MU student dies in motorcycle crash

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A 20-year-old woman was killed Monday in a motorcycle crash on Nifong Boulevard.

Columbia police responded to the crash around 11 a.m. after the motorcycle’s driver called to report it. The passenger, Caitlin Valora, 20, was pronounced dead at the scene, police said, and her family in the St. Louis-area town of Grover has been notified. The driver, Aaron Hansberry, 21, was taken to University Hospital with a broken leg.

Police said the 1981 Yamaha was traveling westbound on East Nifong Boulevard approaching State Farm Parkway. The front tire hit a curb, causing the motorcycle to become airborne, police said, and the vehicle came to rest about 20 feet from the road. No other vehicles were involved.

A University of Missouri student directory lists Hansberry and Valora as students. Hansberry’s driver’s license indicated he is from Lee’s Summit, police said, but local addresses were not available Monday afternoon.

A police crash reconstructionist will complete a report, and Valora’s cause of death will be determined by the Boone County Medical Examiner’s Office.

Police believe Hansberry was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash but took it off to call 911. A helmet was on the ground next to him, and officers did not locate a second helmet. Hansberry was unable to give police additional details Monday afternoon because he was receiving medical treatment.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU student killed in motorcycle crash

By Dan Everson
August 9, 2010 | 5:19 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU student was killed in a motorcycle accident at East Nifong Boulevard and State Farm Parkway on Monday morning.

Caitlin Valora, 20, was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident, according to a release from the Columbia Police Department.

Police officers responded to a report of a motorcycle accident shortly after 11 a.m., the release said. Valora was a passenger on the motorcycle. There were no other vehicles involved in the accident.

The motorcycle driver, identified as Aaron Hansberry, 21, was taken to University Hospital at about 11:30 a.m. to receive treatment for a broken right leg, the release said.

A University Hospital spokeswoman said Hansberry was in fair condition as of 6:45 p.m. Monday. MU's online directory lists Hansberry as a junior pre-communication student.

Valora was a sociology student, her friend Elizabeth Nonnemaker said. Valora would have been a junior this fall.

Nonnemaker, also a junior, said she met Valora her freshman year.

"We were random suitemates in South Hall, and we just became really good friends," Nonnemaker said.

Nonnemaker said she and Valora chose to room together again for their sophomore year.

"She always was smiling and a go-getter," Nonnemaker said. "If we were ever sad, we would go shopping or do something fun like that."
Steve Winters, a senior at MU, said he became good friends with Valora after meeting her about four years ago.

"I'll always remember laughing with her," Winters said. "We always made fun of each other jokingly."

Winters said he took care of Valora's plant, which she had named Edward, while she traveled to New York and other places like Kansas City and New Orleans.

Winters recalled speaking with Valora on the phone and updating her on Edward's growth from a 3-inch "weed" to a flowering 3-foot plant with "two daisies and counting."

Following this morning's crash, authorities said, it was Hansberry who called police.

The release said Hansberry and Valora were riding westbound on East Nifong Boulevard toward State Farm Parkway. The two roads meet in a T-intersection; East Nifong Boulevard does not continue west of State Farm Parkway.

The motorcycle continued across State Farm Parkway, according to the release. The front tire hit the curb, and the motorcycle became airborne. It came to rest approximately 20 feet from the roadway.

Police believe Hansberry was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash, the release said. Investigators did not find another helmet at the scene.

Authorities said Hansberry's driver's license lists his home address as Lee's Summit. The 2009-10 MU Directory lists Valora as a resident of Wildwood.

Nonnemaker confirmed that Hansberry and Valora were friends.

Police said a crash reconstructionist will complete a report on the accident. Valora's cause of death will be determined by the Boone County Medical Examiner's office, the release said.
A new 'indie' genre: iPhone 4 filmmaking

MU mention page 2

By Marianna Nash, Special to CNN

(CNN) -- Ryan Gonzalez really wanted to make a music video for his first solo album -- but like many independent artists, he had no budget.

So Gonzalez, a Hawaiian singer who goes by the stage name R. Vaughn, found a director with a plan to shoot the project cheaply.

Digital designer John Garcia, a colleague from his Honolulu office, had just bought the iPhone 4 and downloaded Apple's iMovie app, a program that allows iPhone 4 users to shoot and edit HD video using only their phones.

The two shot the video one morning on the scenic Makapu'u Lighthouse trail overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Garcia started cutting footage at the diner where they had breakfast after wrapping up and spent a total of four hours over the next 10 days making edits.

"Whenever I had time to open up the project, I'd add a clip and listen," said Garcia. "My entire family memorized the song."

The result, a simple but professional-looking clip, is now on YouTube and R. Vaughn's website. Gonzalez accomplished his low-budget music mission. He only had one expense: Garcia's breakfast.

Despite the iPhone 4's well-known antenna woes, Garcia and Gonzalez are among a group of artists and bloggers who are optimistic about its potential as a high-def camera and mobile video-editing tool. CNN iReport's "Video editing on the iPhone 4" assignment drew in 10 submissions as of Thursday, and iPhone 4 clips on YouTube and Vimeo run the gamut from short films to news reports.

Gonzalez and others say the $4.99 iMovie app -- even with some flaws -- has the potential to open new doors for artists who have great ideas but no money. Gonzalez believes the user's ability to shoot and edit video on the phone and upload it to the web may prove particularly useful to independent musicians.
Traditionally, you would spend a lot of time on production and rely on someone else to do dissemination, like a radio station or a label," said the singer.

"For an independent musician, I think this technology is awesome, because you can eliminate all the other processes and go straight to getting your stuff up. It's making everything a lot cheaper, too."

Bloggers and citizen journalists will also benefit from the iMovie app and similar technologies, according to Karen Mitchell, professor of convergence journalism at the University of Missouri.

"It puts the power of journalism in more people's hands," she said. "One of the most iconic images of 9/11 was taken by a woman with her amateur digital camera. Those sorts of moments are really important to putting out information, and we'll take it in whatever form it comes."

But while users say Apple has made filmmaking more accessible than ever, many also consider the iMovie app a work in progress.

iReporter Alex Acosta of Sherman Oaks, California was pleased with the iPhone 4's HD camera, but said editing on it was more trouble than it was worth.

"I would recommend taking the raw footage you took from your phone, uploading it to your computer and doing your simple editing there," said Acosta, who shot video at a press briefing last month and spent hours trimming it on the small smartphone screen.

The app restricted him to a limited number of "cookie cutter" templates that he couldn't customize, he said. "You're gonna see it and go, oh, that was done on the iPhone 4. It's gonna make you look cheesy."

iReporter Paula Brahan of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, noticed the same thing while editing shots of her dog.

"On the computer [version of iMovie], you can see the individual panes of your movie," she said. "They're not compressed, as they are visually, on your phone."

Like other users, she disliked the way the title stayed onscreen for the duration of the clip -- a problem because it blocked out parts of her home videos.

It's also a problem for California-based iReporter Chris Allen, though for different reasons.

Allen, who runs YoYoSkills.com, says he knew when he got the iPhone 4 that yo-yoers would be interested in using it to record contests and tricks. But there are too many stumbling blocks to editing more than three minutes of footage, he said.
"The biggest barrier to entry, for me, is how hard it is to trim down a clip," he said. "On the Macbook, it's really easy to select the part of the video you want, but with the iPhone, you have to drag your finger to trim the video. And you can only trim about eight seconds at a time, so you constantly have to tap, drag and pull back."

Allen also had to put his hand over the lens for a black background, because he couldn't put text over stills.

"If you want a video editor where you can do extremely rudimentary editing -- very, very basic editing -- and it doesn't matter too much about the precision of your clips and you don't care about transitions too much," he said, "it's probably OK. Five bucks well invested."

Still, others have found ways around those limitations. Michael Koerbel and Anna Elizabeth James, MFA students at the University of Southern California and co-founders of Majek Pictures, started writing "Apple of My Eye" before their pre-ordered phones arrived. The short follows a girl and her grandfather who discover a model train in a shop window.

"We put all our cards on the table as to what we had access to," said Koerbel, who directed the short film. "One of those things was my dad's train set."

The train set was in Arizona. The team called up any actors they knew and were soon on their way from Southern California, aiming to wrap shooting and editing within 48 hours.

"I had never tried to make a movie on a small camera before," said James, who edited the film. "I first started doing at-home movies of my kids and creating content really simply. Then you go to film school, and it gets really complicated. Going back to the phone was simplifying it all over again."

"Trying to accomplish this in such a short amount of time, I had to make sure the choices I was making were right, because it is quite a process to edit on the phone."

They shot about six hours of footage, which James pared down to a short less than two minutes long. On the five-hour drive back, she was already editing in the car.

The iPhone's size made shooting a unique experience, according to Koerbel.

"We literally took the camera and wedged it into the train engine with some foam, and let it ride the train. It took a lot of tries to get that right," he said. The filmmakers also designed a rig, with the help of Birns and Sawyer Inc., to help clamp the camera on a dolly. "We were able to do everything with that camera that we did with the film camera."

In total, they spent $103 on the project. Not counting the cost of the iPhone, of course.
"The thing that's amazing for us is that, sometimes we shoot hundreds of miles away and can't do anything until we get back," said Koerbel. "She already had a rough cut by the time we pulled into our driveway."

When it was finished, they uploaded the clip to YouTube and Vimeo. Soon, it was all over Twitter and Facebook.

Social media is a key component in the app's success, according to iReporter and weight-loss video blogger Tony Posnanski.

Posnanski, who has lost more than 221 pounds since 2008, uses his blog to encourage others to lose weight and stay healthy. He says the iPhone has combined the processes of shooting, editing and uploading -- making it easy to stay connected.

"The iPhone 4 is going to change the way you do video blogging," he said. "With Sony, it took three hours to make a two-minute video. I can take a video now and upload it to iReport and Facebook all within a matter of minutes."

Garcia agreed. "There's going to be a day when you see feature-length films shot on handheld devices and uploaded straight to the internet. It's just a matter of time before the price comes down and people get a bit more savvy with technology."

Posnanski said he's not a "movie master," though his YouTube channel has scored thousands of views. Despite this, the restaurant manager from Sanford, Florida, said all you need to film on a smartphone is sheer creativity.

"I can actually take my creativity and put myself out there," he said. "When you have video or easier access to the internet, and it's not something hard to do, you can show your talent a bit more."

Even Koerbel, used to directing on sets surrounded by cast, crew and extras, appreciated the app's simple editing technique.

"If I were 9 years old and I had an iPhone, I'd be out filming," he said. "I think we're three to six months away from seeing a wave of people with little stories, people who never had a voice before, who can now put their story on YouTube."
Missouri teammates honor Daniel Schatz

BY KATHLEEN NELSON > knelson@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8233 | Posted: Monday, August 9, 2010 2:43 pm

Members of the University of Missouri football family attended services for Daniel Schatz, 19, who was killed Thursday in a crash on Interstate 44 involving a tractor, two buses and Schatz's pickup truck.

Offensive coordinator Dave Yost attended visitation on Sunday in Sullivan for Schatz, a graduate of Sullivan High and a walk-on at Mizzou who often filled the role of scout team quarterback. Attending the funeral Monday were teammates Michael Sam, a defensive lineman from Hitchcock, Texas, and defensive lineman Corey Sudhoff of Blue Springs, Mo.
A simple package from home can say a lot to your student

By RAY SEGEBRECHT

Mon, Aug. 09, 2010 10:15 PM

All Kelsey Murrell wanted was a meal with her mom, a brief break from her University of Kansas sophomore stress. She was looking for dinner out and coffee — two loves they share — in her hometown, Kearney.

But the 45-minute drive was too much for Murrell last October; she had studying and work to do at her dorm. So she stayed in Lawrence. As a resident assistant of her dorm, she worked the front desk, where care packages frequently came in. Then one day, a small box arrived with her name.

Its contents — a mug, some coffee and a note — couldn’t have been more perfect, Murrell said. The mug said coffee across it in different languages, a longtime interest of hers. The note, along with loving words from the mom she missed, contained cash and instructions for her to treat herself at any restaurant.

Through her job, Murrell has seen mailed gifts of all types — good and bad — greet students. But thoughtful, personal presents have been the biggest hits.

“Anything you can do to personalize it, like if you know your student’s favorite candy or favorite something, that’s always a good thing to send,” Murrell said. “During finals week, my mom has sent me highlighters in hopes that I would be studying ... tea if I’ve been sick, Tylenol.”

Frankie Minor, director of residential life at the University of Missouri-Columbia, said parents have a wide range of options when giving their kids care packages. They can even place online orders for generic care packages from companies such as On Campus Marketing.

We asked Murrell and Minor for tips on packing the perfect mail room surprise.

• Students always like food, especially in the form of cookies.
“They really prefer the homemade ones because some time and energy and thought was put in it,” Minor said.

• Send care packages as often as possible, but especially the weeks before midterms and finals.

• For special occasions, send a plant instead of flowers. It’s a similar but more permanent reminder to students that their families love and think about them.

“You want it to be something hardy,” Minor said. “Students aren’t always the best caretakers.”

• Frequent small gifts are better than a few big ones. And students like presents that are practical.

“Anything that can be useful,” Murrell said. “If they’re running out of something, mascara, any little thing.”

• When possible, have everyone in the family send something.

“One of the things students often talk about is when they get something from a little brother or sister — a card, a crayon drawing — because they really miss their families,” Minor said. “It reassures the students that their families have not forgotten.”

• To make the package meaningful, take the time to pick out its contents.

“They probably enjoy them a little more when some time and energy is put into it,” Minor said, “rather than just clicking and buying.”
Tour guides make universities 'come alive'

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Monday, August 9, 2010 12:10 am

As a tour guide at the University of Missouri at Columbia, Josh Heffernan can tell you about the legend of the shamrock built into the pathway outside the engineering building: Cross it and you are destined to marry an engineer.

The senior from Sunset Hills can talk about the history of the oldest building on campus. He knows the university is credited with creating the tradition of homecoming, and that the surest way to get an 'A' on a test is to rub the nose on the statue of former Gov. David Francis, which sits outside Jesse Hall.

And he can explain all of this while walking backward.

But this isn't what makes the Josh Heffernans of the world so important to their schools.

It's the personal stories he tells and the way he tells them. It's his ability to relate to parents and their children. But more than anything, it's his ability to turn prospective students into actual students.

That matters today more than ever, as the nation's colleges and universities face several years of shrinking high school graduating classes and increased competition to maintain enrollment levels. Campus tours are becoming a key piece of the recruitment machinery.

"Five to 10 years ago, they were simply the thing you did if you had time. Now they've become events," said Steven Goodman, an admissions consultant with Washington-based Top Colleges. "Some universities even give out tickets, as if you were going to visit the Empire State Building or some historical landmark."

Done right, these tours can mean big things for schools. At St. Louis University, for example, campus tours have proved to be the school's best tool for persuading students to join up.

"It's our No. 1 yield event," said Jean Gilman, dean of undergraduate admissions. "It's really these tour guides that make the university come alive."
More than that, it is that guide’s job to essentially represent every other student on campus, said Trent Gilbert, a consultant with Atlanta-based TargetX. The company’s 4-year-old consulting division has helped 170 schools improve their visit programs. The tour and the tour guides, he said, are a major part of that.

"It allows these (visiting high school students) to come to campus and see: Can I be friends with these people? Can I live with these people? Can I date these people? Can I see myself here?" Gilbert said.

Heffernan knows these things as well. And it’s why he approaches his job the way he does. During one of his hour-long tours, he covers the basics, with quick stops inside a variety of campus mainstays, including the bookstore, recreation center and library. But he sprinkles his tours with tidbits about his experiences and those of his friends — and says he has never given the same one twice.

He doesn’t just point out a concert venue. He recalls a concert that was there and what it was like. When touring the recreation center, he tells of one roommate’s peculiar habit of working out while watching Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles videos. And about the guy from Atlanta who came to Missouri and met several people from his hometown.

And he’s quick to make sure no one feels out of place.

On a recent summer afternoon tour, Heffernan took time while passing out water bottles to learn more about the three families in his group.

"Do you know what you’ll be majoring in?" he asked Brandon Hughlett, a high school junior from Springfield, Mo.

No sales pitches

Hughlett, who was brought to the school by parents wanting him to understand why he needs to work on his grades, quietly shook his head.

No worries, Heffernan assured him, before moving seamlessly into a story about a friend who claims to have changed majors half a dozen times: "I don’t know if it’s true, but that’s what he tells people."

What he doesn’t do, however, is make a straight sales pitch. Heffernan never promises that Missouri is better than any other school. He just explains why he likes it so much.

And that’s the way it should be, according to admissions experts, who say there’s no quicker way to turn off prospective students than by following a carefully prepared sales script.

Of course, the desire to provide an honest glimpse of the school can clash with the university's need to look as good as it can for recruits. It's a conflict, however, that generally takes care of itself through the selection of tour guides — who tend to be high performers with a deep sense of loyalty.

Even at schools like Washington University, which uses volunteer guides, these aren't easy jobs to get. Administrators at area schools say it's not uncommon to get 10 to 15 applicants for each opening, giving them the luxury to be picky when hiring.

The University of Missouri puts it applicants through a three-stage gauntlet that includes a written application and group and one-on-one interviews. And everyone is required to submit a project demonstrating their creativity.

"I've received everything from songs to poster boards to Power Point presentations. I've seen a Mizzou Life (board game) game. I've received a quilt. And there was a papier-mâché tiger," said LeAnn Stroupe, coordinator of the school's visitor relations program.

'Take some risks'

Still, the fact that the guides are employed by universities — they generally make little more than minimum wage — is not lost on parents and high school students making those college visits. That's a good reason to make sure guides are free to be honest, said Lloyd Thacker, executive director of The Education Conservancy, a nonprofit based in Portland, Ore., that fights commercial influences on admissions.

He argues that tours should be designed as more than just sales pitches. In some instances, he said, they should even help students decide to go elsewhere.

"You've got to take some risks," Thacker said. "There's much more to be gained by having the courage to let recruiters be educators."

Where Heffernan, who professes a love for sales, falls in that equation is debatable. Clearly he has strong feelings for the university that educated his parents and older sister and will soon take in his younger sister. So it's no surprise that it's hard to leave one of his tours feeling like Mizzou is anything less than perfect.

Still, he insists he only says things he believes.

"I'm not trying to pull the wool over anyone's eyes," he said. "I'm not trying to be a used car salesman."