MU vet wants to stem glut of unwanted horses

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

A low- or no-cost horse sterilization clinic a University of Missouri veterinarian is planning this fall is designed to address the growing population of unwanted and neglected horses.

LaCarrubba

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Read the Unwanted Horse Survey study at www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/resources/UHC_Survey_07Jul09b.pdf

A glut of unwanted horses caused by the closure of slaughterhouses in the United States three years ago has caused the price of a horse to drop to well under $100 and, in some cases, a would-be horse owner can find a horse for free.

Alison LaCarrubba, who has headed the equine ambulatory section at MU’s College of Veterinary Medicine since 2005, said that scenario only adds to the overpopulation of horses that owners eventually are unable to afford.

LaCarrubba is planning a castration clinic this fall at the university’s Middlebush Farm. Stallions referred by area veterinarians or equine rescue organizations will be brought to the farm, where veterinary students will assist with the procedures. A date has not yet been set.
The effort is modeled after a similar project in Minnesota.

"I know it’s only going to touch a small portion of the problem," LaCarrubba said.

But that’s good enough for Sharon Marohl, a horseback riding instructor and horse owner in Clark.

Even though Marohl worries that transportation to Middlebush could be a hurdle for many horse owners, “anything to make a dent in the unwanted horse population is worth pursuing,” she said.

Marohl, past president of the Missouri Equine Council, pointed to the recently published 2009 Unwanted Horses Survey by the Unwanted Horse Coalition, which outlines the growing problem of unwanted and neglected horses.

Both the study and LaCarrubba point to the 2007 ban on U.S. horse slaughterhouses as a major contributor to the glut of cheap horses.

“Horses used to be sort of prohibitive to purchase,” LaCarrubba said. “We’ve sort of lost that screening process. That’s happening a lot right now.”

Livestock auction houses now offer horses for $50 and lower. There have even been reports of unpurchased horses being abandoned and given to a new owner at no cost.

Veterinarian Michelle Schmidt, owner of Animal Medical Services LLC in Hallsville, said the sterilization clinic is a good idea, but she doubts the people who most need the service will bring their horses. She said the larger problem is the ban on slaughterhouses.

“Unfortunately, I don’t think it’s going to get any better until they resolve the horse slaughter issue,” she said. Schmidt noted that she has owned horses for 40 years and that horses are her favorite animal.

“I love horses more than anybody,” Schmidt said. “But if” slaughterhouses are “the only option for some of these horses, then I think that’s something the U.S. ought to let happen. I think that’s better than letting them starve to death.”

LaCarrubba, meanwhile, is looking for $500 to $1,000 in private donations to fund the upcoming clinic. She also said the clinic is not designed to take established clients from local veterinarians.

“We don’t want to step on any toes of our area vets,” she said. “We’re hoping they are going to be on board and behind it.”

To be eligible for the castration clinic, a stallion must be at least 4 months old, have two fully descended testicles and have the recommendation of a veterinarian or equine rescue organization.

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MU student tailgaters get lot on campus

By Janese Silvey

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Keenan Patel pumped a fist into the air when his buddy, Missouri Students Association President Tim Noce, announced the opening of a new tailgating spot for University of Missouri students this fall.

“I think it’s awesome,” said Patel, who in previous years tailgated at Reactor Field before MU football games.

Patel was among a handful of students who gathered with reporters yesterday at Tiger Plaza when Noce and Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor of student affairs, unveiled the official student tailgate lot. Starting this football season, students will be allowed to use the parking lot on the southeast corner of Maryland Avenue and Rollins Street on the MU campus to meet up before games. The spot will have even more school spirit if the university’s request to rename Maryland Avenue to Tiger Avenue is approved.
The student association has been working for the past year to secure a pre-game spot for students after MU shut down other tailgating hot spots. Just before last year’s football season, the university closed the 800-space Reactor Field in reaction to fights and alcohol-related problems on the site. Most students aren’t looking to cause problems, Noce said, they just want to have a designated pre-game space. “Most students just want a place to hang out with their friends,” he said. “They want a place like this.”

To curtail problems, the new pre-game spot will have some restrictions. The lot will be open to pedestrians, only; no vehicles will be allowed to park in the lot, although there will be a spot where students can drive up to drop off grills.

Students won’t be allowed to bring kegs, hard liquor or glass, said Ben Hansen, MSA’s student activity director. They also won’t be allowed to share coolers or beverages. MU police officers will be on hand to check for identification to combat underage drinking.

The gathering spot will close at kickoff, making sure it attracts only those looking for pre-game pep, not students who just want an excuse to party.

Despite the tight rules, Cameron Johnson, a 21-year-old senior, said he’s looking forward to hanging out at the new student lot.

“It’s nice to finally have a place where the student population can go to do some celebrating before the game,” he said.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
MU professor Charles Davis receives Freedom of the Press Award

By Tony Flesor
August 25, 2010 | 7:09 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Charles Davis, former executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition and an associate professor of journalism at MU, has won a John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award.

The announcement came in a news release from the National Press Club on Wednesday. The release stated Davis was being honored for having “done more than most to force light onto parts of national, state and local government that many in power want to keep hidden.”

“I’m rarely speechless, but I’m speechless,” said Davis, who learned about the award Wednesday morning when he received an e-mail from a colleague congratulating him. Davis said he didn’t even know he was being considered for the award.

A former reporter, Davis has worked and taught at MU for 11 years and described himself as a longtime advocate for freedom of speech.

“It is a precious, unappreciated right,” he said. "People are too quick to take it for granted."

Davis was the executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition from 2005-2010. He was also recognized for his research in governmental information and media law.

Each year, the National Press Club chooses one domestic recipient and one international recipient for the award. The international recipient was Kouhyar Goudarzi, an Iranian blogger who has reportedly been in solitary confinement since May of this year for his work.
Winning an award alongside Goudarzi was humbling, Davis said.

"It's people whose rights are trampled who deserve it," he said.

But Kenneth Bunting, Davis's successor as executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, said the award to Davis was well deserved.

"He undertakes his work with a missionary zeal," he said.

Last year, Davis won the Journalism Teacher of the Year Award from the Scripps Howard Foundation.

Davis has also been the Facilitator of the Media of the Future Initiative for Mizzou Advantage since April.
Other colleges retool in new-media universe

By John Ingold
Posted: 08/26/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

For the schools across the country that train the next generation of journalists, it is not news that the media world has changed around them.

Jobs for graduates have been growing scarce. Media companies that are hiring expect candidates to not only write but blog, tweet, take photos, shoot video — and be capable of jumping on the next big wave of media technology.

"It puts journalism schools in a hard place, trying to prepare students for media jobs when the market for media jobs has shrunk," said Lynda Kraxberger, a professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia's School of Journalism, who teaches students multiplatform "convergence" journalism. "So everybody is trying to predict where things are going to be in five or 10 years."

That means the University of Colorado is hardly alone in making drastic changes to its journalism program to keep up with the drastic changes taking place in the media-jobs market. In its statement announcing the "program discontinuance of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication," the university pointed to other schools — such as Rutgers and the University of Wisconsin — that have revamped their programs for the times.

The University of Michigan axed its traditional journalism program in the mid-1990s after realizing it was turning out far more graduates than the job market was absorbing. The university replaced the program with a broader "communication studies" department, which takes a more academic look at media platforms and how to use them. The idea, said Susan Douglas, a professor and the department's head, is to spend less time teaching students the how-tos of journalism — which can be learned on the job, the school reasons — and more time providing students with versatile critical-thinking skills that can lead them into a wider range of professions.

"It gives them, I think, a broader platform from which to launch themselves," Douglas said.

At the University of Missouri, home to one of the nation's premier journalism schools, the transformation has been less dramatic. But Kraxberger said the school has steadily increased its new-media offerings and forced students to develop more versatile skill sets.

"Employers know that they don't know what the future is going to hold," Kraxberger said. "They're all trying to maximize their resources."
Congress should clarify law on embryonic stem-cell research

last updated: August 26, 2010 05:06:06 AM

The following editorial appeared in the Kansas City Star on Wednesday, Aug. 25:

A lone federal judge has, for the moment, slammed the door on new government funding for embryonic stem-cell research.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth’s injunction serves notice that the quest for medical cures in our nation is still precariously ensnarled in politics, competing interests and legal ambiguities. Congress and the Obama administration must work swiftly to untangle this latest knot.

They could best do that by clarifying legislation known as the Dickey-Wicker Amendment. First passed in 1996 and renewed annually as part of the federal budget, the amendment prohibits federal funding for "research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death ..."

Lamberth unfortunately decided that ban is being violated, even though scientists generally obtain lines of stem cells from private sources, and only use federal funds for subsequent research.

Embryonic stem-cell lines are derived from surplus embryos created by in-vitro fertilization procedures. If not used for research, most of those embryos are frozen indefinitely or discarded.
Lamberth appears to be applying a sweeping interpretation to the amendment. But rather than delay scientific research while grinding through a legal appeal, Congress could rewrite the law to clearly allow federal funding for research on embryonic cell lines.

It should do so, and quickly.

Lamberth's injunction negates the more permissive policy on embryonic stem-cell research that President Barack Obama enacted last year. It even calls into question whether federal funding can be used for research on the limited number of stem-cell lines approved by President George W. Bush.

For practical purposes, the short-term effect of the federal ruling is limited in Kansas and Missouri.

The sole researcher using embryonic stem-cells in Kansas is Kenneth Peterson, a molecular biologist at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Peterson is researching how hemoglobin is made, in hopes of advancing cures for blood diseases such as sickle cell anemia. He is working with embryonic stem cells obtained during the Bush administration.

Michael Roberts, a scientist at the University of Missouri-Columbia, is studying embryonic stem cells in hopes of learning why pregnancies fail at the implantation stage. His stem-cell lines also date to the Bush administration.

"Everybody's totally confused at the moment," Roberts said of the judge's ruling. He said he would attempt to use private funds for his research until the picture becomes clearer.

The Stowers Institute for Medical Research in Kansas City is not currently doing research with embryonic stem cells. But William Neaves, president emeritus, called the ruling "regrettable" and predicted the delay on other research nationwide would be temporary.

Peterson, the KU researcher, said he didn't think his work would be immediately affected. But the threat to the research is disturbing, he said.

"What most scientists think is, you don't want to leave any stone unturned. We simply don't know yet what discoveries might come from those cells."

What we do know is that Congress must summon the political will to clear up the legal ambiguities.
MU honors Beetle Bailey, cartoon native son

By The Associated Press
August 26, 2010 | 7:16 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The U.S. Postal Service is honoring a classic cartoon character with mid-Missouri roots at a ceremony Friday at MU.

A stamp depicting sad-sack soldier Beetle Bailey and his longtime foil, Sergeant Orville Snorkel, is part of the new "Sunday Funnies" series released in July. Other stamps feature Archie, Calvin and Hobbes, Garfield and Dennis the Menace.

The 60-year-old cartoon’s creator is Mort Walker, a 1948 Missouri graduate. He based many of the early characters on his fraternity brother. The cartoon’s setting of Camp Swampy is loosely based on Walker’s Army stint at Camp Crowder near Neosho.

A ceremony is set for 11 a.m. Friday outside the Reynolds Alumni Center, where a Beetle Bailey statue welcomes visitors.
Colleges see prospective donors among new students

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER

The drill for new college students remains pretty consistent: grab a campus map, buy some overpriced textbooks, save those quarters for laundry and don't forget to call home.

On a growing number of campuses, first-year students are hearing another message. Please give. Not for tuition, but instead as a young donor.

With alumni-giving rates at record lows and lagging state support of postsecondary education, public and private schools alike are focusing their efforts on building lifetime loyalty among still-impressionable students.

Some schools start small. Fundraisers at Emory University in Atlanta pass out piggy banks for freshmen to collect spare change. Texas Christian and California University of Pennsylvania ask for $1 donations at their new student convocations.

Other schools, including the University of Pennsylvania, have created more elaborate efforts, with four-year programs designed to teach students the value of philanthropy as a civic virtue as well as the nuances of higher education funding.

"We are unapologetically laying out expectations for their relationship with Penn," said Elise Betz, executive director of alumni relations. "Before our students enter a classroom, they are given this message."

In the Penn Traditions program, school trustees and donors visit dorms to share their perspective on financing an Ivy League education. Trivia night contests focus on school history and traditions, not just sports or pop culture arcana.
By the second semester of their freshmen year, students can tap an alumni database for job leads or networking contacts. But the first 'ask' - donor-speak for a request for money - doesn't take place until senior year.

"It really isn't just about giving," Betz said. "It's about staying connected."

The program seems to be paying off. Participation in Penn's senior gift drive increased from 18 percent in 2001 to 70 percent in 2009 - a figure nearly double the school's alumni-giving rate.

The University of Michigan doesn't wait until freshmen orientation to discuss student philanthropy. Instead, prospective Wolverines learn about the importance of private contributions while touring the Ann Arbor campus.

Students at public colleges and universities - and their parents - often mistakenly assume that tax dollars cover the bulk of their education, said Judy Malcolm, director of development communications and donor relations.

Instead, state support of the school's core academic functions hovers near 20 percent - nearly one-fourth the level of support provided by Michigan to its flagship university 50 years ago.

"At privates, from the moment the student sets foot on campus, giving to the university is an expectation," Malcolm said. "Here, they mistakenly think the state is paying for their entire education."

Angelo Armenti Jr., president of California University of Pennsylvania, calls his school's focus on current students as future donors a "survival strategy." State support at the 158-year-old school in western Pennsylvania now accounts for just one-third of its budget, half the funding levels of 25 years ago.

Alumni who graduated during more flush times don't always understand the necessity of private support, Armenti said.

"Most of them graduated at a time when the state paid all the bills," he said. "How do you convince these people that they have to step up and contribute like private university graduates? Educating our students before they become alumni is much more effective and efficient."

The tough economic times have hit campus development offices particularly hard. A Council for Aid to Education survey of charitable contributions to U.S. colleges and universities showed a decline in private giving of nearly 12 percent in 2009, the steepest drop in the survey's 53-year history. The alumni participation rate of 10 percent was also a record low.

On some campuses, asking students for donations outright is secondary to educating them about the role of private philanthropy in higher education.

That's the case at the University of Missouri, where the private Mizzou Student Foundation invites scholarship recipients to a "Grateful Tiger" day where they write thank-you notes.
and holiday greeting cards to their benefactors. In another program known as TAG Day - an abbreviation for "Thanking Alumni and friends for their Generosity" - classrooms and buildings that have benefited from donor money are "tagged" with such designations to increase awareness. Faculty members with endowed chairs and student scholarship recipients also wear the tags.

Allyson Lindsey, a 2007 Michigan graduate, learned about the importance of alumni donations on her campus while working as a student fundraiser in the school's telethon office.

The Detroit native returned home after graduation to work as a neonatal researcher at Wayne State University. It took her six months to find a job, but she quickly donated $25 to her alma mater - despite still owing more than $20,000 in unpaid student loans.

"I was really inspired to give back," she said. "I can't give thousands of dollars yet, but they still appreciated my $25. That really resonated with me."

Read more: http://www.kansascity.com/2010/08/26/2176635/colleges-see-prospective-donors.html#ixzzOxiUPskeq