MU vet offers a good idea to aid neglected and unwanted horses

Someone in Macon County, Mo., is willing to sell a 1-year-old gelding and a 2-year-old paint horse for $200 each, or best offer.

“Both geldings are really sweet,” the owner wrote on an Internet classified site. “Unfortunately our circumstances have changed and they need to go now.”

Alison LaCarrubba, a veterinarian at the University of Missouri, sees many horses on the market for bargain prices, or for no cost at all. An entry-level horse used to sell at auction for $700, she said. Now a buyer can purchase the same horse for $50.

LaCarrubba also sees the consequences of the deflated equine market. More horses are turning up underfed and poorly cared for.

Although purchasing a horse is inexpensive, caring for one is not. Owners can pay as much as $15,000 a year for feed, veterinary costs, fencing and shelter. But many don’t realize that until it’s too late.

The problem of neglected and unwanted horses doesn’t lend itself easily to a solution.

Processing of horse meat for overseas sale ended in 2006 when Congress stopped funding inspectors. The slaughterhouses encouraged animal cruelty and shouldn’t be revived.

Horse rescue farms do good work, but they can’t take in all the unwanted horses out there.

LaCarrubba, who directs the university’s equine ambulatory section, is smartly proposing a proactive solution.

She is preparing for a low- or no-cost castration clinic, at which stallions can be sterilized by veterinary students. The horses must be referred by a veterinarian or come from a rescue group.

Using funds donated by a rescue operation and the Pfizer pharmaceutical firm, LaCarrubba has scheduled a clinic for Oct. 2 at the university’s Middlebush Farm. She hopes eventually to direct a mobile clinic to sterilize horses in all parts of Missouri.

“Let’s stop the unwanted breeding,” LaCarrubba said. “The only people who should be breeding are those with the best stock we have.”
One of a public university's roles is to solve problems. LaCarrubba and her students deserve support for doing just that.
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia say their work on tracking woodpecker movements could be used to improve bird habitats.

The university said in a news release the researchers tagged 33 juvenile red-bellied woodpeckers earlier this summer in Missouri’s Mark Twain National Forest.

The tags allow researchers to track the birds using radiotelemetry and GPS technology.

The team hopes to discover more about what happens when birds move from where they hatched to where they will breed.

One researcher says that in many non-migrating birds, this is the only time the birds make a substantial movement from one location to another. Previous research has shown that manmade features such as roads can restrict bird movement, creating the risk of inbreeding.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Renowned MU professor united campus

Sandra Abell

COLUMBIA — Sandi Abell managed to balance a passion for research and devotion to her family and still have a sense of humor.

"I don’t know if I can do this.' 'Gee, I’ve bitten off too much.' The things we say to ourselves when we have doubts — I never heard her say those things,” her husband Mark Volkmann said. “When she saw what she wanted, she went for it.”

Ms. Abell died of ovarian cancer on Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2010. She was 54.

Dr. Abell was the director of the MU Science Education Center and was named a Curators’ Professor of Science Education in 2006.

In an obituary written by Volkmann, Chancellor Brady Deaton expressed sadness for the loss of "a distinguished scholar, teacher and mentor.”

"During this time when science education and research in that field play an increasingly critical role in our state's and nation's and future, Dr. Sandra Abell has been an international leader," Deaton said.

She was “incredibly capable and wise, but also one of the most caring people I know,” said Debi Hanuscin, an MU associate professor of science education and physics.

“She created a culture on this campus that brought together all different stakeholders from science and education, and that’s pretty rare,” Hanuscin said.
That even-handedness carried through to other aspects of her life.

"She held positions of national prominence while also being the kind of person you wanted to work with and spend time with," said another of Abell's colleagues, Marcelle Siegel, an MU assistant professor of science education. "It's kind of a rare thing."

Colleague Pat Friedrichsen recalled Dr. Abell's ability to connect with her students.

"She really valued, and took seriously, her role as mentor; not only to just her graduate students, but to grad students in the science education field," said Friedrichsen, an MU associate professor of biological sciences and the department of learning, teaching and curriculum.

Dr. Abell was a renowned researcher, both nationally and internationally. She was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and held similar positions with the Kellogg National Fellowship Program, the American Education Research Association and the National Science Teachers Association. Abell also served as president of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching.

At a conference in Europe in 2009, Hanuscin remembers Dr. Abell being "swamped by students from all over the world who wanted to get a picture with her."

Dr. Abell received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Iowa in 1977 and taught in classrooms from Iowa to Iceland. Dr. Abell earned her master's degree in talented and gifted education from the University of Northern Colorado in 1981 and returned to the University of Iowa to earn her doctorate in 1988.

Abell was born in St. Louis on Feb. 24, 1956.

She is survived by her husband Mark Volkmann, associate professor of science education at MU; a son, Luke Abell Volkmann of Columbia; her parents, Paul and Emilie Abell of Diamondhead, Miss.; a brother, Clifford Abell of Radcliff, Ky.; and three stepchildren, Mary Volkmann of Burke, N.Y.; Anne Koski of Portland, Ore.; and Matthew Volkmann of Iowa City, Iowa.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Oct. 16, in the Reynolds Alumni Center at MU. Arrangements were handled by Heartland Cremation and Burial Society.

Donations may be made to the Sandra K. Abell Scholarship fund. The scholarship will support a graduate student pursuing doctoral studies in any science discipline who has demonstrated a dual passion for both research and teaching.

Contributions to the scholarship can be sent to the University of Missouri, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211.

-- Dustin Renwick
Tailback Washington won’t be allowed to return to the Tigers

By MIKE DeARMOND

The University of Missouri will not allow Derrick Washington to return to the Tigers’ football team, even though there has been no resolution made public regarding a class C felony charge against Washington for deviate sexual assault.

The move surprised Washington’s family, said his mother, Sarah.

In an e-mail to The Star, Sarah Washington said: “We were told that if he cleared his name in the court process, he would be welcomed back with opened arms.”

In response to questions from The Star before its decision was made public, the MU athletic department sent an e-mail confirmation, reading: “Derrick Washington has been permanently suspended from the University of Missouri football program. Nothing about this decision will affect his existing athletic scholarship as long as he remains enrolled at Mizzou.”

The release said MU officials would have no further comment.

Bogdan Susan, an attorney with the Columbia firm representing Washington, said he would reserve comment for later.

Sarah Washington, in an initial e-mail to The Star, said: “We heard right after the suspension that his locker was cleaned out but his scholarship has not been pulled. Coach (Gary) Pinkel or coach (Andy) Hill would have informed us of that if so.”

Early on Wednesday — reflecting that the decision was being discussed — Chad Moller, MU assistant athletic director for media relations, texted The Star: “Efforting in progress.”

The “efforting” apparently involved final sign-on by school legal representatives. By 11:30 a.m., Moller e-mailed the Missouri statement to The Star, confirming Washington would not be allowed to return. The Star left messages for athletic director Mike Alden but had not received a comment from him by midafternoon.

Susan was asked about this pre-emptive move leaving the university open to a lawsuit. He would not comment on that possibility. Nor would Sarah Washington.
According to a Boone County court order of protection, Washington is alleged to have sexually assaulted a former MU student in her apartment June 19.

A statement released by Susan’s law office said Washington was never served or provided notice that an order of protection was sought and never had the opportunity to respond to the accusations in the application for the order of protection. The civil order of protection case was dismissed when neither the accuser nor Washington appeared in court to extend or reject it.

Last Thursday, Pinkel announced he had indefinitely suspended Washington, a team captain and the Tigers’ starting tailback, without detailing the reason. On Monday, Pinkel again declined to discuss the specifics of the suspension.

According to MU athletic-department policy, an athlete charged with a felony cannot be reinstated to his team until the charge is resolved. The arraignment is scheduled for Sept. 23, meaning Washington definitely would not have played in MU’s first three games.
MU's Washington 'permanently' suspended

COLUMBIA, Mo. • As he stood watching his son Derrick at a University of Missouri football practice in August 2009, Donald Washington spoke of how he always urged him to run "like it's your last carry."

He spoke proudly of how people always commended him on Derrick's conduct, how "nice he is and how respectable he is." Like all of his five children, he said, Derrick was raised to be that way.

"We can teach you at home, but when you're out you've got to remember that you're representing the family," Donald Washington said, adding, "Like we always tell him, don't do anything to embarrass us."

However it might be construed by his family, and mother Sarah Washington's despondent voice Wednesday told part of that story, the charge of felony sexual assault brought Monday against Derrick Washington was a major aspect of what MU coach Gary Pinkel called an "embarrassing" set of incidents.

And now Washington, a senior co-captain, no longer has to imagine each carry is his last for Mizzou.

Boldly asserting that playing for Mizzou is more a privilege than a right and apparently demonstrating what he meant when he said his program had to "earn back" respect, Pinkel has "permanently suspended" Washington.

In a three-sentence statement Wednesday, MU added, "Nothing about this decision will affect his existing athletic scholarship as long as he remains enrolled at Missouri. The university will have no further comments on the topic."

The move three days before MU's opener against Illinois at the Edward Jones Dome leaves the tailback job in the hands of sophomore Kendial Lawrence and junior De'Vion Moore, who have just over 700 career yards between them.

Washington could not be reached to comment, and an attorney for Washington, Bogdan Susan of Columbia, did not return a phone message left Wednesday. Donald Washington did not immediately return a message left on his cell phone. His wife and Washington's mother, Sarah, said simply, "I really can't talk right now. I'm too emotional."
It remains unclear why Washington's status changed from an indefinite suspension to a permanent one.

By Mizzou athletics department policy, an athlete facing a felony charge forfeits his or her eligibility until the charge is resolved.

Washington's arraignment is scheduled for late September. Washington could face up to seven years in jail if convicted on the Class C felony, although it's uncertain how much time prosecutors would seek if the case goes to trial.

While a source close to the case told the Post-Dispatch last week that a plea bargain was being discussed that could reduce the charge to a misdemeanor, even if that were to happen the residue of the allegation still would linger — perhaps a factor in Pinkel's considerations.

Boone County assistant prosecutor Andrea Hayes said she did not know what brought about Washington's permanent removal and said, "It's still the same charge. No additional charges have been filed."

According to the probable cause statement, just before 2:30 a.m. on June 19 Washington made an unexpected visit to a female friend and banged loudly on doors and windows until he was let in.

In a supplemental interview with University of Missouri police, the friend said Washington was "acting different and was being mean to her and rude."

After tense discussion between them, the woman said in the interview, Washington left the room from approximately 2:33 a.m to 2:36 a.m. During that time, it's alleged that he opened the closed door of her sleeping roommate and sexually assaulted the roommate before returning to the other woman's room.

The alleged victim sought and received an order of protection against Washington, stating in court documents, "I was sexually assaulted by him. ... I am pressing criminal charges. I fear physical retaliation."

Attorneys for Washington issued a statement Tuesday saying Washington was "never served and provided notice that an order of protection was sought" and noted that the order was dismissed when the accuser did not appear in court July 21 for a hearing seeking a full order.

By then, a source said, the alleged victim had moved out of state.

Attempts to reach the alleged victim have been unsuccessful. But between information in the supplemental police interview and interviews with sources by the Post-Dispatch, it's clear that the female friend of Washington considered his actions that night "out of character."
His family probably feels the same and for the moment must hope that Derrick Washington heeds advice from his father to get his degree. "You never know," Donald Washington said last year, "when football will end."
UPDATE: Derrick Washington permanently suspended from MU football team

By Dieter Kurtenbach, Joan Niesen, Len Goldman
September 1, 2010 | 12:35 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Derrick Washington has been permanently suspended from the Missouri football team, according to an e-mail from team spokesman Chad Moller.

Washington, the starting running back, was charged with deviate sexual assault on Monday. He was suspended indefinitely from the team on Thursday. His arraignment is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 22.

Boone County Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Hayes said Wednesday that nothing in Washington's case has changed since she filed charges on Monday. She said that she could not say anything about the athletics department's decision.

**Attorney Bogdan Susan of Holder, Susan & Slusher, the firm that is representing Washington, confirmed that there have been no recent changes to Washington’s case. Susan said he had not spoken with anyone from the Missouri athletics department regarding Washington's permanent suspension.

"You’d have to ask (Athletics Director) Mike Alden about that," Susan said.

Moller's e-mail said the university will have no further comments on the topic, and a call to the athletics department was not returned.

The e-mail also said Washington will retain his athletic scholarship as long as he remains enrolled at MU. Washington said Wednesday that he is still enrolled as a student, but he would not comment on whether he plans to remain enrolled.
MU permanently suspends Washington

By Dave Matter

Senior tailback Derrick Washington will never carry the ball again for Missouri. The co-captain has been permanently suspended from the program, MU announced in a news release this morning.

Washington is facing a Class C felony charge of deviate sexual assault, stemming from an allegation that he assaulted a women in her Columbia apartment in June. Washington is expected to plead not guilty at his arraignment in Boone County Circuit Court on Sept. 22. He turned himself in to the Boone County Sheriff's Department on Monday and was released on $4,500 bond.

According to the MU press release, Washington's dismissal will not affect his existing athletic scholarship as long as he remains enrolled at Missouri. The university will not comment further on the issue, the release said.

Washington, MU's starting tailback in every game since 2008, ends his Missouri career ranked 10th all-time in rushing yards with 2,085 yards and 28 touchdowns.

Washington and his family could not be immediately reached for comment.
MU basketball recruit is still ineligible

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted: Thursday, September 2, 2010 12:20 am

At least for the fall semester, the final element of a heralded University of Missouri men's basketball recruiting class officially failed to fall into place as of Wednesday when Mizzou acknowledged that prized prospect Tony Mitchell is not enrolled and not eligible for the first semester.

In a statement, Mizzou coach Mike Anderson said that "we remain hopeful Tony will be able to join us at a point later in the season," suggesting the second semester was a possibility.

The case of Mitchell remains under review by the NCAA Eligibility Center "as has been the case for quite some time," Anderson noted.

That's because there apparently is plenty to process on Mitchell, a forward from Dallas whose five-star status helped account for MU having the nation's sixth-best recruiting class as ranked by Rivals.com in May.

For starters, Mitchell did not graduate with his high school class in the spring because he did not score high enough on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills exam. He said he would retake the test in July and is believed to have graduated. However, he also needed to post a standardized test score that combined with his grade-point average to meet NCAA standards.

Earlier this summer, Mitchell's high school credits were reported by a Texas TV station to be under investigation by local athletics authorities.

According to station WFAA, at issue were 14 credits that did not transfer from Center of Life Academy in Florida to Pinkston High in Dallas. Mitchell reportedly took the equivalent of nine course make-up exams in two days, including five in a two-hour period.

The station later reported that Mitchell had 102 unexcused absences last year, most after his basketball season ended in March.

Even if Mitchell does not ultimately qualify, Mizzou's class will be considered potent. Forward Ricardo Ratliffe, who enrolled last week after finishing an online course, was one of the most coveted junior-college players in the nation.
Guard Phil Pressey is considered a major recruit, and his brother Matt, a junior college transfer, and Columbia native Ricky Kreklow give MU more backcourt options. Forward Kadeem Green rounds out a class that Rivals.com ranked No. 1 in the Big 12 with Mitchell.
Mitchell won't join MU basketball for fall semester

By Sean Leahy
September 1, 2010 | 6:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Missouri men's basketball team will be missing one of its prized recruits when it hits the court for the 2010-2011 season.

According to a news release, Dallas-area recruit Tony Mitchell missed the deadline to enroll for fall classes because of academic issues being reviewed by the NCAA Eligibility Center and will not be on the team this semester.

According to the Missouri Registrar's Office website, the deadline to register for fall classes was Monday.

"Tony's case with the NCAA Eligibility Center remains under review, as has been the case for quite some time," coach Mike Anderson said in the release. "However with our fall enrollment deadline having passed, he will be unable to join our program at this time. We remain hopeful Tony will be able to join us at a point later in the season."

Mitchell, a 6-foot-8, 220-pound small forward, is listed as a five-star recruit on rivals.com.

He transferred to Pinkston High School in Dallas the summer before his senior year from the Center of Life Academy in Miami.

According to a report from WFAA-TV (Dallas/Fort Worth) in June, there was trouble regarding Mitchell's transfer and make-up credit. Fourteen credits Mitchell brought to Pinkston were untransferable, and make-up credits ended up being taken away because of disputed testing, the report said.

Another WFAA-TV report in June said Mitchell had 52 days with at least one unexcused absence from a class during his senior year, and he did not graduate with his class.
Mitchell committed to Missouri in November and was considered one of the highlights of a 2010 Missouri recruiting class rivals.com ranked as No. 6 in the nation.
5 Big Health Issues On Campus

This time last year college kids were stressing out about swine flu, hard as that is to believe in hindsight. With students streaming back to campuses, we wondered what health concerns are topping the agenda now.

We checked in with Dr. Al Glass, president of the American College Health Association, and the heads of health services at some colleges around the country to get a bead on what students face this time around.

Here are their top five issues:

1. Mental Health

"Mental health issues in a broad sense certainly remain a primary issue," Glass says. Stress is a biggie.

**Dr. Susan Even, director of the University of Missouri's student health center, agrees. At Mizzou, which is expecting a record enrollment this year, adjustment to a big school just compounds the problem, she says.**

The University of Maryland's student health center offers help to students dealing with stress and anxiety, including acupuncture and meditation. "We are very supportive of alternative medicine," says Dr. Sacared Bodison, director of the student health center.

2. Sleep

All-nighters and good health don't mix. Students should pay more attention to getting enough sleep.

"College and university students tend to keep schedules that are really different from people who are out having jobs in the world," Glass says. Unfortunately, that's nothing new. Only 11 percent of college students in a sample of 191 undergrads had good quality sleep, a 2001 study in the Journal of American College Health found.
3. **Infectious Disease**

Although some students died from swine flu last year,"it didn't turn out to be the pandemic of illness that people were worried about," says John H. Turco, director of the Dartmouth College health service.

Still, the focus on H1N1 led to cultural changes at Dartmouth, Turco says. More people became aware of disease prevention and use of hand sanitizers has become routine.

Glass says infectious disease is a perennial concern. There's no particular bug on the radar this year, but "exposure to other infectious illnesses — colds, upper respiratory infections, influenza" are inevitable.

Vaccines can help against some of the usual suspects. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends these for teens and colleges students.

4. **Exercise**

Weight problems are everywhere, even college campuses. So what else does the CDC recommend? Exercise.

Adults should be active at least 2 1/2 hours a week. But some students may not be getting enough. Glass says too many college kids aren't heeding the advice and warns that college students aren't immune to the obesity epidemic.

5. **Alcohol**

Glass says a discussion about college health wouldn't be complete without talking about alcohol use.

"If [students] would make the decision to drink in college — which, certainly, we're all aware a large number of them do — to make those choices about what to drink, how much to drink those kinds of things need to be optimally made in a very responsible way," Glass says.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, about 4 in 5 college students drink. And when asked, 2 in 5 say they've been on a drinking in the past few weeks. Nearly 600,000 college students are injured while under the influence of alcohol each year.
MU professor attempts to prove the pursuit of happiness

By Leif Kothe, Teresa Shipley
September 1, 2010 | 9:34 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Declaration of Independence states we have a right to the pursuit of happiness, but MU psychology professor Kennon Sheldon asks whether it’s all in vain.

Speaking to a crowd Wednesday afternoon in Jesse Auditorium at MU's annual Corps of Discovery lecture, Sheldon said he has made it his life’s work to answer that question with science, something he says most happiness books don’t try.

“We have this expectation of an upward spiral of happiness,” Sheldon said. “Are we delusional, are we tilting at windmills, are we wasting our time?”

In other words, is there a way to boost our happiness and get it to stay there?

Sheldon, the university’s seventh lecturer in the series, is a nationally recognized scholar in the field of positive psychology, which focuses on well-being and happiness. It’s a field, he says, Americans are particularly obsessed with.

“I found 836 books on happiness on an Amazon search today,” he told the group of more than 200 people.

But the study of happiness is not a waste of time, he said. In fact, he said researchers are getting closer to identifying the exact factors that contribute to a person’s sense of well-being.

Sheldon said he believes personal measures of happiness come down to three factors: genetics, one’s situation in life and his or her chosen activities. Taken together, they form the foundation for a scientific measure of happiness.
Genetics, Sheldon said, influence 50 percent of a person's happiness. If a person is predisposed to melancholy, he or she is going to have a lower baseline for happiness than a person with a naturally lighthearted personality.

“I’m not sure that it’s cause for pessimism,” he said of those with lower baselines. “It means it’s going to be hard to get up and stay up.”

But personal circumstances, such as demographics or appearance, have just a 10 percent influence on happiness, Sheldon said, despite the importance society places on these factors. That’s due to a phenomenon he calls “hedonic adaptation,” or the idea that humans can adapt to almost any situation.

In other words, Sheldon said, you have to notice something for it to make you happier — or sadder. If you get used to something that once made you happy, you eventually take it for granted and it ceases to have the same effect.

Luckily, Sheldon said there are ways to boost your happiness and get it to stay there. The third factor, chosen activities, accounts for 40 percent of a person’s sense of happiness.

“This gives us hope,” he said. “We can do something about it. We can change what we do. It might sound obvious, but it’s amazing how many people think a quick fix for happiness is to go out and buy something. Change what you do, not what you have.”

But the kind of activity also matters, he said.

Sheldon also said outer appearances of success such as money, fame and beauty, pale in comparison to happiness gained from helping others and fostering relationships.

Columbia resident Libby Gill, 81, agrees. She said much of her happiness stems from spending time with her family, being in good health and being in nature. But she said she also believes happiness is ultimately a matter of personal choice.

“I believe what Abraham Lincoln said,” Gill said. “Most people are just about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Walter Bargen, an MU employee and Missouri’s first poet laureate from 2008 to 2009, said happiness is often a matter of work-life balance. “After all these years, I’m still chasing after happiness. It doesn’t bode well,” the 62-year old said, laughing.