Freshmen crowd campus residence halls

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Sunday, August 15, 2010 12:05 am

The numbers won't be official for a couple of months, but colleges across the region are expecting record numbers of freshmen this fall.

And while administrators are thrilled, there's just one problem: They don't have room for everyone.

Residence halls on most campuses are being pushed to capacity and beyond as schools deal with a problem produced by an influx of freshmen — the latest crop of Missouri high school grads is the biggest in decades — and a growing number of upperclassmen hesitant to leave the dorms.

The Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla is renting apartments off campus. Maryville University bought a Marriott Hotel near campus. The University of Missouri-Columbia is pushing some upperclassmen off campus. And Southeast Missouri State University is telling some freshmen to wait until next semester before enrolling.

Most, however, are finding ways to squeeze in everyone who's actually required to live on campus — generally freshmen, and sometimes sophomores. Of course, sometimes the definition of "on campus" has to be loosened a bit for students such as Josh Wagner, of Oswego, Ill.

He's about to start his freshman year at Mizzou. After signing up about two weeks after the school started taking housing requests, Wagner expected to have some difficulties with room selection. Maybe he'd end up in one of the older, less desirable halls.

Not quite.

Wagner is one of a 100 or so students who'll be starting the year in a dorm rented from nearby Stephens College. He'll have no cable. No Internet access in his room. A 15-minute walk to campus. And a promise that the school will try to get him into one of its own dorms as soon as possible.

"It'll definitely be a pain having to travel a little more than everyone else," said Wagner, who's planning to bring a bike with him.

Like most schools in the area, Mizzou is facing pressure on multiple fronts, with the demands of old and new students compounded by the ongoing need to close some halls for renovation.
The campus has added several new halls in recent years, expanding the bed count to 6,400, but housing officials are hesitant to keep expanding when their projections suggest enrollment could begin to taper off over the next several years.

The university's research pegs the recent Missouri high school graduating class at more than 63,000. Those numbers have swollen as the children of baby boomers move through school. And the numbers are expected to drop to 55,000 within four years.

"We have to make sure we don't overbuild," said Frankie Minor, director of residential life.

Instead, the school is employing a variety of short-term remedies, including the leased space at Stephens and an apartment complex off campus. And it has been forced to get tough with sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Just three years ago, the housing department had requests from 1,400 upperclassmen wanting to return to the residence halls. It hit 2,200 this year, said Catherine Scroggs, vice chancellor for student affairs.

"This year was the first year we said to returning students: 'We can't accommodate you,'" Scroggs said.

So the school capped returning residence hall students at 1,400 and even tried buying off some of those who'd already signed up, offering $1,000 incentives to upperclassmen willing to move out. It got fewer than half of the 200 it was hoping for.

It's something of an odd twist, but at MU and elsewhere, students have increasingly grown attached to campus living, particularly with new-style residence halls featuring suites, air conditioning, high speed Internet and cable. Even the food, they say, is much improved.

These are among the reasons that junior Schuyler Noeth, of Florrell Hills, gives for her determination to stay right where she is in Mark Twain Hall, one of the older buildings on campus. It's not quite as nice as some of the newer buildings, but she loves the food, the short walk to the engineering building and the fact that someone else cleans the bathrooms.

Most of her friends left last year — many were bought off by the incentive deal. But Noeth, an engineering student, made a list of pros and cons and came up with a simple conclusion: "Living off campus just doesn't make sense for my situation."

The campus housing crunch is being handled a variety of ways by different schools.

Among the more drastic measures are those taken by Southeast Missouri State, which requires both freshmen and sophomores from more than 50 miles away to live on campus. First, the school canceled its single-occupancy rooms and converted them to doubles. That wasn't enough, so now incoming freshmen from more than 50 miles away are seeing their enrollments deferred to next semester.
"We'll accept you, but only in the spring," said Kenneth Dobbins, school president.

Even at schools without a residency requirement, there have been challenges. At Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, more than 140 students have been turned away from the dorms. And that's after the school converted nearly a dozen study lounges into temporary triple-occupancy rooms.

"We've had some issues in the past, but this year is completely different," said Mike Schultz, director of housing.

At the Missouri University of Science and Technology, housing officials have a waiting list with some 20 upperclassmen seeking beds. Dozens of others have asked about space.

The school, which has added more than 500 new beds in recent years, requires freshmen and sophomores to live on campus. One of its older dorms is out of commission for renovations, forcing the school to rent apartments from a company that specializes in apartments geared toward students. As with other schools taking that step, all typical campus housing rules — including a prohibition against alcohol — apply to those apartments, and they are staffed by resident assistants, said Tina Sheppard, director of residential life.

If things get worse before classes start later this month, the school does have the option of renting rooms from a nearby hotel.

"We had a 100 students living out there" last fall, Sheppard said. "The people who end up going there are the ones who apply late."

In some instances, housing crunches have been at least partially self-created. At St. Louis University, for example, the school's growth in freshmen has been compounded by a decision last year to require sophomores to live on campus as well.

Spokesman Clayton Berry said studies had shown that students tend to do better at college if they live on campus during their first two years. And although the school realized the move would put more pressure on the school's housing stock — there are 3,600 beds on campus — there aren't any plans to add any more rooms on campus.

However, the school did pick up an additional 300 beds through an agreement with the Flats at 374, a nearby apartment complex where SLU acts as property manager.

But though that building is being counted as official housing, not everyone is happy with a change that in effect forced some upperclassmen to move out of coveted rooms on campus, said Chris Ackels, a student senator from Dallas.

"We require so many people to live on campus that we just don't have room for everybody," Ackels said.
Freshmen numbers rising

Posted: Sunday, August 15, 2010 12:00 am

Many schools across the region are expecting their incoming freshman class to be among their largest ever. Freshman enrollment, in general, has been trending upwards in recent years corresponding to larger high school graduating classes. Here's a five-year look at freshman enrollment trends at several area colleges. Numbers for 2010 will not be known until the semester begins.

Source: Figures reported by universities.

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Pet woes: First comes baby, then the doghouse

We still love our furballs, but children change how much time we spend with them

By Stephanie Pappas

updated 8/15/2010 3:21:54 PM ET

Pet owners often swear that a new baby won't change how they feel about their cat or dog. But a new study of pet owners in Indiana finds that parenthood does affect the way people think about and treat their domesticated furballs.

The study involved survey questions about how much time people spent with their animals, what they did together, and how often the pets got medical care. The last question was a proxy for how well the animals were cared for.

"In all cases for dogs and cats, except for cats going to the vet, children adversely affected the animals," study researcher David Blouin, a cultural sociologist at Indiana University South Bend, told LiveScience. "People with children spent less time with their animals and took them to the vet less often."

That's not to say that parents neglected or mistreated their pets. It just turns out that the way we view our pets depends a lot on our social context, Blouin said.

Pet Nation
Pet ownership is incredibly common in America, with over 60 percent of households claiming at least one pet. The way people interact with their pets has also shifted over time, Blouin said, which made him wonder what other factors make a difference in how people see their relationships with a pet.

To investigate, he mailed surveys to 1,900 dog and cat owners in Indiana.

Almost 600 people, 307 dog owners and 271 cat owners, responded. The results showed that, for the most part, people really love their pets. Almost 93 percent of dog owners and 77 percent of
cat owners took their animals to yearly veterinarian appointments. Fewer than 1 percent of dog owners and 4 percent of cat owners admitted to never taking their animals to the vet.

Pet owners also reported spending lots of time with their animals. Over 80 percent of dog owners and 67 percent of cat owners said they spent more than two hours a day interacting with their pet. All but a few percent of people spent at least some time with their pets each day.

**Defining the relationship**

To find out more about how people felt about their pets, Blouin arranged in-depth interviews with 35 dog owners. He found that people reported intense emotional attachments to their dogs; often, the dogs would sit on the owner's lap throughout the interview.

"It was moving at times to see how attached people were and how much they did get from their relationships," Blouin said.

Blouin's previous research has found three types of pet owners: Dominionists, who are fond of their pets but view them primarily as useful animals, not companions; Humanists, who see their pets as practically human; and Protectionists, who see animals as separate beings that humans have a responsibility to help and protect. The last group includes many people who take in foster pets or volunteer to care for abandoned animals.

He found that people who live in rural areas tend to hold more Dominionist attitudes, while those in cities are slightly more likely to hold a Humanist view. He also found that people with children reported that their attitudes changed with the birth of their child. Before the birth, he said, people reported feeling like their pet was their child. After having a kid, they were less likely to hold that attitude.

The findings could explain, in part, why people with kids spent less time with their pets, Blouin said.

"Part of it is time and money, perhaps just not having the resources," he said. "But also part of it is about definition."

Fortunately for fluffy companions everywhere, this less-sentimental view toward pets tends to shift back after the children grow up. Empty nesters often reported that relationships with their pets were stronger after the children left the house.

**Walking the dog**

Even if you view your pet more as a useful animal than a fuzzy child, it may be wise to not set your cat or dog aside when a new baby comes along. Pet ownership can be enormously beneficial, said Rebecca Johnson, a professor of nursing at the University of Missouri and director of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction. Studies have shown multiple benefits to interaction with companion animals, from lowered blood pressure to increased survival after heart attack.
Johnson and her team have studied the health effects of dog-walking on people over 60. They've found that people who walk with a dog from an animal shelter increased their walking speed by 28 percent, compared with no significant increase in people who walked with a human companion. Part of the reason for the difference may be in the dose of doggie enthusiasm, said Johnson, who was not involved in the current research.

"If treadmills provided the kind of reinforcement that dogs do, we wouldn't have the obesity epidemic that we do," she said.

Even better, she said, the dogs that participated in the walking program were more likely to be adopted and less likely to be euthanized — just the kind of result to make a Protectionist smile.
Autopsy: MU student died of blunt trauma

Sunday, August 15, 2010

A University of Missouri student who was killed in a motorcycle wreck on Monday died of blunt trauma to the head, neck and torso according to an autopsy conducted by the Boone County Medical Examiner’s Office on Tuesday.

Caitlin Valora, a 20-year-old University of Missouri student, was a passenger on a motorcycle that crashed on East Nifong Boulevard on Monday. 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. Hansberry suffered a broken leg.
MU student in motorcycle crash
golden by blunt trauma

By Dan Everson
August 13, 2010 | 6:22 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Blunt trauma caused the death of an MU student killed in the
Monday morning motorcycle crash on East Nifong Boulevard, the Boone County
Medical Examiner’s Office confirmed on Friday.

Caitlin Valora, 20, died as a result of blunt injuries to the head, neck and torso, the
medical examiner's office said.

Valora was a passenger on the motorcycle, which was westbound on East Nifong
Boulevard, driving toward State Farm Parkway. East Nifong Boulevard reaches a dead
end at State Farm Parkway, forming a T-intersection.

The motorcycle continued through the intersection, hit a curb and became airborne,
police said. It came to rest about 20 feet from the road.

Valora was pronounced dead on the scene, authorities said. The driver, Aaron
Hansberry, 21, was transported to University Hospital, where he received treatment for
a broken right leg. He has since been released from the hospital.

Police found one helmet on the ground near Hansberry. They believe he was wearing it
at the time of the crash. They did not locate another helmet.

Missouri law states that motorcycle drivers and passengers must wear protective
headgear at all times the vehicle is in motion.

Sgt. Shelley Jones of the Columbia Police Department Traffic Unit said that because
Valora was an adult, she was responsible for wearing her own helmet.
She said the officer investigating the crash would look into whether Hansberry could be held accountable for allowing her onto the motorcycle without a helmet.

Police would have to finish the investigation before any citations could be issued or any charges filed, she said.

Public Information Officer Jill Wienke said it would be a few weeks before the investigation concludes because the investigator is waiting to receive results from a test for drugs and alcohol in the driver's bloodstream.
Bookstore to boost rentals

MU reacting to market forces.

By Janese Silvey

Sunday, August 15, 2010

The University of Missouri Bookstore will offer more rental options this semester in effort to help students shave college costs and to compete with an ever-growing online textbook market.

University Bookstore began its rental service last semester, offering about 4,900 copies of 46 book titles. This semester, 200 titles — about 23,000 books — will be available for rent, marked with bright pink stickers on bookstore shelves.

Renting isn’t an option for all textbooks used at MU, said Michelle Froese, spokeswoman for Mizzou’s Student Auxiliary Services. First, in order to be efficient, professors have to agree to use the book at least six semesters — a tough sell because “that flies in the face of academic freedom,” she said. Second, renting books is labor intensive for bookstore staff.

Textbook costs have been in the forefront in the past several years with new state and federal laws aimed to hold publishers and colleges accountable. In 2008, then-Gov. Matt Blunt signed the Textbook Transparency Act, which requires publishing companies to disclose to professors, when asked, wholesale prices and justify why a book has been updated to a new, pricier edition. New federal laws mimic what Missouri has already done.

University bookstore supports the legislative efforts, but Froese said they’re tough to enforce because they put the burden on busy faculty members to ask publishers for that information.

There’s also a difference between wholesale prices and retail prices — a 25 percent difference at University Bookstore, to be exact, so the price publishers give won’t match the sticker prices in the bookstore. MU tacks on the 25 percent because that’s the amount needed to keep the store stocked and operating, Froese said. Any profit the bookstore makes goes back into other university operations.

Operational costs make it tougher for campus bookstores to compete with private alternatives, especially those online.

Cally Monroy, a University of Missouri junior, said she’s saved hundreds since discovering Chegg.com, an online textbook store. Monroy — who’s being paid this month to promote the
company — said she spent about $180 last semester on rental books from Chegg and MU compared to some $600 she spent on used books her freshmen fall semester.

Not only is renting cheaper, it also doesn’t require students to try to sell back books that might not be wanted anymore.

“It’s so much easier not having to deal with books afterwards,” said Monroy, a journalism major. “I always got stuck with books I’m never going to use again.”

Aside from Chegg, there are dozens of online rental options, including Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com. Other private brick-and-mortar bookstores in town and peer-to-peer sales also cut into University Bookstore sales, but Froese doesn’t mind.

“Competition is good,” she said. “It keeps us honest and focused on our mission of finding the most affordable course materials to sell.”

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Mizzou's rat sperm stimulus grant: What price knowledge?

By the Editorial Board | Posted: Friday, August 13, 2010 8:50 pm

Republican U.S. Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Tom Coburn of Oklahoma this month published their third list of what they regard as the most wasteful projects to be funded by last year's $787 billion stimulus bill.

One of the 100 projects they singled out was a $180,935 grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia who are trying to come up with a better way to freeze rat sperm.

With a single pair of rats capable of yielding 1,500 rats in a year, we wondered why anyone would bother to freeze rat sperm. Answer: You want to be able to ensure continuity of specific genetic traits. In today’s thawed-out rat semen, only 10 percent of the sperm survive.

This research, no doubt, is useful, but the stimulus was supposed to kick-start the economy. The rat sperm project supported 1.25 jobs. Advantage: Sens. McCain and Coburn.

On the other hand, while looking this stuff up, we learned that you don’t have to check the undercarriage to find out the sex of a rat. Females smell like grape soda, and males smell like corn tortillas. You can’t put a price on knowledge like that.
Iraqis pursue education at MU

Exchange program is a $1 billion effort.

Photo by Parker Eshelman | Buy this photo

Hayder Touran, left, locates his hometown of Kirkuk, Iraq, on a computer while Hussein Abdulhussein watches. The two are among 10 Iraqi students who are attending the University of Missouri this year to pursue advanced degrees in engineering.

By Janese Silvey

They thought it was going to be cold here. And they were expecting action, too, the kind they’ve seen in American movies.
Instead, Hayder Touran and Hussein Abdulhussein have found out that the mercury in Missouri can rise just as high as in Iraq, only with humidity. Oh, and Columbia isn’t exactly action-packed, at least until football season starts.

Touran and Abdulhussein are among 10 Iraqi students planning to attend the University of Missouri this year to pursue advanced degrees in engineering. They’ve come as part of the Iraqi Education Initiative, a $1 billion per year effort by the Iraqi government to train a new generation of qualified instructors who can return to their own colleges and universities.

The program started last year as a pilot, sending 5,000 students to schools in the United States and Britain. For the next five years, the program aims to send 10,000 Iraqi scholars a year to foreign schools. It’s a strategic plan aimed to transform the country’s educational system to make up for years not spent developing human resources, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki explained in a letter quoted in Al Jamiat magazine.

MU is one of eight U.S. schools accepting students from the program this year. The university has about 1,800 international students, most of whom come from East Asia, said David Currey, assistant director of the International Center.

“This is a wonderful way to have more representatives from different countries on campus,” he said. “To see numbers expand from other areas — especially areas where we have a lot of involvement politically — we’re excited about that.”

Touran and Abdulhussein earned undergraduate degrees from the University of Technology in Bagdad, where they taught before coming here. Touran said the educational exchange opportunity was the only chance the scholars had to earn advanced degrees and become full faculty members.

Five of the 10 students coming to MU arrived in June and spent eight weeks undergoing an intensive English program where they studied not only the language but also the culture. So far, they’ve been model students, said Larry Francis, director of the Intensive English Program. They never missed a class and their instructors considered them a “joy” to have in class, he said.

Even outside of school, the visitors are getting an education about America. Instead of dressing in formal attire — like scholars in Iraq do — they’re getting used to wearing comfortable clothing every day. Unlike their own communities — where residents head outside in the evenings to work in gardens, watch children play or just socialize — people here tend to stay indoors after work. And, even though Touran is looking forward to introducing American students to dolmas — vegetable dishes stuffed with rice and meats — they’ve found out that cheeseburgers are pretty tasty, too.

Abdulhussein also got a first-hand look at mainstream media here. He saw a TV report recently showing an outbreak of violence in his community southwest of Bagdad and worriedly phoned home only to learn everything was fine. “It was an exaggeration,” he said.
The men hope being here shows Americans that Iraq isn’t exactly how it’s portrayed. “I want to change the fear that Iraqis want to kill,” Abdulhussein said. “Soldiers are not being killed by Iraqis; they’re being killed by terrorist groups coming from outside the country.”

Touran admitted he’s letting go of his own misperceptions about Americans, too. “It’s much different from the movies,” he said.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Homesickness isn't really about 'home'

By Derrick Ho, Special to CNN

August 16, 2010 8:06 a.m. EDT

(CNN) -- There was nothing but excitement for Keila Pena-Hernandez when she first stepped onto the grounds of the University of Missouri.

New school. New city. A new phase of her life. "It's just like wow, wow, wow! I was just excited that I'm in new surroundings," she said.

By the third week, the novelty of her new surroundings had worn off. The then 27-year-old health informatics doctoral student from Puerto Rico found herself lying on her bed after classes with the lights turned off and gazing out the window into the sky. All she could think of were the faces of friends and family.

"I started feeling homesick," she recalled. "This is nice, but this is not really home. The gym is awesome, but I didn't know anyone here."

This month, as thousands of freshmen and graduate students flock to colleges to begin a new academic year, many will be leaving home, some for the first time.

As routines are replaced with new social and academic pressures, and home by a dormitory full of strangers, homesickness -- the longing ache for the familiar, friends or grandma's cooking -- sets in. Pena-Hernandez knows all about that; she's felt it since she left home in 2004.

Homesickness is nothing new. It is mentioned in the Bible's Old Testament book of Exodus and Homer's "Odyssey," and happens to just about anyone away from home -- athletes and actors alike. ("Twilight" star Robert Pattinson reportedly told a U.K. magazine he misses home badly.)

Even so, only lately has there emerged a clearer sense of what homesickness is -- a distinct adjustment disorder with identifiable symptoms -- and what causes it.

In a paper co-written by Chris Thurber and Edward Walton published in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, homesickness is defined as "distress and functional impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home and attachment objects such as parents."
Those who suffer from the condition feel some form of anxiety, sadness and nervousness, and most distinctly, obsessive preoccupation with thoughts of home, Thurber said.

Pena-Hernandez craved the tropical fruits of Puerto Rico and the cool sea breeze.

"Lakes or rivers in the Midwest do not compare to the Caribbean Sea," she said.

Also troubling was the sense that her loved ones had moved on without her.

"A lot of my friends got married, had children and I'm not part of that because I'm not physically there, so you feel like you're losing out."

Yet despite the way it's coined, homesickness isn't necessarily about home. And neither is it exactly an illness, experts said.

Instead, it stems from our instinctive need for love, protection and security -- feelings and qualities usually associated with home, said Josh Klapow, a clinical psychologist and associate professor at the University of Alabama's School of Public Health. When these qualities aren't present in a new environment, we begin to long for them -- and hence home.

"You're not literally just missing your house. You're missing what's normal, what is routine, the larger sense of social space, because those are the things that help us survive," Klapow said.

He offered another way of approaching homesickness: It's merely an emotion that comes in waves. "Very few emotions stay with you all the time, they come and they go," he said. But when it strikes, both children and adults often get caught off guard by it, he added.

"They think something's terribly wrong. But it's normal and adaptive to feel homesick for some period of time. It's just your emotions and mind telling you you're out of your element."

That homesickness is a spontaneous emotion also means both adults and children will feel its effects, Thurber said.

"If you look at an 8-year-old boy or girl at summer camp, and an 18-year-old university freshman, you would see very similar symptoms," he said. "The same would be true for a 28-year-old going to medical school in a different country."

Thurber said he has observed few differences in the length and intensity of homesickness between males and females.

While the cloud often lifts after a few weeks, "the distress and level of impairment among some homesick persons can become extreme," according to Thurber's report published in 2007.

In his study of homesickness among children, about 9 percent have it so bad that "it is associated with strong feelings of anxiety and depression, maybe even clinically significant symptoms," Thurber said.
"When homesickness is really bad, it's hard for people to eat, sleep or interact with others. That's terribly rare, but it does sometimes happen."

Age can play a crucial difference in coping with homesickness.

When you're 8, you don't have a lot of formal operational thought nor hypothetical thinking, said Thurber, so being away a month can seem like forever. But an 18-year-old is more likely to be able to translate that into a more manageable time frame.

"You'd be making comparisons in your head: That means if I do laundry once a week I do it four times. That changes and as people's concept of time becomes more sophisticated, so does the quality of their coping," Thurber said.

Experience counts, too.

"It turns out, [homesickness is] the very thing that inoculates against a future bout of homesickness," Thurber said. "By living through a difficult separation, your mind forces itself to cope."

It's this reason why experts advise parents against helicoptering their children out of college if they complain about homesickness.

"It's kind of like a bailout," said Ruperto Perez, director of the Georgia Institute of Technology's counseling center. Students end up being robbed of picking up problem solving and time management skills.

If there's any sort of deal parents can make, it is to agree to stop communicating -- be it text messages or via e-mails -- with their freshmen every five minutes.

Instead, Klapow said, parents should schedule a specific time, once a week, to contact their children. It also allows space and time for college students to make strong social connections among their peers -- perceived absence of social support was a strong predictor of homesickness, according to Thurber's report -- and gain much-needed independence.

Perez said this can be crucial in this day and age in which children have become more and more reliant on their parents. "There is more of an uncertainty of how to be independent. Probably because parents have provided more for them, for a longer period," he said.

While homesick kids at summer camp have the supervision of counselors, college students have less of that.

Colleges have been hypervigilant for signs of depression and anxiety particularly after the Virginia Tech shootings. Counseling centers such as Perez's are taking steps to increase the awareness of the help students can turn to by promoting their services at orientation sessions and working with faculty and residential staff.
While there is still a stigma when it comes to approaching a counselor, Klapow said not doing so is as foolish as not consulting a doctor when a student is suffering from, say, stomach cramps.

"For college students, hey welcome to the big world. And the big world says, sometimes your emotions need to be dealt with," he added.

While homesickness can be dealt with, can it be prevented?

Not quite, Thurber said, despite the title of his study, "Preventing and treating homesickness."

"But what you're able to do is change its intensity," he said. Allowing teens and young adults to be active in deciding which college to go to helps.

Then there's practice and preparation.

Practice time away from home, Thurber recommended. Parents, too, can help by working with their freshmen to learn about the new environment by visiting campuses and talking to alumni. "They increase familiarity and, thereby, reduce anxiety," Thurber wrote.

Pena-Hernandez, who is finishing her Ph.D, makes a trip home once a year. She still misses home occasionally, but has the support from more friends and church as well.

We get homesick because "there are things that we love," said Thurber. "It's the byproduct of the strength of our attachment. If there were nothing in the world we were attached to, then we wouldn't miss them when we're away."
The Campus Connection

Students nowadays stay cyber-tied to parents, but technology can pose problems, experts say.

BY ANGIE LEVENTIS LOURGOS Chicago Tribune

Friday, August 13, 2010

CHICAGO — Nineteen-year-old Taylor Matichak calls her mom several times a day, in between the flurry of text messages they send one another discussing academics, social life or just daily chit-chat.

Technology use keeps rising

A Pew Research Center survey this year found 40 percent of adults use the Internet, e-mail or instant messaging, up from 32 percent in 2009. Seventy-two percent of adults this year reported sending or receiving text messages compared to 65 percent last year. Data also shows that roughly three-quarters of 12-to-17-year-olds own cell phones compared to 45 percent in 2004, which indicates it’s likely teens are increasingly taking cell phones with them to college.

Though the sophomore at the University of Missouri spends most of the year more than 300 miles from her family’s Plainfield, Ill., home, the distance seems to evaporate with technology.

“I like it because we can stay close,” said the teen, who says she initiates most of the calls and texts.

It’s profoundly different from the college days of her mother, 52-year-old Debbie Matichak, who remembers waiting in long lines at her dormitory pay phone to make the obligatory Sunday collect call home.

Keeping in touch with parents was more expensive and time-consuming when she attended the University of Denver three decades ago. But as college students prepare to descend on campuses in the coming weeks, many are finding that with the ease of cell phones, unlimited text message plans, e-mail, Facebook and Skype, they can have near-constant access to mom and dad.

“It’s changed the experience of being away at college,” said James Boyle, president of College Parents of America, based in Arlington, Va. “A generation ago, when your parents said goodbye and drove away, many” students “didn’t see their parents again until Thanksgiving.”
Parents “want to be there, but they need to let go,” she said. “They need to send their child back to the problem.”

It might sound counter-intuitive, but Guy said one of her most gratifying times as a parent stemmed from lack of communication with her daughter Madalyn Guy, who was 19 last semester and studying in Rome without access to a cell phone. Madalyn had to navigate a foreign city, choose her courses — even go to the emergency room once — without her mother’s help.

Deb Guy found the lack of communication unnerving at first. But when she visited Madalyn abroad, she was proud to watch as her daughter took charge and made plans, as an adult would.

“She made every decision on her own, and I saw the value of that,” she said.

As for the Matichaks, they disagree with the premise that more contact hinders a student’s autonomy. Taylor Matichak says she’s very independent: She might ask her mom’s opinion about her coursework or class schedule, but that’s just guidance she can accept or reject.

They also keep certain boundaries. While they might text and call one another, they don’t email and they’re not friends on Facebook, a medium they both believe should be reserved for Taylor Matichak and her peers.

Debbie Matichak, who wishes she had more communication with her parents during college, says she just likes to check in and know Taylor’s all right.

“I can help reinforce the decisions that she’s making,” Debbie Matichak said. “I know that she’s OK, even though she’s five hours away.”
 MU looks to expand platforms

Project would unify users of GoMizzou.

By Janese Silvey

Friday, August 13, 2010

Have an Android or BlackBerry phone? Turns out there’s an app for those, too.

The University of Missouri System is reviewing bids for a mobile device application tool to translate programs across digital media on the MU campus. In other words, applications now only available on the iPhone — such as the GoMizzou app set to debut Aug. 23 — would be available on other smart phones, too.

“Each mobile device out there on the market — the iPhone, Android, Windows mobile, BlackBerry — each have their own specific programming language used to program applications for them,” said Kevin Bailey, director of desktop technologies. “This development platform we’re interested in finding is one where you could design program applications once and then publish them to each of the platforms.”

The GoMizzou iPhone application, a year in the making, is expected to provide an events calendar, a campus map and links to campus news. Making that application available to students who show up with Androids and BlackBerries instead of iPhones was one goal of finding a tool to translate application language, Bailey said, but not the only reason.

“Looking strategically down the road, we realize an awful lot of our computer needs will become more and more mobile,” he said. “We wanted to have the infrastructure in place to serve a mobile work force in the future.”

One possible use would be to create an application that would allow Campus Facilities workers to order supplies from their phones, letting them do it on site instead of forcing them to return to an office computer. Another possibility, Bailey said, would be to have a job ticket program that would let technicians know via their cell phones when new work orders come in.

Mark Yount, multimedia specialist with Campus Facilities, said crews had not been aware of the potential upcoming technologies before but were excited about the possibilities.

They use electronic purchasing “a lot, so any way you can make it more accessible, they’re excited about it,” he said.
Translating those programs to fit a variety of mobile devices lets the campus stay neutral in the marketplace.

“We like to be able to say we’re not tied to a particular type of device in what we’re putting out for students, faculty and staff to use,” Bailey said.

MU’s athletic department has an application available for the iPhone that provides schedules and scores, but administrators there would be interested in seeing how they could take advantage of a translating tool, said spokesman Chad Moller.

“Internally, we’d like to see that available, as well,” he said.

Bailey said administrators are still reviewing the two bids received Tuesday and said he did not know how much the translating system would cost.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
KU's Perkins runs up big bills on private planes

MU Mention on Pg. 2

By The Associated Press
August 15, 2010 | 8:02 p.m. CDT

LAWRENCE, Kan. — University of Kansas athletic director Lew Perkins billed the athletics department more than $150,000 for 22 flights on university-owned and leased planes from July 2008 to May 2010, far more than his counterparts at Kansas State and Missouri spent during the same period.

That doesn’t include 23 other private flights he took during that time, The Kansas City Star reported in a story Sunday.

According to the newspaper, which examined Perkins' travel vouchers, the Kansas official also spent thousands of dollars on car services, rather than renting vehicles at much lower rates.

In February 2009, Perkins flew from Lawrence to Columbia by executive-style jet to attend the Kansas men's basketball game against Missouri. Meanwhile, coach Bill Self and the defending national champions rode a bus.

For that one night, Perkins spent $1,983 on the flight and $380 for ground transportation.

"In my world, time is very important," Perkins told the newspaper. "I consider my time very valuable. That’s one of the reasons why we have planes, to help us get places quicker."

He earned $4.4 million last year, with bonuses, at Kansas, and charged the athletic department at least $107,000 for 22 private flights. In some cases, he flew when he
could have driven in three hours or less to places such as Wichita, Hutchinson and Lincoln, Neb.

In comparison, Kansas State athletic director John Currie has taken 10 private flights costing $28,430 in his 15 months in that position.

Records show Perkins spent about $7,000 on ground transportation during the 22-month period reviewed by The Star, including $1,827 during two days in New York.

Earlier this year, Perkins took the university's jet for a 139-mile trip to Pittsburg, Kan., to attend the funeral of former Kansas State quarterback Dylan Meier, whose younger brother Kerry had just finished his career at Kansas.

Kansas State coach Bill Snyder also flew to the funeral on a university plane from Manhattan. But the big difference was that Snyder rented a car for $44 to take him from the airport to the funeral, while Perkins spent $425 for a car service.

Missouri athletic director Mike Alden said he usually uses commercial airlines or drives when he takes trips outside of Columbia. The university doesn't own a plane, and instead uses private planes provided by donors.

Alden said he uses private planes fewer than five times a year, and when he does take a donor plane to a men's basketball game, he goes only when invited on already-planned flights.

Perkins uses planes owned by Tim Fritzel, a major donor, and Ren Newcomer, both of whom give at least $50,000 a year to the Williams Educational Fund. Boosters at Kansas who donate flight hours can be reimbursed for the cost or earn priority points for their Williams Fund accounts, which helps them get good seats at Kansas athletic events.

Records show Perkins often flew on executive planes up to three times a month, and on at least five of those flights he or he and his wife were the only passengers on a six- or eight-seat plane.

Perkins' employment contract allows him to fly first-class on university business, but he rarely does so.
On one trip, he flew on US Airways for $1,883 to Phoenix for the "Fiesta Frolic," an annual golf retreat for college football coaches. For another, he flew on American Airlines for $720 from a Kansas baseball game in Raleigh, N.C., to Dallas for a Big 12 Conference meeting.

He took a university plane from Dallas to Lawrence at a cost of $3,397.

"Going commercial is an option," Perkins said. "But there's a lot of places we can't get to on commercial flights. You can miss flights, all of those things. Please understand: I don't look at it as a luxury. It's just a convenience."

The 65-year-old is scheduled to retire in September 2011. If he remains athletic director until June 30, 2011, he will receive a $600,000 retention payment.

Perkins said he likes to attend every basketball game, and during a three-week period of the 2008-09 season, he took private planes to games at Iowa State, Nebraska and Missouri.

"The team buses or drives to Iowa State, it's a five-hour drive each way," he said. "I can get in and leave right away. It definitely is, from a business standpoint, a time-saver for me."
In two years, KU athletic director tallied a big bill flying on private planes

By J. BRADY McCOLLOUGH, MIKE McGRAW and BLAIR KERKHOFF

Sunday, August 15

In February 2009, University of Kansas athletic director Lew Perkins flew from Lawrence to Columbia by executive-style jet to attend the Jayhawks’ men’s basketball game against Missouri.

KU coach Bill Self and his defending national champions took a bus.

Perkins’ expenses that night — $1,983 for the flight and $380 for ground transportation — make up a small piece of the big picture when it comes to his travel.

He charged the athletic department more than $150,000 from July 2008 to May 2010 for 22 flights on university-owned and leased planes, according to a review of Perkins’ travel vouchers by The Kansas City Star.

That figure does not include 23 other private flights Perkins took in that time — seven on boosters’ planes, four cited on Perkins’ vouchers without a cost and 12 that were reported on the expense reports of other KU staffers who joined Perkins on a trip.

Athletic directors at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri don’t board private planes at anywhere near the same rate.

For example, in the 15 months John Currie has been K-State’s athletic director, he has taken 10 private flights costing $28,430, according to records obtained by The Star.

In 2009, when Perkins earned a bonus-laden $4.4 million at KU, he charged the athletic department at least $107,000 for 22 private flights, records show. First-class commercial flights would have cost a fraction of that.

“In my world, time is very important,” Perkins told The Star. “I consider my time very valuable. That’s one of the reasons why we have planes, to help us get places quicker.”
In some cases, Perkins flew when he could have driven in three hours or less — to such cities as Wichita, Hutchinson, Kan., and Lincoln, Neb.

He also flew to such places as New York, Rhode Island and Palm Springs, Calif., usually on the university’s eight-seat Cessna Citation Bravo jet. When he couldn’t get the university’s plane, Perkins chartered one or used planes owned by boosters.

Once, a booster’s plane flew Perkins back from a family visit to New Orleans, where his daughter and son-in-law work for Tulane University.

On many of his trips, Perkins hired car services to get around. He spent about $7,000 on ground transportation in the 22-month period studied by The Star, including $1,827 during two days in New York.

Closer to home, Perkins earlier this year took KU’s jet the 139 miles to Pittsburg, Kan., to attend the funeral of former K-State quarterback Dylan Meier, whose younger brother, Kerry, had just finished his football career at KU.

K-State football coach Bill Snyder also flew in for the funeral, taking a university plane from Manhattan.

Both needed to get from the airport to the funeral. Perkins charged $425 for a car service. Snyder rented a car for $44.

**Big Easy confusion**

In October 2008, Perkins claimed an $8,800 expense for a trip to New Orleans, indicating on his travel voucher that his purpose was to meet with Rick Dickson, Tulane’s athletic director.

The $8,800 was for flying on a private plane, a King Air turboprop owned by Tim Fritzel, a major KU donor.

When The Star asked Perkins about the trip Wednesday, he said he couldn’t remember the meeting’s topic, and he seemed surprised at the cost, asking, “How did I spend $8,000?”

Perkins said he visited family on the trip. His daughter, Amy Macneill, works at Tulane’s business school. His son-in-law, Brandon Macneill, had landed a job four months earlier working for Dickson as executive associate athletic director.

Perkins acknowledged a personal trip may have been charged accidentally to KU.

“We’ll take care of that immediately,” he said. “We don’t expect the university to pay. ... If that’s a screw-up, it’s an honest screw-up.”

After researching further, Perkins called The Star on Thursday with new details.
Perkins said he paid his own way to New Orleans after attending a KU football game in Norman, Okla. While in the Big Easy, he advised Tulane athletic officials about a fundraising campaign. The advice had nothing to do with KU, so it was not business-related, he said. He intended to return to Lawrence on his own dime.

A Tulane official told The Star on Friday that Perkins had dinner at Dickson’s home.

While in New Orleans, an emergency arose at KU that required his immediate attention, Perkins said. Because Perkins needed to return immediately, KU approved his request to fly on Fritzel’s plane, which was sent at $2,000 an hour from Lawrence to New Orleans.

“This was not a boondoggle,” Perkins said. “I had to get back right away.”

Perkins would not elaborate on what required such a quick return.

After the athletic department paid Fritzel for the trip, Fritzel wrote a check to KU for the same amount as a “gift” to the athletic department, records show. Fritzel did not return calls seeking comment.

KU officials said Fritzel handles his transactions that way so he can more easily claim a tax exemption.

Bottom line, Perkins said, is that his emergency ride back to Lawrence cost KU nothing.

But his explanation raises other questions. Why did he portray the trip on an expense voucher as a reimbursable trip to talk with Tulane’s athletic director? Why didn’t he describe it as an emergency return from a family vacation?

Perkins said that he “should probably look at every detail” of travel vouchers but that he lets his administrative assistants handle most of them.

“I am not going to hide that I obviously did some family stuff there, too,” Perkins said. “That’s why initially everything we were doing was on our own.”

Perkins told The Star he has been pulled away from personal time for work emergencies only a few times in his seven years at KU. Even though it’s happened rarely, Perkins said, he didn’t remember the New Orleans situation at first because, “It happened over two years ago.

“I’m old,” said Perkins, who turned 65 in March and plans to retire in September 2011. “I can’t remember yesterday. I wish I could tell you my mind is better than it is.”

This is not the first time Perkins has had to clarify personal versus professional expenses.

Earlier this year, the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission was asked to look into Perkins’ use of $15,000 worth of exercise equipment he had borrowed from a Kansas Athletics Inc.
vendor. In an attempt to resolve the issue, Perkins sent a $5,000 personal check to the vendor in April.

State employees are prohibited by law from accepting gifts.

Air options

*When Missouri athletic director Mike Alden leaves Columbia for games or meetings, he opts for commercial air travel or he drives.*

“We burn up I-70 to KCI and Lambert,” Alden said, referring to Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

*MU does not own a plane. Up to 10 donors provide private planes for Alden and coaches to use and receive credit in the Tiger Scholarship Fund as a gift-in-kind. The fund’s top donors receive priority seating at athletic events.*

“If the cost of the flight is $2,000 per hour, the donor receives that amount in the fund,” said Mark Alnutt, MU’s senior associate athletics director for administration.

Alden said he uses private planes fewer than five times a year. He has traveled on donor planes to men’s basketball games, but only when invited on already-planned flights, he said.

Such a trip isn’t considered a gift to Mizzou, and the donor does not get credit toward the Tiger Scholarship Fund.

At KU, boosters who donate flight hours can be reimbursed for the cost or earn priority points for their Williams Educational Fund accounts, which help them secure good seats at KU athletic events.

Perkins has used planes owned by Fritzel and Ren Newcomer, who each give at least $50,000 a year to the Williams Fund.

At K-State, the athletic department uses a university-owned Beechcraft King Air and a leased Cessna CitationJet.

“Typically, we use them for missions that cannot be accomplished without them,” said Currie, K-State’s athletic director. “If there are places that are difficult to get to or the time frame isn’t realistic, we’ll use one.”

But seldom to games. Currie flew the school plane in March when the Wildcats’ men’s basketball team played in the NCAA West Regional in Salt Lake City, with a stop in Greeley, Colo., to visit donors. That trip, which included four other athletic department employees, cost K-State $7,557.
Perkins’ desire to fly charter even extends to his pets. He acknowledged to The Star that he once chartered Fritzel’s plane to fly to North Carolina to pick up a dog he had purchased. Perkins said he reimbursed Fritzel personally.

Donors are at the center of many of Perkins’ KU-related trips.

When Perkins attended a donor golf outing in January 2009 in Palm Springs, Calif., the flight cost the athletic department $22,000.

“It’s donor cultivation,” said Sean Lester, a KU associate athletic director. “It’s part of our business.”

Jim Marchiony, another associate athletics director, explained it this way:

“Walk around KU facilities right now and you’ll see how important donor cultivation is. And compare what you see today with what was here seven years ago.”

Indeed, KU has modernized under Perkins’ tenure, and much of that is because of success in fundraising. KU’s football team trains in a $31 million practice facility, and in 2009 the university completed $42 million in renovations and additions to Allen Fieldhouse.

Yet some donors have complained recently about ticketing problems at KU events. Several Williams Fund and KU ticket office employees resigned earlier this year after federal officials began investigating millions of dollars worth of missing tickets.

Perkins, who will be due a $600,000 retention payment if he remains athletic director until June 30, 2011, said his travel is all about supporting KU athletes, like the ones who won the 2008 Orange Bowl in football and the men’s basketball national championship.

Perkins likes to attend every basketball game. During a three-week stretch of the 2008-09 season, he took private planes to games at Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska and MU.

“The team buses or drives to Iowa State, it’s a five-hour drive each way,” Perkins said. “I can get in and leave right away. It definitely is, from a business standpoint, a time-saver for me.”

To Perkins, it is a question of how valuable one’s time is.

“That’s just the price of doing business,” he said.

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Missouri school districts express doubt over funding

By The Associated Press From The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Supporters say an emergency education spending bill signed into law by President Barack Obama this week will soon send $10 billion to states to help spare thousands of teacher jobs.

But many educators aren’t sure when the money will arrive, or even if their schools will get any. A top Missouri budget official told the newspaper it is uncertain whether the state will distribute all of the new federal funds — $190 million for Missouri — this year, the St. Louis Post­Dispatch reported Friday.

And leaders at many districts in the St. Louis area and elsewhere say they are assuming they will get little or none of the money.

Missouri’s share of the funding won’t likely bring 35 teachers back to work at Lindbergh, the only St. Louis County district forced to lay off a significant number due to the recession. That’s because rules for distributing the federal money won’t direct funds to all districts equally.

“It’s not fun to be on the wrong end of irony,” said Pat Lanane, Lindbergh’s chief financial officer. “I have no expectation that we’ll do any better this time.”

States have the option of handing out the money through their existing state school funding
formula or based on a school district’s level of poverty assistance. Both options favor poorer districts with low local property tax support.

Missouri districts that receive more state aid through the funding formula stand to gain the most. Officials at those districts say the extra money could prevent future teacher layoffs, but they caution it is not a remedy for all financial shortfalls.

“(It) begins to help plug a little bit of the hole, but that is not the state’s only concern,” said Kevin Supple, chief financial officer at the Francis Howell School District in St. Charles County. “Still, this is very welcome news.”

The U.S. Department of Education has estimated the money would support about 160,000 education jobs nationwide, including 3,300 teacher and school staff jobs in Missouri. The Missouri National Education Association lauded the legislation.

But the program has critics.

University of Missouri-Columbia economist Michael Podgursky said schools nationwide have added to payrolls in rates that have far exceeded enrollment growth.

“The idea that they might slim down a bit is not a bad one,” he said. “The more bodies you put on the payroll, the more expensive it becomes. Give them money to spend to keep the schools running, but don’t encourage them to add more to the payroll when really they might not need it.”

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has said he wants to make the money available to school districts as quickly as possible.

The same federal legislation included money for Missouri for Medicaid, and state lawmakers had already agreed to set aside any assistance to make up for shortfalls in fiscal year 2012.

But no decision was made about emergency education funding. State Budget Director Linda Luebbering said she was waiting for more guidance from federal officials to determine if all the $190 million in school aid must be spent this year.
Overseas Demand For Dairy Exports Sours

August 13, 2010

Listen to the Story

All Things Considered

August 13, 2010

MU mention page 2

Businesses that rely on exporting their goods continue to struggle. The U.S. government had been hoping the market would turn around to at least help offset sluggish consumer spending. But forecasts are less than optimistic. Dairy farms have been one of the hardest hit industries, as demand from China and India for powdered milk and whey continues to slump. Kirk Siegler

MELISSA BLOCK, host:

From NPR News, this is ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. I'm Melissa Block.

MICHELE NORRIS, host:

And I'm Michele Norris.

It's been a long week on Wall Street. Stocks fell for a fourth day in a row on continued signs of a sluggish economy. President Obama and others have said the U.S. must boost its exports to turn things around.

President BARACK OBAMA: We're tired of just buying from everybody else. We want to start selling to other people.

(Soundbite of cheering)

NORRIS: Well, here's one American industry that's managing to do more of that: dairy.

Kirk Siegler of member station KUNC takes us to one farm north of Denver to see how it's faring.

(Soundbite of cows)
KIRK SIEGLER: What do these cows on this dairy farm in northeast Colorado have to do with China? More than you'd think.

Mr. LES HARDESTY (Owner, Painted Prairie Farms): One out of 10 gallons of milk that I produce is consumed by not only someone I don't know, but someone that lives in a country that I, most likely, have not been to.

SIEGLER: Cows at Les Hardesty's Painted Prairie Farms churn out milk that will be drunk locally, made into cheese and sold in the region, or increasingly, dehydrated into powder and shipped and sold abroad.

Mr. HARDESTY: And my farmer math will tell you that 95 percent of the people live someplace other than the United States. As their income increases, they too want the Western diet.

SIEGLER: Now, this all started happening a couple years ago when, Hardesty says, the dairy industry decided to ramp up exports. Farms across the country were getting so big, and some say too big, that all the milk couldn't possibly be consumed domestically.

Mr. HARDESTY: And it just made sense. The world economy was strong, people wanted U.S. dairy proteins.

SIEGLER: It made sense until the global economic crash. Americans bought less milk. But Mexicans also demanded less dehydrated milk; China, less whey protein and pizza cheese.

And here's where the dairy business can be different than others who export. Hardesty can't just stop milking all these cows and turn off these efficient, automated and expensive milking machines.

Mr. HARDESTY: A different business might be able to lay people off. Here, we deal with animals, weather on a daily basis and so we have to have the people and the resources to do that.

SIEGLER: And so Hardesty spent much of the recession burning equity and borrowing money to keep the farm afloat.

It's a familiar story, says Scott Brown. He's an economist at the University of Missouri's Food and Ag Policy Research Institute.

Professor SCOTT BROWN (Program Director of Livestock and Dairy, Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, University of Missouri): I think the United States dairy industry has figured out that playing in world markets, although it can have some very good benefits, certainly can only add to the volatility that the industry has faced in the last few years.

SIEGLER: But there are some positive signs. Buried in this week's sour economic news that U.S. exports continue to slip are numbers showing that U.S. dairy exports actually increased, if slightly, by three percent. Yet Brown says nobody is celebrating.
Mr. BROWN: We came out of 2009 in the worst financial situation many of them have probably ever faced in their lifetime.

SIEGLER: And Brown says despite the blip, there are signs that dairy exports could drop off again later this year as Australia and New Zealand ramp up production again.

As for Les Hardesty, this spring, he became the chairman of the U.S. Dairy Export Council and he believes expanding the dairy export market now is key for his industry's long-term survival.

Mr. HARDESTY: The world economy is slow to recover, but it will. And when it does, we need to be positioned to fill those needs.

SIEGLER: Agriculture officials in the Obama administration say they're aware of this, and efforts are under way to expedite long-pending free trade agreements with Asian and Central American countries.

For NPR News, I'm Kirk Siegler.
Unfortunately, cops sometimes have to kill people, or hurt them or chase them until they kill themselves. Officers know it's part of the job. From my experience, they expect their names to be publicized when they get involved in situations serious enough to make news.

To be clear, I'm not after the names because I suspect wrongdoing. They should be released for the simple reason that this run-in along a Springfield street turned deadly and all the facts must be shared publicly, unless they're part of an ongoing investigation. It's that simple.

Told about this issue, one Missouri expert on federal records said: "The U.S. Marshals have taken an indefensible position here, legally and morally, in my opinion."

**Charles Davis, associate professor at the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, former executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition and longtime scholar and advocate for openness in government, continued: "A man is dead, and the government's position is that we have no right to know who uses deadly force in our names? That's ridiculous."

"And here I thought secret police were the stuff of banana republic authoritarians."

Nope. Unless something shakes loose in this case, they're here. In Springfield, in America, today.

By the way, this shooting happened 264 days ago. Names of Springfield police involved in similar situations have been released in less than a week.