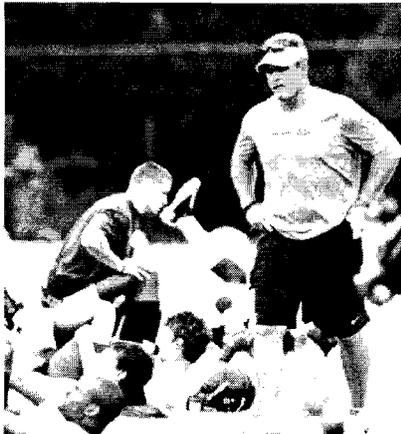


## Mizzou, Illini pay almost \$50,000 a year to scouting services

BY STU DURANDO [sdurando@post-dispatch.com](mailto:sdurando@post-dispatch.com) 314-340-8232 | Posted: Monday, August 8, 2011 10:00 am |



August 4, 2011 -- *Missouri head coach Gary Pinkel during Missouri football training camp in Columbia, Mo.* Chris Lee [clee@post-dispatch.com](mailto:clee@post-dispatch.com)

The use of scouting services in college football generated little discussion until Oregon was found to have paid the operator of one such business \$25,000, leading to intense scrutiny and an NCAA probe.

By all accounts, it was a transaction considerably larger than the norm and generated suspicion.

However, it turns out that some schools, including **Missouri** and Illinois, pay tens of thousands of dollars each year to an array of businesses to receive video and information about potential recruits.

The use of the services is allowed by the NCAA but involves restrictions and heavy monitoring by university compliance personnel.

At issue in the Oregon deal is not only the large chunk paid to Texas-based Will Lyles, but whether he helped steer highly regarded players to the Ducks. Missouri and Illinois use several services but have not done business with Lyles and his Complete Scouting Services.

**Since March 2010, Mizzou has spent \$47,016 and Illinois \$45,751 on scouting and video services, according to documents requested by the Post-Dispatch. Illinois made one purchase for \$11,990, and Mizzou's largest transaction was for \$8,515.**

"We decide as a staff whether we need to get a service," Illinois assistant head coach and recruiting coordinator Joe Gilbert said. "I have to turn information into compliance before a check can get cut. They get on the Internet, contact the service and make sure we follow every step and have everything in line."

Records show that Mizzou did business with seven services, spending the most with XOS Digital. Three invoices dated Dec. 3, 2010, came to \$21,350 for information and video on players from Texas, St. Louis, Chicago, Oklahoma and Colorado, according to documents.

Illinois paid 14 services, one as little as \$110 for publications. The school has purchased a package from Collegiate Sports Data in recent years with data on players around the country to account for its largest purchase.

"We get lists of names from recruiting services," Mizzou coach Gary Pinkel said. "We don't have people go out and eyeball (players) and send us (information). First of all, I didn't know you could do that. There's some question maybe ... whether you can do that. We get a lot of lists of names to find people out there. They put their little evaluation on it, but we get the same one they send everybody, so there's no special list."

Despite the large amounts, the Illini and Tigers are not the big spenders that some schools have become.

LSU spent \$103,869 on scouting services in 2009-10, according to records acquired by Gannett Louisiana. LSU has done business with Lyles. Alabama spent an average of \$72,876 during a three-year period, according to the Birmingham News.

There are questions about whether Lyles directed LaMichael James and Lache Seastrunk to Oregon. Gilbert said some services try to sway players to certain schools.

"There are guys doing services who will say, 'I've got Johnny Jones and the only way you'll get Johnny is to buy my service,' " he said. "So guess what? We're not getting your service. They may not come right out and say it, but they make it clear. 'I'm tight with this guy and you'll have a better chance in the end if you get my service.' "

Wisconsin coach Bret Bielema was more specific. He said former Badgers running back John Clay told him that the operator of one service told him he should go to Iowa or Michigan because he wouldn't achieve his goals at Wisconsin. He rushed for 3,413 career yards for the Badgers.

"It was a person I kind of respected," Bielema said. "But at that point I eliminated, ceased and desisted any conversations with that guy."

The NCAA has expanded its guidelines over the years to clarify which services are allowable. They must have a website and distribute information at least four times a year, and all prices must be listed so that every school is charged the same amount. Services are allowed to distribute video of players only from regularly scheduled games.

Gilbert said recent rule changes have made it difficult for coaches and compliance officials. Some services that have been in business 20 years or longer have been re-screened to avoid violations.

Documents from Illinois include numerous email exchanges between football staff members and university compliance officials in which various scouting services are discussed.

In September 2010, assistant recruiting coordinator Elizabeth Gehrt asked compliance coordinator Sarah McPhee to review material from National Prep Network, which McPhee had previously decided was not a service the university should use.

After receiving further material, she responded: "I have finished my review and it is permissible for the football staff to purchase one subscription to National Prep Network for this year."

The cost of the package was \$4,500.

Each purchase by Mizzou is accompanied by a form created specifically for transactions with scouting services. Seven conditions must be met before purchase "to reduce the likelihood of a violation ..." the form reads.

Adding to the confusion is the continual growth of the industry. Gilbert talked to one high school coach in Miami who said he was starting a service to keep coaches updated on the top middle-school players in his area.

"I started laughing," Gilbert said. "I said, 'I'm not going to buy that.' It's sad."

The NCAA recently cracked down on services such as [Rivals.com](http://Rivals.com) and [Scout.com](http://Scout.com), meaning Illinois will not be able to renew with Scout after its current subscription expires. It's just part of the ever-changing landscape.

"The services have been out there a long time," Gilbert said. "But there are new guys getting into the business that aren't doing what is asked by the NCAA. That's where all of a sudden the problems have occurred."

*Vahe Gregorian of the Post-Dispatch contributed information for this story.*



## Waivers will let schools off hook

### NCLB standards too high for most.

#### MU mention page 2

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Columbia Daily Tribune Monday, August 8, 2011

Education Secretary Arne Duncan has announced a new waiver system to give schools a break from student testing mandates in the federal No Child Left Behind law.

Critics say the benchmarks are unrealistic and brand schools as failures even if they make progress. Schools and districts where too few kids pass the tests for several years are subject to sanctions that can include firing teachers or closing the school entirely.

State and local education officials have been begging the federal government for relief from the mandates, but school starts soon, and Congress still hasn't answered the call.

The plan to offer waivers to all 50 states, as long as they meet other school reform requirements, comes at the request of President Barack Obama, Duncan said. More details on the waivers will come in September, he said. Through the waivers, schools will get some relief from looming deadlines to meet testing goals as long as they agree to embrace other kinds of education reforms such as raising standards, helping teachers and principals improve, and focusing on fixing the lowest-performing schools.

"Missouri will likely be very interested in pursuing the waiver option," said Margie Vandeven, assistant commissioner for quality schools for the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "We still need to get all of the details."

The goal of No Child Left Behind is to have every student proficient in math and reading by 2014. States have been required to bring more students up to the math and reading standards each year.

"The premise of the No Child Left Behind law was a good one — talking about looking at growth of every child and paying attention to various subgroups," Vandeven said. "The challenge has been the all-or-nothing approach."

When all buildings eventually fail to meet proficiency targets, “it becomes a meaningless syst

Grant Elementary School is the only Columbia Public Schools building to meet the academic benchmarks this year. Several Columbia schools have failed the requirements year after year, allowing parents to transfer children to other elementary schools in the district. To date, about 65 families have been approved to move their children from schools that failed benchmarks to Two Mile Prairie and Midway Heights elementary schools, said Peter Stiepleman, assistant superintendent for elementary education.

Columbia schools also have taken corrective steps, including changes in staff and the adoption of new programs, but not necessarily because of missing federal benchmarks.

“We aren’t waiting for the state or federal government to say, ‘You have to improve,’ ” Chief Academic Officer Sally Beth Lyon said. “We’re only going to be the best in the state if we improve because we want to see better results.”

Lyon is waiting for details of the waiver system, “but I would anticipate that some of the flexibility Secretary Duncan is perhaps contemplating is that sort of approach, to honor a sequence of improvement actions and a long-term view. ... Nobody wants not to be accountable for improvement; we just want to do it in a way that really helps us improve.”

**Carol Maher — an assistant professor of professional practice in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri — said she’s happy to see states might get some relief from the law, especially those that haven’t lowered proficiency standards to meet federal benchmarks.** “Missouri has never decreased its standards of proficiency,” she said. “Missouri has always stayed true to course and has had high expectations for student achievement.”

# Chicago Tribune

## Mr. Murray, journalism camp, and a future in the news business

By Angelica LaVito, Lake Zurich Bear Facts

*[ED's note: Over the summer, many students go to camps and explore specialty interests. We're pleased to report that some Chicago area high school students are thinking about studying journalism in college and are among those testing the waters. We learned about the experiences of one student, Angelica LaVito, whose application to a journalism program we supported. And we asked her to take a bow on Trib Nation and write a post for us.*

*And we'd like to hear from other students who participated in summer journalism programs, so let us know if you have stories to share. -- Margaret Holt, standards editor (and Mizzou graduate)]*

**Angelica LaVito: This summer, my goal was to refine my writing skills and gain more journalism experience to apply to my high school's newspaper in Lake Zurich. I worked on the goals by attending the University of Missouri's Summer Media Workshop.**

### Learning to approach strangers

At the camp, I took the Sports Reporting class taught by Oklahoma State professor Ray Murray. For three days we learned about sports writing, with an emphasis on interviewing. He had us interview Missouri students on their best and also most embarrassing sports moments. We wrote articles, Mr. Murray gave us feedback.

I was forced to break out of my comfort zone and talk to complete strangers -- we were asked to interview about seven different people about their stories -- and by the end of the week I felt fearless about asking anyone for an interview.

### Early Success

I learned to refuse to accept "no" as an answer, and can report I was only rejected one-and-a-half times my first day. (Another student had 27 rejections.) For my persistence, I was given the award for "most aggressive interviewer."

### Back in Lake Zurich

I'll bring what I learned to Bear Facts, Lake Zurich High School's student newspaper. This year, my junior year, I'll be the sports editor. The section covers everything from sports medicine news

to Lake Zurich High School athletes moving up in the sports world. I hope our whole staff will benefit from my experience at the Summer Media Workshop.

### **Looking ahead**

Not only did I improve my writing and reporting skills, but I also learned about university life. The camp sparked an interest in the University of Missouri and reaffirmed my desire to become a professional journalist. It was a great learning experience.

-- *Angelica LaVito, Lake Zurich Bear Facts*



## Feral cat estimate hard to verify

**37,000 count comes from Web calculator.**

By Andrew Denney

Columbia Daily Tribune Monday, August 8, 2011

Local advocates looking out for feral cats' welfare give statistics showing there is about one feral cat in Columbia for every three of the city's residents, but some experts think that number might be overblown.

An online calculator from Best Friends Animal Society, a national animal rights group, estimates there are 37,650 feral cats in Columbia, based on the human population of 108,500 from the 2010 census. A local feral cat advocacy group known as Spay, Neuter and Protect, or SNAP, has touted that number in its fight against an ordinance the Columbia City Council passed July 5 that puts new rules on the animals' caretakers.

Under the new rules, residents will be able to apply for a feral cat caretaker permit if the colony is kept on private property and all the cats residing in the colony have been spayed or neutered and have been fitted with a microchip and eartipped. If the procedures have not yet been conducted, the applicant must show proof the cats are actively being trapped to perform the procedure.

Non-permitted residents are prohibited from feeding feral cats, but the caretaker of a feral cat colony is required to regularly feed the cats in the colony. Opponents said the new rules put a financial burden on the caretakers.

The group's online calculator was prepared by John Dunham and Associates, a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based economic research firm. It produces results when a user enters the name of a state and county or city. The firm, which estimates there are 87 million feral cats in the United States, bases its research on population data from four states, 12 cities and 13 counties. The number of feral cats in a location is determined by demographic characteristics of its people, such as the number of rental housing units and the area's unemployment rate.

But some critics, while conceding that counting feral cats is no easy task, have expressed doubt about the 37,000 estimate. **Claud Chastain, a University of Missouri veterinary professor, said the number seems excessive. He also said feral cat populations can change rapidly with climate and said cities in warmer regions would see more cats.**

Chastain said he has not seen groups of feral cats swarming the trash receptacles of local restaurants, which would be an indicator of a high cat population.

Geni Alexander, a spokeswoman for the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services, said Animal Control staffers also have expressed doubt about the number. She said a large number of feral cats would result in a large number of cats found dead on city streets. Last year, Animal Control reported 291 animals found dead on the road, and this year 137 were found as of June 30. In addition, there were 138 cats impounded by Animal Control last year, and 42 this year as of June 30.

Nancy Peterson, the cat program manager for the Humane Society of the United States, expressed support for the work of SNAP in caring for the local feral cat population. But, she said, another method of counting feral cats, developed by a Florida researcher, estimates there are about 17,000 feral cats in a city the size of Columbia.

Christina McCullen of SNAP said the calculator used by Best Friends offers more scientific variables than most other population counts. She said the real number of feral cats in the city is a “moot point.”

“It’s still a lot of cats,” McCullen said. “It doesn’t take away from the point that they are out there reproducing.”



## Water engineer dives headfirst into life

By Bill Clark

Columbia Daily Tribune Monday, August 8, 2011

I recently met a man whose résumé is a bit different.

He was born in 1933 in New York City, graduated from Stuyvesant High School in 1950 and from prestigious Peter Cooper Union College in 1955, which admits only 240 students each year, and they go to school “free like the air and the water.”

He met his wife on a ski vacation in Aspen, Colo., where he skied the treacherous “Elevator Shaft” on Ajax Mountain.

He has run the Heart of America four times and calls it “a beautiful run.”

He has a doctorate in sanitary engineering and water resources from The Johns Hopkins University (1961), was a professor of civil engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 1961-75 and, from 1975-92, was the chairman and **C.W. LePierre Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Missouri.**

His 2009 book “Water Treatment Plant Performance Evaluations and Operations” received the Dr. Warren Kramer Award by the American Water Works Association. It is based on his experiences as co-owner of H2O’C Engineering, a professional counseling service he has operated with his son since 1993.

His name? John O’Connor. And for all he has done, most Columbians relate more to the girl from Batavia, Ill., he met on the ski slopes and later married — Joni, his wife of 45 years. Joni is one of Columbia’s movers and shakers, primarily a driving force in the League of Women Voters.

Together, the O’Connors are another of those couples who came here en route to somewhere else and found our town to be exactly where they wanted to be.

They raised their two children here, and both kids have stayed. **When John was offered the position of chief of the Illinois State Water Survey upon his retirement from MU, he and Joni moved to Champaign but did not sell their home in Columbia because they knew they would return — and they did in 1995.**

Son Tom, an MU graduate in both electrical engineering and business administration, followed Dad into the world of water and has been his partner in H2O'C for the past 18 years. Daughter Heather Leigers is a Columbia forester.

H2O'C Engineering has been “a great and productive experience,” John said. “We’ve dealt with testing and improving municipal water supplies and water conservation in Little Rock and Chicago; and the Illinois towns of Morton, Bloomington and Normal; in Sedalia, Kansas City, Gladstone, St. Peter; and closer to home in Hartsburg and Public Water Supply District No. 9 in Harg.”

The best water around? Wow! Did I' Clark learn something. ”The best water in the state,” John said, “is at the University of Missouri. We tested 101 state water supplies, and MU came out on top.”

Wait up, John. Doesn't MU get its water from Columbia? Hardly. The university has four deep wells on campus, and all MU buildings get their water from those deep wells. Live and learn, huh?

John O'Connor — daredevil skier, marathoner, family man — has a list of publications eight pages long involving everything right and wrong about water quality and use. His list of awards as a professional engineer stretches from 1981 to his recent “water plant” book.

His future plans?

“I don't hunt or fish. I don't run anymore, but I love to take long walks. I look forward to each day. Water treatment plant problems are like doing a crossword puzzle. Every day, we add a few pieces to the puzzle.” Just don't ski the “Elevator Shaft” again till the puzzle is done, old friend.

One final thought. In the 51-year history of the Heart of America Marathon, I've never before heard someone describe the brutal, six-hill challenge as “a beautiful run.”

John O'Connor is a man apart.