Amazonian Cultures Found Social Benefits in Multiple Fathers

Posted on November 10, 2010 | 0 Comments

Up to 70 percent of Amazonian cultures practiced multiple paternity—more than one man fathering and taking responsibility for a child—according to research announced today by the University of Missouri (MU).

"In modern culture, it is not considered socially acceptable for married people to have extramarital sexual partners. However, in some Amazonian cultures, extramarital sexual affairs were common, and people believed that when a woman became pregnant, each of her sexual partners would be considered part-biological father," MU said about a study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* that found that nearly three out of four Amazonian cultures may have believed in the principle of multiple paternity.

"In these cultures, if the mother had sexual relations with multiple men, people believed that each of the men was, in part, the child's biological father," said Robert Walker, assistant professor of Anthropology in MU's College of Arts and Science. "It was socially acceptable for children to have multiple fathers, and secondary fathers often contributed to their children's upbringing."

The Yanomami are among the Amazonian cultures who have beliefs in partible paternity.

NGS stock photo by Robert Madden.

Sexual promiscuity was normal and acceptable in many traditional South American societies, Walker explained.
"Married couples typically lived with the wife's family, which increased their sexual freedom," Walker said.

"In some Amazonian cultures, it was bad manners for a husband to be jealous of his wife's extramarital partners. It was also considered strange if you did not have multiple sexual partners. Cousins were often preferred partners, so it was especially rude to shun their advances."

Approximate distribution of the six major language families discussed in this study.

Data provided by World Language Mapping System. Map by Robert Walker, University of Missouri.

Previous research had uncovered the existence of multiple paternity in some Amazonian cultures, MU said in a news release about the research. "However, anthropologists did not realize how many societies held the belief. Walker's team analyzed ethnographies (the branch of anthropology that deals descriptively with cultures) of 128 societies across lowland South America, which includes Brazil and many of the surrounding countries. Multiple paternity is reported to appear in 53 societies, and singular paternity is mentioned in 23 societies. Ethnographies for 52 societies do not mention conception beliefs," the university explained.

Photo: Robert Walker, assistant professor of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Science. Photo courtesy of MU.

Walker's team has several hypotheses on the benefits of multiple paternity, according to MU.

"Women believed that by having multiple sexual partners they gained the benefit of larger gene pools for their children, [Walker] says women benefited from the system because secondary fathers gave gifts and helped support the child, which has been shown to increase child survival rates. In addition, brutal warfare was common in ancient Amazonia, and should the mother become a widow, her child would still have a father figure."
"Men benefitted from the multiple paternity system because they were able to formalize alliances with other men by sharing wives," MU said. "Walker hypothesizes that multiple paternity also strengthened family bonds, as brothers often shared wives in some cultures."

Village men in a Yanomami settlement. In the majority of Amazonian cultures, it was socially acceptable for children to have multiple fathers, and secondary fathers often contributed to their children's upbringing.

NGS stock photo by Robert Madden.

Walker collaborated with Mark Flinn, professor in the MU Department of Anthropology, and Kim Hill, professor in Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change.

Read the paper: Evolutionary history of patible paternity in lowland South America.
MU program decreases binge drinking by 25 percent over five years

Columbia, Mo (KSDK) -- The program credited with helping to reduce binge drinking by University of Missouri students is being recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The U.S. Department of Education cited the Wellness Resource Center as a model program and awarded a grant to the program. Money from the grant will be used to begin a new project, "Life is Not a Spectator Sport," to encourage students to intervene in other students' risky behaviors.

To be named a "model program," a program must show that it has made a significant impact on the campus community, and that the program could be implemented successfully on other campuses. Each model program receives a $130,000 grant to begin a new project.

According to an annual survey conducted by the Wellness Resource Center, over the past five years the program has significantly reduced student involvement in several risky situations and behaviors including:
- 25% decrease in binge drinking (five or more drinks in one sitting).
- 24% decrease in binge drinking for students under 21.
- 71% decrease in students purchasing alcohol without having ID checked
- 73% decrease in underage students getting alcohol from someone they knew at the bar
MU Veterans Center celebrates Veterans Day with grand opening

By Danny Rainey
November 10, 2010 | 7:56 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Among a host of activities planned for Veterans Day this year, the MU Veterans Center will celebrate the unveiling of its new home.

The center acts as a “one-stop shop” to help veterans with any issues they might encounter so that they don’t have to run to different offices all over town, said center Director Carol Fleisher. The center will help any veteran — regardless of whether that person is associated with the university — plan for their deployments and their eventual return to work or school, as well as finding health care, counseling services and employment.

“If they’re a veteran, they’re welcome here,” Fleisher said.

The center moved in June from its previous location in Lafferre Hall at MU to a more spacious office in Memorial Union, said Dawn Copeland, the center’s student services adviser. Copeland said the center’s original office space covered 400 square feet while the new space covers 800 square feet.

“It’s more centrally located to other classroom buildings than Lafferre is,” Copeland said. She said this makes it easier for veteran students to access the center and utilize its services.

Fleisher and Copeland said the larger space allows the center to better accommodate both students and university employees who are veterans. The center serves about 800 employees of the university and 500 student veterans and their dependents, Fleisher said.

The center now has three rooms as opposed to one, which allows for more privacy, said Fleisher. In addition, the new center features a television, computers, couches,
microwave and fridge that allow students to make themselves comfortable and hang out there, said Copeland.

"They can come and relax," Copeland said.

The center is proving to be a very popular place for people to come and hang out, said Fleisher. She said there are sometimes 20 to 25 people in the office at once.

The grand opening will feature several events, beginning with a reception and the unveiling of the video-based Missouri Veterans History Project at 1 p.m. in Memorial Union's Stotler Lounge.

Chancellor Brady Deaton will give his Veterans Day address at the event.

The center will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house from 2 to 4 p.m. Deaton will cut the ribbon for the grand opening and tours of the new office space will be offered, Fleisher said.

Many state and local officials are expected to attend the ceremony including U.S. Rep. Sam Graves; state Reps. Jason Kander, Chris Kelly, Mary Still, Jill Schupp and Steven Webber; Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid; and representatives from U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill's office, said Copeland.

For more information on events occurring throughout Columbia on Veterans Day, see the Missourian's Veteran's Day calendar.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Veterans History Project continues despite cuts to funding

By Robert Johnson
November 10, 2010 | 7:55 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — When Pat Shay was asked recently to be interviewed for the Missouri Veterans History Project, he agreed instantly.

Shay, 84, from Quincy, Ill., enlisted at 17 by forging his father's signature and became a Marine. He served in combat from 1943 to 1945 and made friendships that lasted for decades.

"The war wasn't all bad," Shay said. "We had a lot of fun, especially on Guam."

But as he talked about those years, it didn't take long for the hard times to flood back as well.

"We saw a lot of bad things," Shay said, his voice cracking. "All this has brought it back."

Shay is one of 15 veterans who was interviewed by amateur historian and American Legion member Mike Trial at American Legion Post 202. It's part of a grass-roots effort to capture the stories of World War II veterans for posterity in the Library of Congress.

At the opening Thursday of the new MU Veterans Center, snippets of the project will be shown to the public. It showcases the voices of the "Greatest Generation," which is shrinking rapidly. According to the Veterans Administration, World War II veterans are dying at a rate of 850 people per
day, or 310,250 people each year. As of late 2009, there were only 2.2 million living World War II veterans.

Congress saw that time was running out for these veterans’ stories to be recorded and created the national Veterans History Project, which President Bill Clinton signed into law in 2000. The project was set up to preserve the recollections of veterans all over the country. The Missouri Veterans Stories project, a state initiative officially launched in 2007, provided material for the national project.

Trial, 64, who retired from the Army Corps of Engineers, got involved after he heard that government funding had been cut for the state project.

“When I heard Representative Jill Schupp was trying to continue the project without public funds, I spoke up,” Trial said.

Schupp, D-Creve Coeur, had a role in cutting the funding but said she did not want to see the project die.

“When we are a half an hour from one of the best broadcast journalism schools in the world,” she recalled saying to the legislature. "Why don’t we see what we can work out?”

What Schupp and MU worked out was access to students, faculty and equipment. There is now talk at MU and Columbia College of creating an accredited class in which students would conduct interviews and produce videos for college credit, Schupp said.

Schupp is looking for people to bring whatever time and skills they have available to the project.

Trial figured he had the time and interest to help get the project rolling again.
"I brought a big mouth and said, let's do it," he said. Trial said he is picking up the tab for costs that his part of the project incurs along the way.

"All the big stories about World War II have been told," Trial said. "We are looking to find out how veterans felt, where they were, what they were doing, what friends they made, what friends they lost."

Stories like the one about the gasoline-operated Maytag washing machine Shay found on Guam.

Desperate to wash their clothes, "we got that washing machine going. ... We had to have gasoline, and we had to have water. And we got a trailer. We stole this trailer," he said with a deep chuckle. "... And we put a big sign up. It said, 'wash your clothes for 50 cents.'"

Earning a base salary of $21 a month, the extra change meant a lot, Shay noted, though he said he forgot how much he made off the scheme.

That story is now part of the record, and Trial hopes to get more like it and of a quality worthy of their final destination.

"We are aiming to consistently attain a quality of interview that will have no problem getting into the Library of Congress Veterans History Project," he said.

Midwest Litigation Operations Manager Mary Gaul doesn't think that will be a problem.

"They will definitely be accepted by the Library of Congress," she said. Midwest has signed on to do most of the recording and all of the production work to get the videos onto DVDs.
The National Court Reporters Foundation and the National Court Reporters Association have both partnered with the Library of Congress to use their expertise to produce professional quality video of the interviews.

"It's such a fabulous project, and we are so honored to be involved," Gaal said.

Gaal feels personally invested in the project.

"Before my grandfather passed away, I sat him down with my grandmother and recorded all their stories for my children to someday listen to," Gaal said. "My kids were young, and I wasn't sure they'd ever get the chance to hear this otherwise."

There are still many stories left to capture and veterans eager to share what they saw, but time to listen is running short.

"We are hoping this effort of ours in Columbia serves as the new prototype for getting these interviews done," Trial said.

Shay said he has seen the numbers of his fellow veterans dwindle.

"I made a lot of friends in the war and we stayed in touch for a while after we got back," he said. "But now, I'm the only one left."
UM to give up manuscript collection

By Janese Silvey

The University of Missouri is turning over management of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection to the State Historical Society of Missouri, marking the end of a piecemeal collections system created some 60 years ago.

The consolidation, though, could mean less funding to an already cash-strapped state historical society.

The manuscript collection began separate from the historical society in the 1940s. Today, the two are combined but continue to operate under separate funding streams. The state historical society gets its funding from the state, while UM allocates $1 million to support the manuscript collection.

That $1 million will be cut, although the university will likely pay a fee to the historical society to manage the collection. Details of the arrangement have yet to be finalized, said Gary Kremer, executive director of the state historical society.

Right now, all 24 staff members who oversee the statewide collections are UM System employees, but four are directly hired by the state historical society. It’s unclear how these staff members will be affected, although UM said the change could involve a reduction of positions.

Most of those employees are in Columbia. Those workers are charged with sorting donations, assisting researchers and cataloging collections.

Steve Graham, vice president of academic affairs for the UM System, said the pending consolidation is part of an ongoing effort to realign system priorities.

Kremer now reports to both the historical society board and to the system’s academic affairs vice president. Under the agreement, he will only report to the board.

“This management change will provide us with an opportunity to evaluate how we can serve” the public’s “needs more effectively and cost-efficiently,” he said.

The historical society this year saw a 25 percent reduction in its state appropriation and has been relying on private donations to keep normal operating hours.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Swofford said he even checked his stories with fellow Marines. He said he called one and asked if he remembered desecrating the corpse and said the former Marine laughed. Apparently, his former comrade uses the story to entertain buddies at happy hour, Swofford said.

Swofford is working on a new military novel after his first attempt at a semi-romance in 2007. "Exit A." received negative reviews. The latest work, he said, is based on conversations with a young veteran he met in New York. It carries much of the same themes as "Jarhead": unfaithful military spouses, alcoholic soldiers and horrific acts becoming the subjects of jokes.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM System turns over management of Western Historical Manuscript Collection

By Kristina Houser
November 10, 2010 | 8:30 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — University of Missouri System officials announced Wednesday that they will hand over management of a manuscript collection to the State Historical Society of Missouri.

The transfer is expected to help the university cut costs by allowing for better allocation of resources, combining services and reducing the collection’s current $1 million annual budget.

The Western Historical Manuscript Collection was created in 1943 to collect and preserve documents containing information about Missouri, including political and military records, history, research on the arts, social movements and other data.

In 1963, the UM System combined its resources with those of the State Historical Society of Missouri, which had been acquiring manuscripts since 1900. The collection was co-managed by the two organizations until now.

The State Historical Society is a research facility dedicated to the study of Missouri’s heritage. It was founded in 1898 by the Missouri Press Association.

"The system’s continuing review of organization alignment with strategic priorities and core mission identified this historical document collection as a better direct fit with the expertise and focus of the State Historical Society," Steve Graham, senior associate vice president of academic affairs for the UM System, said in a release.
The oldest manuscripts in the collection date back to the late 18th century, said John Konzal, manuscript specialist at the Historical Society. The collection contains not only manuscripts, but also photographs, microfilm, audio and videocassettes.

“We have Civil War materials, information about mining companies, a steamboat collection, several collections about railroads,” Konzal said. “There’s also family genealogy documents, congressional papers. There’s so many different things — the collection is very eclectic.”

Konzal said many different people utilize the materials, including students conducting research and people trying to track down their family history.

“We want the materials to be open to everyone,” Konzal said.

Parts of the collection are currently housed at the four branches of the UM System — Columbia, St. Louis, Rolla and Kansas City. Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society and director of the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, said he expects the collections will remain at their current university locations after the management transfer.

University officials are negotiating budget reductions for the collection. Kremer said he is unsure of what changes will occur because of the transfer. He said those changes depend on how much money is available.

“It’s the big question right now,” Kremer said.

Due to multiple previous budget cuts and constraints, the majority of the current budget is used to pay salaries. If the collection faces a large budget reduction, positions could be cut.

The transfer is expected to take about two months, but Kremer said that time frame could change based on when the budget is released. Kremer said he hopes the decision will be made within the next several weeks.

“The challenge will be to adjust the level of service to the amount of money available,” he said.
Missouri Corrects Record on 1923 College Town Lynching

by Alan Scher Zagier, Associated Press, November 9, 2010

Dr. Patrick Huber is an associate professor of history at Missouri University of Science and Technology whose undergraduate thesis discussed the James T. Scott lynching.

COLUMBIA Mo. - Hundreds looked on as an angry mob dragged a Black University of Missouri janitor from his jail cell in April 1923, publicly lynching him before he could stand trial on charges of raping a White professor's 14-year-old daughter.

Historians say the instigators included some of Columbia's most prominent citizens. The crowd that watched James T. Scott hang was filled with laughing and cheering students from the first public university west of the Mississippi River.

Eighty-seven years later, civic leaders have come together to confront an ugly episode in Columbia and correct the record on the death of Scott, who insisted the rape allegation was a case of mistaken identity.

Local filmmaker Scott Wilson teamed up last month with the Boone County medical examiner's office to successfully lobby state officials to change the cause of death on Scott's death certificate.

The primary cause is now listed as "asphyxia due to hanging by lynching by assailants." A secondary cause of "committed rape" was removed and now reads "never tried or convicted of rape."

"This was done solely for one purpose," Dr. Michael Panella, associate medical examiner, said of the original listing. "And that was to justify an unjustifiable and heinous act."

Scott, a 35-year-old married janitor at the medical school, was arrested April 21, 1923, one day after the reported rape of Regina Almstedt, the teenage daughter of a German literature professor.
The girl identified Scott based on his distinctive “Charlie Chaplin” mustache and a chemical odor she said her attacker carried. Scott maintained his innocence to the very end. With the noose at the ready, he spoke of his own 15-year-old daughter. He also identified a cellmate whom he said confessed to the attack.

Even the girl’s father implored the 1,000-man mob to spare Scott until he could stand trial. Hermann Almstedt was reportedly threatened with a lynching of his own. Scott was killed eight days after his arrest.

Several hundred people gathered Sunday at Second Missionary Baptist Church for a service organized to raise money for a headstone for Scott’s grave. A nondescript grave marker now designates his burial site in what was once the segregated section of the 190-year-old Columbia cemetery.

Organizers say the effort is about trying to heal wounds from a decidedly dark chapter in local history.

Keynote speaker Patrick Huber, an associate professor of history at Missouri University of Science and Technology whose undergraduate thesis discussed the Scott lynching, said the killing was one of more than 4,000 racially motivated lynchings in this country from 1885 to 1923, including 75 in Missouri.

Communities nationwide are working to re-examine histories of racist violent acts, said Mark Potok, who tracks hate crimes for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala. Among those places is Tulsa, Okla., which recently opened a “reconciliation park” recognizing a deadly 1921 riot that killed dozens, injured hundreds and destroyed thousands of homes.

“There are more and more places around America trying to come to grips with their racial past,” Potok said.

Minneapolis resident Bradley Stewart was among those at the downtown Columbia church Sunday night. His sister Janna, a southern Missouri lawyer, described how their late father talked about attending Scott’s lynching as a 4-year-old.

Stewart said he came to the service “to bury family ghosts.”

Columbia mayor and longtime resident Bob McDavid said he only recently learned about Scott, but told those gathered that an event recent enough to occur in their lifetime was one that should never be forgotten.

“The James Scott lynching did not happen in a different world, in a different time or a different place,” he said.
Can sleep and alcohol co-exist?

This story appeared in many outlets across the country

November 10, 2010| By Shari Roan, Los Angeles Times

Drinking alcohol is thought to interfere with a good night’s sleep. But a new survey has found that most adults don’t experience sleep problems due to drinking.

Researchers headed by a team at the University of Missouri analyzed questionnaires from 1,699 adults whose average age was about 50. They found that sleep and alcohol problems were common. More than 22% of those surveyed reported hazardous drinking patterns while almost 48% reported fair or poor overall sleep quality and 7% reported a diagnosis of sleep apnea.

However, further analysis failed to show any association between alcohol use and sleep problems. There was one exception: People who said they used alcohol to get to sleep had a much higher rate of hazardous drinking.

It’s not clear why the study contradicts other studies that show alcohol use disrupts sleep. Other studies, for example, have shown that drinking causes delayed insomnia -- waking in the early-morning hours. And sleep studies conducted in sleep labs also suggest that alcohol is bad for sleep. The study was released Monday in the Annals of Family Medicine.
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - A California scholar whose latest book calls for a "radical transformation" in nursing education will speak about her work Friday in Columbia.

Patricia Benner is a senior scholar at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. She's also an emeritus professor at the University of California School of Nursing in San Francisco.

Her research suggests that drastic changes are needed in nursing education in response to a "chaotic" U.S. health care system and a chronic shortage of nurses and nursing instructors.

Benner is scheduled to speak Friday morning at the Midwest Regional Nursing Educators Conference. The event is sponsored by the University of Missouri's Sinclair School of Nursing.