannot expel the accused and we cannot take proper action without changing the entire system. To expel the accused will only perpetuate their ignorance and further
their small-minded misconceptions on the proper way to carry oneself as a member of MU, the U.S. and the human race.

To prevent further actions like this, education must be put to the forefront to ensure that ignorance is no longer an excuse for such acts. An apology is needed, and a punishment must be handed out, but neither of those things can reverse what has already happened. The accused need to be educated and rehabilitated in order to rejoin the ranks of the competent. Many people, mostly white people, have tried to write this act off as "not a big deal," but I urge you to do your research and understand the implications of even a tiny cotton ball. The actions of the past, the accounts of slave narratives like Douglass, the gripping tales of women like Sojourner Truth, all echo in the wake of what happened at the BCC.

Our nation cannot take away the past, MU cannot change what happened, but we can put the best foot forward to ensure that "For All We Call Mizzou" is something every person can believe in.