True Fact: Dog-Walking Helps Dogs But Harms Birds

By Hal Herzog, Ph.D.

One of the best aspects of being a member of the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) is that our annual meetings are often held in great places. This year, it was in Stockholm. While my wife Mary Jean was out obsessively tracing the real-life haunts of the Millennium Trilogy fictional characters Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist, I was listening to talks on the differences in empathy between vegetarians and meat-eaters and the relationship between the personalities of dogs and their owners.

There were lots of fascinating presentations at the conference, but one that really caught my interest was on dog-walking. The talk was by Rebecca Johnson, director of the Research Center for Human Animal Interaction at the University of Missouri. Rebecca's group specializes in research on the benefits of dog-walking on people. This experiment, however, was different. It focused on the fates of dogs in animal shelters who were facing the needle.

The Good News...

The researchers wanted to know if regular walks could help keep these dogs from being euthanized. The design of their experiment was simple. Dogs in animal shelters were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The dogs that lucked out were assigned to the Walking Group. They were taken for walks five days a week by volunteer older adults, while the sad sacks in the Control Group sat glumly in their cages. The researchers regularly evaluated the behavior of the dogs in each group and kept track of their ultimate fate.

The results were impressive. During the study, the dogs in the Walking Group became much better behaved and social than the animals in the Control Group. More importantly, 75% of dogs who were taken for walks were adopted into permanent homes compared to only 35% of animals in the Control Group. But the heartbreaker is that 27% of dogs who by sheer random chance found themselves in the Control Group were euthanized while only 9% of their luckier peers were, as they say, "put to sleep."

In addition to being good for dogs, the University of Missouri researchers found that dog-walking benefits the walkers. For example, they have found that older adults who regularly walk shelter dogs have much greater increases in their "physical functioning" (as measured by how far they can walk in a set time) than subjects in "no walk" or "walk with a friend" control groups.

Because of the obesity epidemic, the beneficial effect of walking dogs on human health has become a hot research topic in anthrozoological circles. I think the jury is still out on whether getting a dog will cause you to lose weight -- and more importantly -- to keep it off. It is clear, however, that, as a rule, dog
walkers get more weekly exercise than non-dog owners. In addition to getting people off their butts and away from their computers and TVs, dog walking facilitates social contacts with other people. This is particularly important in older people who feel isolated.

The Bad News....

But what's good for dogs is bad for the birds. It's a true fact.

The evidence is in a paper published in the journal Biology Letters by Peter Banks and Jessica Bryant of the University of New South Wales in Australia. Their study was ambitious. Banks and Bryant made bird counts in 90 woodland sites not far from Sydney. Half of the sites were regularly visited by dog walkers, while in the other half, dog walking was prohibited. The researchers studied the effects of dog walking on resident bird populations by making the counts after either a person walking a dog or a person walking alone strolled through the woods. Of course, they also included a no person/no dog control condition.

The results? Dogs and birds don't mix. Dog walking produced a 41% decline in the number of birds in the wooded tracts. Indeed, a human ambling through the woods alone caused less than half the disruption to birds as a person walking a dog on leash. In addition to reducing the number of birds in the woods, fewer species were found in the wake of dog walkers. Finally, dog walking seems to cause permanent changes in the avian ecology of forests. By comparing bird populations in sites in which dogs were allowed and sites where they were banned, the authors found that even dogs on leashes caused birds to abandon their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.
Street signs to get dose of Tiger spirit

The **University of Missouri** is replacing traditional street signs on campus with new black-and-gold signs that will display the MU tiger.

The Mizzou Alumni Association is financially supporting the roughly $5,000 project, and the signs are expected to be installed by the end of this week.

MAA President Randy Wright said in a prepared statement that the group wanted to add a "bit more black and gold" to the campus.

"As students and alumni return this fall, we hope these distinctive signs will make them feel more at home than ever," he said.
MU junior dies in Nifong motorcycle crash

By JANESE SILVEY

Published August 9, 2010 at 4:42 p.m.
Updated August 10, 2010 at 1:45 p.m.

Mike Valora isn’t sure whether his daughter had ever been on a motorcycle before yesterday.

In fact, she was kind of afraid of them, he said.

“That’s why it’s such a shock.”

Caitlin Valora, a 20-year-old University of Missouri student, died yesterday in a motorcycle crash on East Nifong Boulevard.

Columbia police say the 1981 Yamaha driven by Aaron Hansberry, 21, was westbound on East Nifong approaching State Farm Parkway just after 11 a.m. when the front tire hit a curb, causing the motorcycle to become airborne.

Valora was on the back of the bike, which came to a rest about 20 feet from the road. She was pronounced dead at the scene. An autopsy was scheduled for this afternoon.

Hansberry, who reported the crash to authorities, was taken to University Hospital with a broken leg and listed in fair condition this morning.

Police discovered a helmet on the ground next to Hansberry, and officers think he was wearing it at the time of the crash but took it off to call police. Officers did not locate another helmet.

Caitlin Valora was from the St. Louis suburb of Grover. She was going to be a junior this fall, majoring in sociology.

Her father described Valora as a Christian who prayed nightly and “knew what was really important in life.”

“She was incredible,” Mike Valora said. “We know she wasn’t perfect, but she was an awesome daughter. She had her head on straight. She was smart, funny, obviously beautiful. She had a lot of friends. ... As a dad, I just can’t imagine a better daughter.”

Hansberry is from Lee’s Summit and is a pre-communications major at MU.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU student who was killed in motorcycle accident 'always was smiling'

By Dan Everson
August 10, 2010 | 1:22 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.

Valora was a passenger on the motorcycle, and the driver was identified as Aaron Hansberry, 21. He was taken to University Hospital for treatment of a broken right leg, the release said. No other vehicles were involved in the accident.

A University Hospital spokeswoman said Hansberry was in fair condition as of 3:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The accident occurred at about 11 a.m. According to police, 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. The front tire hit the curb, and the motorcycle became airborne. It came to rest about 20 feet from the road.

Police found a helmet at the scene of the accident, which they believe Hansberry was wearing at the time of the crash, the release said. Investigators believe he took off the helmet to call police. They did not find another helmet at the scene.

Missouri law states that motorcycle drivers and passengers must wear protective headgear at all times the vehicle is in motion.
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. She said Hansberry and Valora were friends.

Nonnemaker, also a junior, said she met Valora her freshman year in 2008.

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

The two 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."

Caitlin Miller, also a junior, lived in the same South Hall suite with Valora and Nonnemaker. Miller planned to room with Valora during the upcoming school year.

"She was one of those people that, immediately, everybody loved," Miller said. "She was really personable, really kind. She had more friends than I could ever imagine having."

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 this summer to places such as New York, 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."

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.

Police said a crash reconstructionist will complete a report on the accident. The Boone County Medical Examiner's office said an autopsy had been performed, but no results have been released.
New Mizzou science center unites campus brain researchers

By Associated Press

4:01 AM CDT, August 11, 2010

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A new University of Missouri research center is bringing many campus scientists who study the brain's complex wiring under one roof.

The university held an open house Tuesday at the new Center for Translational Neuroscience. The center contains 9,000 square feet of renovated lab space in the medical school's Medical Sciences Building.

The lab will host faculty researchers in biochemistry, pathology and anatomical sciences, neurology and other disciplines. Four core facilities will focus on neurosurgery, cell culture, neurobehavior and imaging analysis.

A $1.4 million federal grant for medical research construction was used in the renovation project.
Bob Foos was supposed to start a job at the Tribune when the Centralia Fireside Guard came calling.

Over coffee, publisher Charlie Hedberg "begged me to work for him," Foos recalled. Foos took the gig as a newspaper photographer and now credits it for giving him the experience needed when he later took over the Webb City Sentinel.

This fall, Foos will be one of four photographers inducted into the Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame.

The sixth annual induction ceremony is scheduled to be held on Oct. 21 in Washington, Mo.

Bill Miller Sr., publisher of the Washington Missourian — with help from the Missouri Press Association and the University of Missouri School of Journalism — launched the hall of fame in 2005.

"Everybody else in journalism is recognized — editors, publishers, the newspapers themselves," Miller said. "There had never been adequate recognition for photojournalism, and we really have had outstanding photojournalism in the state of Missouri."

The hall of fame is housed in a rented building in downtown Washington not far from the Missourian building. The free museum is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and features the work of inductees. The museum has attracted visitors from states as far away as California and New York, Miller said.

Foos enrolled in the MU School of Journalism's photojournalism sequence after working for the Joliet Herald News in Illinois. While at MU, he received the AP Ernie Pyle Scholarship and worked for the Columbia Missourian.

Foos was working for the Carthage newspaper covering Webb City news when he decided the community needed its own paper. He bought the Webb City Sentinel — a paper that mostly served as a legal publication and shopper — in 1979. Adding news and snapping pictures of local events and sports helped turn the publication from a 100-subscriber shopper into a community newspaper that now has some 2,000 subscribers.

Foos said he is honored to be inducted into the Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame. "You try to live up to all the people who have gone before you," he said.

Other 2010 inductees include: Scott Dine, who spent 35 years at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch working as a Sunday Pictures Magazine photographer, a photo editor and director of photography until he retired in 1999. He previously worked at papers in Richmond, Denver and Houston.

Roy Inman, director photography for the Star Magazine at the Kansas City Star for 17 years after graduating from the MU School of Journalism. He then began a full-time freelance photography business and spent six years documenting the restoration of Union Station in Kansas City.
Tim Jaynes spent nearly 20 years at the Sikeston Standard Democrat before he died of a heart attack in 2008 at the age of 38. Jaynes, who attended Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, also owned his own photography business.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Hudson and Rollins reopen on campus

By Nicholas Jain
August 10, 2010 | 7:34 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — When students lug plastic tubs full of clothes through the door of Rollins Commons to move into their new Hudson Hall room later this month, there will be little evidence the space was originally constructed in 1965. The only reminders are a few old Homecoming trophies and plaques displayed in a trophy case.

As they breathe the new car-like smell of freshly installed carpet, the students will enter the modern space punctuated with funky furniture and scattered with computers, and approach a massive front desk anchored on each side by a wall of mailboxes.

The desk, made of recycled shower partitions, is just one example of a building designed with sustainability in mind.

**MU’s Hudson Hall and Rollins Commons are open for the first time for the fall 2010 semester since the fall 2008 semester, when they closed. Hudson is a residence hall and Rollins is a common space that houses the Rollins Dining Hall and will connect Hudson to Gillett Hall, which should be finished for the fall 2011 semester.**

The total project costs $43 million. It includes a new entrance to the Rollins Dining Hall and the remodeling of Gillett Hall.

MU has opened 11 new residence halls and renovated six halls since 2004, said Frankie Minor, director of residential life.

Rollins’ new central entrance is more pedestrian friendly because students no longer have to walk through a driveway to get to class, Minor said. The remodel also added a new bike shelter.
He highlighted the sustainability efforts of the new building: it features flooring made with recycled materials.

In front of the building, a garden of Missouri native plants will be watered from rainfall collected on the entrance's roof.

During an open house Tuesday afternoon, Hudson Hall peer adviser Seth Newbold gave tours of the new building. He pointed out the adjustable height loft beds that can be raised high enough for a student to fit a desk underneath.

Newbold said the best view of campus could be seen from the seventh floor lounge where residents gaze out at the dome of Jesse Hall, the rear facade of Ellis Library and the smokestacks of the MU Power Plant.

Each floor has three study rooms, two of which have been converted to student bedrooms to house extra students as MU is seeing what could be one of its largest freshman classes.

Before the renovation, the space held 455 students but after adding study spaces and converting rooms from doubles to singles, it now is designed to hold 420. Newbold said 440 students will be moving in later this month, the surplus housed in the converted study rooms.

Because the Rollins Dining Hall can now be accessed without entering the Rollins lounge, the dining hall can have different hours than the residential hall, which will mean better security, said Director of Campus Dining Services Julaine Kiehn.

Minor said he liked the openness of the new space. He said the 1960s building was built for students from that era, but the new space is a place today and tomorrow's students will be proud to call home.