Suicide victim was respected lab employee

By Janese Silvey
Columbia Daily Tribune

Before committing suicide on the second floor of a University of Missouri parking garage yesterday, Jonathan DeHaven went to work in Lafevre Hall and tended to the research animals under his charge.

"The last thing he did before he killed himself was made sure all the animals were cared for — that's the way he was," said Frederick vom Saal, a biological sciences professor who worked with him.

DeHaven, 55, was pronounced dead yesterday after shooting himself with a revolver on the second floor of the University Avenue Parking Garage. MU police responded to the scene at 11:39 a.m. after receiving a medical emergency call. MU police Chief Jack Watring said DeHaven had a short suicide note with him.

Vom Saal and others who knew him were in shock this morning.

"He really basically was someone who we were able to give complete responsibility for running a pretty complicated animal research program," vom Saal said. "He was just a person who you never worried that there would ever be a problem. He made himself available seven days a week and was totally dedicated to doing this."

A few days ago, DeHaven had been joking around with his typical sense of humor, vom Saal said.

"We didn’t see this coming," he said. "He was a good person and a really good employee. We valued him, and we’re going to miss him. We’re just sorry that we couldn’t have done more to help him."

DeHaven was a cancer survivor with a heart condition, but vom Saal said he was unaware of any pressing medical problems.
DeHaven worked at MU for more than 30 years and had been in his current department for 12 years, said Dana Weir, manager of the research animal facilities. His wife, Cindy DeHaven, also works in the department, as well as a stepson, Timothy Onderbeke.

“The whole family is very devoted to our department and this university,” Weir said. “He’ll be missed by many people, not just within the university, but at home and in the community.”

DeHaven also leaves behind grandchildren, whom he was “very devoted to,” vom Saal said.

In a statement, Chancellor Brady Deaton said he was “deeply saddened” to learn of DeHaven’s death. “His dedication and excellent work will always be remembered and appreciated by those who worked with him,” Deaton said. “He will especially be remembered for his kindness toward the animals he cared for as well as those who were fortunate to work alongside him in our laboratories.”
Higher ed funding

Based on performance?

By Henry J. Waters III

Sunday, January 1, 2012

Earlier this month, the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education adopted a plan that would push lawmakers to provide funding based on whether colleges and universities meet stated goals, including retention rates, degree attainment, quality of learning and good financial management.

The general idea seems reasonable enough on its surface, but Rep. Chris Kelly says the General Assembly is not likely to go for the idea in anything resembling the specific terms outlined by the board.

To begin with, as a general proposition higher education denizens will not like the idea, not because they don’t believe they should deliver palpable quality but because they doubt whether politicians are qualified to properly assess. Perhaps even more to the point, favorite colleges are represented by various lawmakers whose funding motivation will depend more on geography than knowledge of anything that might be going on in classrooms. Institutional lobbyists will want to mine these associations for parochial financial gain.

In Missouri history, perhaps the most successful effort ever to gain legislative approval based on measurable quality of education delivery was the move by the former Northeast Missouri State University to assess “value added” gains among individual students. The move was part of the hugely successful effort to reinvent the university led by President Charles McClain, producing legislative appropriations successes and eventual designation as Missouri’s public liberal arts institution, renamed Truman State University.

The technique was simple but profound. Student achievement was measured at the beginning and end of every school term, showing learning progress and effectively revealing the quality of education delivered. Adoption of the system required a serious buy-in by every staff and faculty member and did not come easily, but when successfully implemented, lobbyists from Kirksville were able to tell legislators, “We’re the only institution that can show you what you’re getting for your money,” a claim irritating to competitors but too logical to ignore.

These many years later, comprehensive value-added assessment remains a superior method, celebrated more by its avoidance than its adoption. The wholesale culture change it requires on
campuses from Grade One to 16 keeps educators at bay. They prefer to live by the simple maxim “More money means better education,” and who can blame them? Legislators are more naturally attuned to that sort of approach, which does not involve trying to apply quality control.

So every state, including our own, slogs through its own political swamp toward vague decisions about higher ed funding. There is nothing wrong with attempts by boards and commissions to improve the rationality of public funding, but don’t expect them to actually produce formulas guaranteeing appropriations effectively linked to measurable performance. Legislative appropriations will remain largely the free-for-all their perpetrators know best.

As Kelly says, lawmakers won’t care a fig what governors and coordinating boards proclaim.

HJW III
Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive, left, and University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton embrace after an announcement that Missouri will join the Southeastern Conference, with competition to begin in all sports for the 2012-13 academic year.

Columbians had to dig out from a massive pile of snow this year, but we were spared from an epic twister that devastated Joplin in May.

And while we celebrated alongside St. Louis when the Cardinals captured the World Series win, Columbia had its own historic moment in athletics when the University of Missouri celebrated its 100th Homecoming.
The year that touted a once-in-a-centennial 11-11-11 date also will go down in history for MU’s
decision to alter its conference alliance.

Here, in descending order, are the Tribune staff’s picks as the top Columbia stories of 2011.

9: Unforeseen announcement

New University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and his wife, Molly, are greeted by
Truman the Tiger at the Reynolds Alumni Center in December. Wolfe was announced as the
replacement for interim President Steve Owens and will start on Feb. 15.

A little-known former Columbia resident and software businessman was named the new UM
System president in December, capping a search process that spanned most of the year.

Tim Wolfe became the 23rd president, replacing Gary Forsee, who resigned in January just shy
of his third anniversary.

While General Counsel Steve Owens worked as interim president, the UM Board of Curators
quietly went about finding a new leader. Unlike in previous presidential searches, curators were
able to keep a lid on Wolfe’s identity until the formal announcement. Some criticized the search
process for being too secretive, but board Chairman Warren Erdman defended the process,
saying other candidates with current employment needed to be assured their bosses wouldn’t find
out they were job-hunting.

Wolfe is a former president of Novell Americas, an infrastructure software company, and
previously worked at IBM. He starts the job Feb. 15 — more than a week after curators are
expected to vote on a proposed tuition increase.

— Janese Silvey

2: Snowed in
Tribune file

Mike Hill, right, an MU junior, shovels a path out along Wilson Avenue on Feb. 2 with some help from Sebastian Los, left, and Stuart Miller, center, after a snowstorm left about 17 inches of snow in Columbia. Hill, from Houston, Texas, had his car stuck in the middle of the road overnight and was trying to get back to his residence on the other side of campus.

A blizzard that dumped almost 18 inches of snow on Columbia in early February stopped most of the city in its tracks, forcing government offices and some businesses to shut down.

Columbia Public Schools canceled classes for four days, and MU and Stephens College shut down for three days as crews cleared sidewalks, roads and parking lots.

Although many residents heeded warnings and stayed home for a day or two, Columbia police officers responded to 20 vehicle accidents the day after the storm. Officers also responded to more than 90 calls for stuck or stalled vehicles after what some dubbed “snowpocalypse.”

The city’s 22 snowplows spent more than a week clearing residential streets. Even after they were plowed, some areas still were not receiving mail a week later because snow piles were blocking mailboxes.

The storm made Boone County eligible for federal disaster-relief money, which requires the cost of a snowfall to be about $443,000 in expenses within a 48-hour period, requirements the county met. Officials are still waiting for final word on what the government will provide.

If a season full of snowstorms wasn’t enough — Columbia totaled more than 51 inches of snow last winter — a few months later, the city was plagued by a storm of cicadas. The bugs flew into people’s homes, cars and faces as they buzzed around town for several weeks of their curious life cycle.

— Catherine Martin

1: M-I-Z ... S-E-C
Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive, left, and University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton embrace after an announcement that Missouri will join the Southeastern Conference, with competition to begin in all sports for the 2012-13 academic year.

Eighteen months of rumors, loyalty oaths and enough anonymous sources to make journalism professors throw up their hands in despair came to a head Nov. 6 at MU. Hello, Southeastern Conference. So long, Big 12.

That was the day SEC Commissioner Mike Slive was on campus to formally welcome MU to the country’s premier athletic conference, a courtship that unfolded as faith in the Big 12’s future eroded. But a different date will be remembered for launching school officials down the Big 12’s escape hatch: Sept. 2. That’s when Oklahoma President David Boren suggested the Sooners were fielding offers from other conferences, putting the Big 12’s — and Missouri’s — future into panic mode.

“When that began to fragment, I realized I had to do what was best for the University of Missouri,” MU Chancellor Brady Deaton later said.

For some loyal supporters, that means 2012 ushers in a bright new era for the Tigers, who will compete in the SEC’s Eastern Division against the likes of Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. For others, the school turned its back on a century of history and traditions, namely its long-standing rivalry with the University of Kansas, a series that will presumably expire on the playing fields unless KU agrees to keep it going. Either way, the school and its Athletic Department face new challenges and opportunities. Headlining the charge into the SEC will be Gary Pinkel’s football program, which joins the most grueling conference in the United States, one that’s about to claim its sixth-consecutive national championship. To meet that challenge, Pinkel has already stumped for a stronger commitment from MU’s administration and boosters.

“There’s a lot of great things historically that have happened here,” Pinkel said. “But this is our shot.”

Pinkel’s 2011 had its share of adversity, too. His Tigers stumbled early before finishing 8-5 with a win against North Carolina on Monday in the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La. His low
point came Nov. 16, when he was arrested for drunken driving, which led to a quick guilty plea, a hefty punishment from the university and a one-week suspension that forced him to miss the Tigers’ home finale against Texas Tech.

“I’ve always tried to be a good and positive role model, but ... I failed miserably,” he said. “Now it’s up to me to begin earning everyone’s respect and trust back.”

Around the same time, Frank Haith began earning heaps of respect. In April, Missouri was widely criticized when it chose Haith to replace Mike Anderson to coach the men’s basketball team, a curious hire that looked worse in August when Haith was accused of recruiting violations by a rogue booster at the University of Miami, his former employer. With Anderson off to Arkansas, the NCAA is still investigating the Haith allegations, but he has won over MU fans, leading the Tigers to their best start in decades.

— Dave Matter
Brian Brooks going to part time at MU J-school

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, December 31, 2011

A longtime University of Missouri School of Journalism faculty member is stepping down from his full-time position before the start of next fall’s semester.

Brian Brooks, who has been associate dean for nearly a decade, has been part of the journalism faculty since 1974. “Thirty-eight years is enough,” said Brooks, 66.

Starting next year, he plans to work part time, likely teaching a freshman introductory class and a media studies course for upperclassmen during fall semesters only. He plans to use the rest of his time to travel, “go see more away football games in the fall, things like that.”

Brooks is well-known among journalism undergraduates. He has written or co-written four textbooks considered staples in the curricula.

Two years ago, he was inducted into the Missouri Press Association’s Newspaper Hall of Fame “because of his lifelong dedication to journalism education and to the newspaper business,” said Doug Crews, executive director of the association.

“Brian has shared his skills in the art of news reporting and editing with literally thousands of student journalists during his career,” Crews said in an email. “His popularity in the classroom extends to working journalists at newspapers in Missouri and across the country who respect his passion for journalism.”

Brooks said he’s most proud of creating the Walter Williams Scholars program along with Dean Mills, dean of the school. The program awards scholarships and benefits to students who score a 33 or higher on the ACT and maintain a high school grade-point average of at least a 3.25.

In 2004, Brooks helped implement a change in policies that grants qualifying freshmen direct admission into the journalism program instead of the traditional admissions process of having to apply to the school before their junior year.
“That also helped us attract more students and better students,” he said. “We doubled our enrollment over that period of time while also increasing ACT scores. That’s a pretty significant trick.”

Mills referred to Brooks as a “relentless recruiting machine” and said he’s “one of those faculty who truly will be impossible to replace.”

“He established a reputation as a legendary teacher, editor and textbook author early in his career,” Mills said. “Then he topped it off, during the last few years, by becoming a legendary undergraduate dean, pushing for quality and innovation.”

The journalism school is accepting donations to create an endowed scholarship in Brooks’ name.
Preferences tell story of new tree frog species

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, December 31, 2011

University of Missouri researchers have figured out that female tree frogs are more apt to mate with males who share the same number of chromosomes as they do — a discovery that could offer insights into how new frog species might have evolved.

Carl Gerhardt, a curators’ professor of biological sciences in MU’s College of Arts and Science, and doctoral student Mitch Tucker studied two closely related species of gray tree frogs. The eastern gray tree frog and the Cope’s gray tree frog both live in Missouri and look alike. The eastern gray tree frog, though, has double the number of chromosomes.

Potential mates can detect differences in mating calls.

“The males are both singing the same love song — just one frog is singing it slower,” Tucker said in a statement. “It’s kind of like the difference between Eric Clapton’s original and unplugged versions of ‘Layla.’ ”

Previous studies showed tree frogs with more sets of chromosomes have larger cell sizes, which slows down the trill rate. The research team wanted to figure out whether the calling preferences of females were linked to the number of chromosomes.

Tucker tested it by replicating spring temperatures early in frog development. Females were grown to maturity and then exposed to computer-generated synthetic male calls that differed by trill rate. They found the females hopped toward the calls with the trill rates of males with matching chromosome numbers.

“This shows that chromosome number alone can control the behavior that keeps the species separate,” Gerhardt said. “In turn, as chromosome number increases, so does the size of cells, which is probably the immediate cause of the changes in calls and preferences.”

The eastern gray frog might represent a rare case of rapid evolution occurring by chromosome duplication, changes in behavior and reproductive isolation, Gerhardt said.

The study was published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences.
COLUMBIA, Mo.

A University of Missouri spin-off company plans to test a new plasma dental brush on human patients in hopes of creating a pain-free alternative to filling cavities.

Scientist Meng Chen says he expects human clinical trials to begin in early 2012 at the University of Tennessee's Memphis campus. Chen is chief scientist for Nanova Inc., a company formed by several professors that shares a patent on the new technology with the university.

The plasma brush uses chemical reactions to disinfect and clean out cavities for fillings within 30 seconds. The research team hopes the technology will allow dentists and patients to reduce the number and costs of replacement fillings as well as decrease the need for patients to have teeth pulled after repeated fillings.
Program helps breast cancer survivors

Published: Dec. 30, 2011 at 11:51 PM

COLUMBIA, Mo., Dec. 30 (UPI) -- A meditation technique can help breast cancer survivors improve their emotional and physical well-being, U.S. researchers say.

Yaowarat Matchim, a former nursing doctoral student; Jane Armer, professor of nursing; and Bob Stewart, professor emeritus of education and adjunct faculty in nursing, at the University of Missouri, said survivors face further health challenges after their treatments end.

Previous research reported as many as 50 percent of breast cancer survivors are depressed, the researchers said.

The study, published in the Western Journal of Nursing Research, found breast cancer survivors' health improved after they learned Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction -- a type of training that incorporates meditation, yoga and physical awareness.

"Patients often are given a variety of options to reduce stress, but they should choose what works for them according to their lifestyles and belief systems," Armer said in a statement.

The program consists of group sessions for eight to 10 weeks, during which participants practice meditation skills, discuss how bodies respond to stress and learn coping techniques.

The researchers found breast cancer survivors who learned Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction lowered their blood pressure, heart rate and respiratory rate, and their mood improved.

The level of mindfulness increased after taking the class. Armer suggested women should continue the program after the class ends to maintain the positive effects.
Local bookings reflect schedule.

It’s not too early to book your hotel room to catch the Tigers at Faurot Field for the coming season. Actually, less than a week after the University of Missouri’s inaugural Southeastern Conference schedule was released, it’s already too late to find a spot at some local hotels.

“It was a surprise how quickly things started selling,” said Chris Maher, general manager of the Wingate Inn off Keene Street. “The phones were off the hook the last couple of days.”

MU’s 2012 football schedule, released Wednesday, has generated a flurry of early reservations at area hotels as Tiger fans race to secure rooms in town so they can watch their team take on its new SEC opponents. And the SEC schools’ fans, with a reputation for traveling, are adding to the early activity generated by the excitement about MU’s conference realignment.

“From everything I have seen and everything I have heard, I am not surprised it has happened this quickly,” said Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Amy Schneider. “It’s a big deal to them, and it’s a big deal to Mizzou fans.”

An inventory of available hotel rooms compiled by the CVB on Thursday indicated nine Columbia hotels had already booked all their rooms for the night before and the day of MU’s Oct. 27 Homecoming game against Kentucky. Four hotels were booked the weekend of Oct. 13 for MU’s game against Alabama and for the Sept. 8 game against Georgia. Schneider cautioned on Friday that the list was probably already out of date.

“At this time, there are still rooms available in the city, but they certainly have sold out faster than in the past,” she said. “I expect that the city will be sold out shortly.”

Wingate Inn, for instance, had by Friday reserved the rest of its rooms during the weekend of the Alabama game, Maher said. Usually, he said, the hotel sells out of rooms on conference home game weekends about three to six months in advance.

The number of reservations at the Holiday Inn Executive Center on I-70 Drive Southwest surprised JoAnna Chandler, the front office manager. Usually, the hotel will sell out early for Homecoming and other high-profile games, she said, but the early influx of reservations for conference home games has been higher than usual.

“We have steady reservations coming in,” Chandler said. “If we keep up at this pace, I think we will sell out earlier for home games than we have in the past.”
The Hampton Inn and Suites on Stadium Boulevard generally books all its rooms on football weekends early because of its location, said General Manager Susan Bell. But after Wednesday’s announcement, the hotel was inundated with calls. “When the schedule was released, we had a flood of calls, and I think that was the same for most hotels in town,” Bell said.

Most of the reservations have been from MU fans making sure they can find a room early, Schneider and hotel managers said. “In my mind, I thought the SEC fans would be sitting there waiting and picking up the phone as soon as they got the schedule, but apparently that’s what the Mizzou fans were doing,” Schneider said.

Still, the number of reservations from fans of MU’s new Southern rivals has validated their reputation as travelers, Schneider said. “At least this early in the game, they’re showing us that this is not all hype,” she said.

Reach Jacob Barker at 573-815-1722 or e-mail jtbarker@columbiatribune.com.
Mike Alden answers questions during a press conference announcing the hiring of Frank Haith on April 4. The controversial Haith hiring was just one of several blockbuster events in 2011.

By Joe Walljasper

At the end of the most momentous year of his tenure as Missouri’s athletic director, Mike Alden sat down with Tribune sports editor Joe Walljasper and PowerMizzou.com editor Gabe DeArmond for an hour-long Q&A. The topics included Missouri’s basketball coaching change, the move from the Big 12 to the SEC and his thoughts on the future of conference realignment.

Q: In the spring you had a three-week period where you lost Mike Anderson, looked like you might be getting Matt Painter and then you do get Frank Haith amidst a bit of an uproar. If you go back through that process, were there things you think were misconstrued or things that got out into the public that weren’t accurate that you would like to set straight?
A: I don’t know that there was anything that got out there that wasn’t necessarily accurate. It was just we were operating a search under a different set of spotlights. ... The one thing, though, if there was a possible misconception it was that I think folks thought we were only zeroed in on one person. That was not the case. We had several people that we wanted to visit with. One of them that was on the list was Frank. One of them that was on the list was Matt. There were other coaches, as well, too, that we wanted to visit with.

I just think the nature of searches — plural — now in today’s day and age are just so much more public, and it’s challenging to be able to be efficient with it in a confidential type of environment.

Q: Did you think Mike was going to stay after you presented him with the contract extension offer? Did that catch you off guard?

A: Yeah, it did. I don’t believe I would have taken that entire package together for discussion with the Board of Curators in Rolla, Mo., if I didn’t think that. By all indications from Mike and others, that was what we were going to do. So that caught us off guard.

Q: A lot of your fans now, especially because Frank has started so well, want to, I guess, discount what Mike did here. Now that you’ve had some time to reflect, even if it didn’t end well, what’s your take on what Mike did?

A: I think he did great things for Mizzou. I think we were fortunate to have Mike. ... Mike, at the time we recruited him from UAB, really provided stability to our fan base, stability to our student-athletes, stability nationally as far as our brand and our image and what we were trying to do and what we were recruiting to, how we were going to graduate our kids, how they were going to represent us on and off the court.

For those that don’t recognize that, that’s unfortunate, because that’s exactly what he did. During an unbelievably turbulent time in 2006 he brought a tremendous amount of confidence and stability and calmness to our organization that can never be discounted. He did great things for the university, and I was sorry to see him go.

Q: What did you know about Frank that nobody else knew?

A: I knew about Frank primarily due to 20, 30, 40 people that I knew and I trusted nationally about that. What I knew about him through all of those people is the guy has high integrity. He does a terrific job with his student-athletes. He does it the right way. He’s been involved and around a lot of successful people. He has a tremendous work ethic. And he’s a guy that will be committed to your organization, like he was at Miami or he was at Texas or Texas A&M or Wake or all of those places.

Q: But he has obviously been accused of something (knowing about a $10,000 payment to a recruit while at Miami) that, if it were true, would be a fireable offense. What level of confidence do you have that he will be exonerated by the NCAA?
A: You’re confident in the fact that we know there is going to be a thorough process. We’re confident in the fact that we know we’re participating in the process, and Frank has been tremendously transparent, and everybody involved with it has been transparent. But the frustrating part of that is how long these types of things take. For something that didn’t occur at the University of Missouri or have anything really to do with us, it does have to do with us because that’s our head basketball coach.

My confidence level is I know it’s going to be a thorough process. I know it’s going to be fair. The frustrating part is it just takes so long, and I don’t know what the outcome of that will be.

Q: He has signed three transfers. Is that something you’re comfortable with? Do you get more involved when it involves a transfer than you would a regular freshman?

A: I don’t get involved more. I get involved the same. The level is pretty intense for us with the recruiting process. For me, with football, men’s basketball and women’s basketball, I’m tremendously involved in those, and we have other sports supervisors involved with all of our sports. In the situation where you have a transfer vs. a high school kid coming in, there’s additional scrutiny there. You try to find out what are the reasons for the transfer. What about academic issues, off-the-court issues, different types of things you’re dealing with? You do deal with that from a high school standpoint, but not as much, because you’re dealing with not only a high school but another institution.

It didn’t surprise me on the number of transfers we’d be looking at early. My opinion is, and my understanding is, this won’t be a pattern for Mizzou. This was by virtue of the fact that when Frank came on board, we had six scholarships to give in Year 1 and then three (in Year 2). Every coach that we talked to, every one that we talked to — not just Frank, but others — said, “This is almost unheard of.” That was almost their exact phrase.

Q: I think we spoke to you during a football scrimmage when the first rumors of the SEC came out. You’d mentioned how Brady Deaton was single-mindedly focused on keeping the Big 12 intact. Early in the process, before it got to the point where the Oklahoma faction almost split off, was there any disconnect in your feelings and Brady’s. Were you more eager than him early on to explore other options, or were you guys in lockstep?

A: I would say we were in lockstep. I think Brady was in a tough position because he was the chair of the Big 12 Conference, and certainly he has a focus on Mizzou but also with the rest of the league.

Q: What was Gary Pinkel’s involvement in the decision throughout? And, hypothetically, if he was opposed to it, does Missouri still make the move?

A: How was he involved? Gary and I talk all the time on things. I seek counsel and advice and discussions with him all the time, as Brady does with me. Throughout that whole process, as that really started to unfold, like when A&M was still making its decision and we were still locked in to everything we were doing, I would talk to Gary about that all the time.
He was always committed to doing the right thing for Mizzou and doing it in a league where there was going to be equality as far as understanding the constraints of institutional networks and on and on. He never wavered from his thoughts to me as far as, “This is going to be a great move for Mizzou.” The only caveat he put in there, which is the right caveat, is like, “Look, man, when we do this, we’ve got to do it right. We’ve got to understand we’re stepping into a whole different deal here. As great as our facilities are here and as great as the different things we’re doing are, we’ve got to keep stepping it up.”

Q: But if he had been opposed to it, would you have still moved forward?

A: I don’t know if I could answer that, because he never really was, so I never really thought of that. It never really came up.

Q: The response from a lot of Big 12 people, including the guy in charge of the Big 12, is, “We did everything Missouri wanted.” That is either not true or you guys had either reached a point where the decision was too far down the road and you couldn’t go back. Which one of those would you say it is?

A: I could take you back to some meetings in August in Dallas, Texas, with what you’re talking about right there. I can remember specifically responding about, “What does Missouri want?” I remember my answer to that absolutely was, “This isn’t about Missouri. I don’t know why people keep saying, ‘What does Missouri want?’” That, to me, is not a conference position. A conference position should not be, “What does this institution want, and by gosh, we might do it and we might not.” It needs to be, “What does the conference and league need to do?”

When people were making comments that “we did everything that Missouri wanted,” I’m telling you, forever Brady and myself were saying: “It’s not about Missouri. These are the things that we think are important to the league, and this, collectively, needs to take place.” Now for all of these years, none of this has happened. So now, when you say, “We might take a look at this because of Missouri,” I mean, Nebraska had these same issues. Colorado had these same issues. Texas A&M had the same issues. We were no different, but it wasn’t about us. …

There was a point where they said, “We’ve done all of these things, so why would you leave?” They say that, but there were other issues that to this day are probably not resolved. I hope they do. I hope the Big 12 gets all those resolved. I do think some of the steps they’ve taken, the equal revenue distribution, trying to get a little bit more definition on institutional networks — I don’t think they’re there yet but they’re working on that — I think the additions of West Virginia and TCU are going to be really good for the Big 12. I still think there are other things they can work on.

Q: A lot of blame has been cast to a number of different places. I saw an interview with Texas A&M President Bowen Loftin after they left where he said, “Why we started looking again was because Texas was looking as much as two years ago.” Did you know that to be true, or did you think there was a period of time where everything was solved until A&M came back out?
A: We thought everything was solved. We did. After Nebraska and Colorado made their moves, and then we were obviously out there in the public — that was 2010 — now all of a sudden we have 10 teams, everybody’s locked together, we’re doing all of these things to assure that people are getting, what, $20 million of revenue. Everything was set to go. We go all the way through the year. When I had a chance to read President Loftin’s interview, I thought that was interesting to know that other schools were looking for the last couple of years.

Q: But you didn’t have knowledge of it at the time?

A: No, no, because you had everybody in that room saying, “We’re all locked together, everybody is set to go, this is the place to be.” It was enlightening to read that interview with President Loftin.

Q: I don’t know how many loyalty pledges you and Brady took through the years, but why do you think none of them — even though these were leaders of universities — ever seemed to be taken very seriously?

A: I don’t know. It’s disappointing to me that you see that. It’s interesting because you don’t hear that out of the Big Ten. You don’t hear that out of the SEC. You don’t hear that out of the Pac-12 now. But you heard that in the Big 12 constantly: “We’re all loyal together. We’re all in this together. We’re committed.” And then people turn around say that we’re not.

Q: One thing about the Big 12 is there was never any strong central leadership. Maybe it was impossible due to the way the whole thing was set up. But do you think if there had been a figure in place, a commanding presence as a commissioner, that the Big 12 would still be the original Big 12?

A: You would hope. Steve Hatchell was the original guy. I didn’t work with him. I worked with Kevin Weiberg, and I think he’s phenomenal. I think he’s a great leader. Obviously, I worked with Dan (Beebe) for a long time, and I have high respect for him, as well. I just think the initial premise that the Big 12 was set up upon — this is my opinion — it was flawed from the start, from the very start. When you form a family of 12 institutions, and you make exceptions for a couple of kids in that family and don’t treat the rest of them the same, you are setting yourself up for failure.

From a leadership standpoint, Kevin, for example, I know that Kevin tried to stand up to that, to say, “Look, if we’re ever going to be a great league we have to have this, this and this.” He continued to get rebuked from a couple of institutions. So when that happened, we lost a very strong leader at that time. And when Dan came in, he tried to do the exact same thing. I’m hopeful that after 15 years of this happening and them going through two pretty darn good leaders … I’m hopeful that some adjustments will be made. But I don’t know, because history says there may not be. Not only in the Big 12 but in leagues before that — the Southwest Conference.

I don’t know if a different leadership team, in those roles, could have done a better job, a worse job, whatever that might be, because the setup of the whole system was flawed from the start.
Q: A super majority of votes could have changed the rules at any time, so it wasn’t just Texas holding things up. Why do you think eight schools couldn’t get together and make it a more progressive conference?

A: You’d have to ask some of those other institutions. With Missouri, we were kind of always off over here trying to position things in a certain way. As hard as I think some folks tried to get the majority of people to one side, for whatever reason, there was always a couple that just wouldn’t. As for why, I don’t know. It was always frustrating.

Q: I think it was from the curators meeting in St. Louis, there was a document leaked that said Missouri was estimating its increased TV revenues in the SEC to be between $2 million and $12 million, which is a pretty big range. What do you think it might be?

A: Initially? Probably about 2. ... Maybe a little bit north of that, like 2.1 or 2.2.

Q: Two above what? What are you getting now?

A: Let’s say we’re getting 17 (million). It would be 19-point-something. ... The other thing with the SEC is they have the opportunity for what is called a “look-in” to their contracts with ESPN and CBS, because with the additions of Texas A&M and Missouri, the footprint has changed, the households have changed. So they have an opportunity to look at that, and they anticipate those numbers in the not-too-distant future to go up. I think all of us do — not just Missouri and Texas A&M. Everybody in the league anticipates that.

Q: And what is the possibility of an SEC Network? It’s my understanding that the SEC does not pool third-tier media rights to the conference. The schools retain those. Will that get in the way of an SEC Network?

A: At least what I’ve seen, the collegiality and collaboration of the SEC in my short time there, the institutions will say, “What is best for the league?” If it’s best for the league to start pooling our third-tier rights and doing something a little bit differently, at least what I’ve gotten out of those meetings is that’s what they’ll do. I didn’t see anybody in that league sitting there saying, “We’re going to hold on to all of these rights and do our own thing.” At least that’s what we understood going in. That gives us pretty strong confidence going into the next couple of years that there will be some enhancements to it, wherever that may come from, whether that’s current existing television networks, different networks that are competitive, digital platforms.

Q: Do you think there will be an SEC Network, something similar to the Big Ten Network?

A: There will be enhanced exposure. Is it a true network presentation? That, I don’t know. I think I’d leave that to Mike Slive, the commissioner, and those folks to identify. I am confident in the next few years there will be greater exposure for our fan base and for our product in the SEC, whatever platform that may take.

Q: Do you think Missouri will ever play Kansas again?
A: I hope we do. I do. We’ve done everything we can to continue to encourage that, but now that we’re focusing in on the SEC and making the move and have so many things on our plate, Kansas knows that the opportunity is there and we respect them.

I hope that we do, because those are decisions for generations. Those aren’t decisions because people are ticked off at one another because of something that happened in 2011. What about in 1911? What about in 2111? When people look back and say, “Why? Well, because they moved to another conference.” I just think that’s unfortunate.

Q: Is playing anyone in Kansas City a possibility for 2012?

A: I don’t think so for 2012. You guys saw when our schedule came out, we’ve got to get three nonconference games. This is a lot of work. … We want to make sure we always have six games in Columbia, maybe seven. And then we would take a look at a neutral-site game, but nothing for 2012.

Q: Gary Pinkel is, I guess, 59. You mentioned you two talk a lot. Do you ever talk about his exit strategy? Do you have a sense of how much longer he wants to do this?

A: We talk about a lot of stuff, but with Gary I usually don’t share a lot of stuff we talk about personally and privately. I just know this: He’s doing one heck of a job. He’s got a ton of energy. Obviously, he’s in great shape. He’s, I know, really excited about going into the SEC. How long does he want to keep doing it? I don’t know but hopefully for a long time.

Q: It sounds like the Big Ten and Pac-12 aren’t overly interested in expanding anymore. Do you think conference expansion will settle down, or do you think it will end up being four 16-team conferences?

A: I don’t think it’s settled down yet. I think the Big Ten-Pac-12 partnership is going to work out really well, because I think it provides them with this great national exposure without having to add schools to their mix. But I think there are still other movements that are going to take place. I don’t know if that’s going to be in the ACC or the Big 12 or the SEC or what have you. But I still think there’s more juggling to do yet. Whether it goes to four 16-team leagues — people have talked about that before — but I don’t know. But I do think from the Big Ten-Pac-12 one, they’re making a statement by doing this, saying, “I think we’ve got it for right now, for the next 10 years, so the rest of you guys can do what you need to do.”

Q: Why does the Big Ten and Pac-12 schools playing each other in one football game a year equate to expansion? I don’t understand the connection.

A: I think their deal is more the Big Ten Network and everything they’re doing with the Pac-12. It’s going to provide them with inventory. Even if it’s just one game per school per year in football, it’s going to provide them with all they need to keep driving those numbers north. With that and their alignment with the Rose Bowl, I think they’re in really good shape for the foreseeable future.
Q: The SEC doesn’t offer wrestling. What is going to happen with wrestling?

A: The proposal put forward by the National Wrestling Coaches Association is all these regionals. ... What they’re saying is there’s going to be a Big Ten region, because every school in the Big Ten participates, all 12. Got that. Then there will be an East Region, a Southeast Region, a Central Region where Missouri would be and Oklahoma State and Oklahoma and Northern Iowa and schools like that, and then there would be a West Region. So you would funnel through regional championships to get you to the NCAA Championships. ... (NWCA Executive Director) Mike Moyer sent that proposal to the NCAA, and I think the NCAA is going to be looking at that.

Q: For the foreseeable future you talk about, is the Big 12 going to still be around?

A: I think so. I just don’t know if it will be in the same makeup we see today. I think the addition of TCU and West Virginia has been good, very good. I just think you’ve got to continue to look at how is that driving your television revenue, the exposure, because that’s unfortunately what we talk about. I know what it’s doing for the SEC, the addition A&M and Missouri. I can see it. I can see all the numbers, as far as households that it adds.

If you take a look at that, which is millions of households more than the Big 12 currently has — or is on par with what the Big Ten has — I look at that and say the future of their television contracts is going to be dictated on not just how good their teams are but how many households there are. I think (the Big 12) is going to have to look at possible further expansion.

Q: You guys are way down the list in the SEC in terms of budget. What are the realistic goals where you want to be five years down the line so you’re at least in the same ballpark with some of these schools?

A: Some of the schools that are in the SEC — Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee — to be able to reach all the way up to their level, that would be a pretty big mountain to climb. What we have to do is climb to that area, just kind of like we’ve been in the Big 12, where you are going to be somewhere in the neighborhood of six, seventh, eighth in the SEC. So it in the Big 12 you would have wanted to be around fifth in the league or sixth in the league. To do that, our plan will be in the next four or five years to position yourself to be somewhere around that middle tier.

How do you do that? Well, we’ve got to sell more season tickets. We sell about 40,000 season tickets in football. That’s great. We need to be selling 45,000. We’ve got 8,000 great members of the Tiger Scholarship Fund, but we need 10,000. We’re generating $8 million in the Tiger Scholarship Fund, but we need to generate $10 or $11 million. I think the multimedia rights partnership we have with Learfield and with (Mizzou Sports Properties), how can we enhance those dollars, too?

Q: What is your budget now?
A: I think it’s around $65 (million). That includes debt service and things we generate, but 62 to 65. Now in the (Equity in Athletics Data Analysis) report, that might say 56 or 58, but those numbers might change depending on whether you have some capital gifts one year.

Q: You lost Whit Babcock to Cincinnati. What is the status of that position?

A: I purposely did that, kept it vacant purposely. I needed to make sure from a transition standpoint into the SEC that it was confirmed it was going to be July 1, 2012. That, to me, was important, because I had to think that through. We launched the digital network that is just getting its feet under it right now — the Mizzou Network — the first part of December. I wanted to see how that played out and how that works with the SEC strategy. We had a couple of other things we wanted to do so I could really analyze where we’re going with the TSF, game operations, what’s happening with the digital platform, the SEC transition and this capital campaign. I wanted to know what projects we’re going to be zeroing in on.

After the first of the year, I’m going to determine what we’re going to do with that. There’s an awful lot of people who are interested in that. A lot of people internally have talked to me about things, too. I’m really looking forward to getting that finalized. I’ll probably get something completed about March.

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A Year to Remember
Changes at Missouri Theater, national recognition for Columbia natives among 2011's top local arts stories

By Aarik Danielsen and Jill Renae Hlicks

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High school yearbook inserts are meant to do more than fill in the spaces between track team photos and exhortations to “never change” from people you will never speak to again. They’re supposed to exist as a digest that, decades from graduation day, provides a small reminder of what stories the world revolved around during the years so many of us think the world revolves around us.

Which of this year’s stories will find their ways into the hands of the class of 2012? Likely, 2011 will be remembered as a year of royal weddings, natural disasters, college football scandals, wars ended, terrifying masterminds killed and streets occupied. It’s highly unlikely any of the stories below will be preserved in ink for generations to come. Yet, for the Columbia arts community, the following developments catalyzed both conversation and creative action. Although perhaps less amplified, repercussions and ramifications of these stories will certainly affect the rhythms of culture-making here for the foreseeable future. Here are the Tribune’s selections for the five most notable arts stories of 2011.

A NEW DAY FOR THE MISSOURI THEATRE

After several years of exuberant hope and unforeseen disappointments ebbing and flowing for the historic Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts, a lease agreement was reached between its current owner, Missouri Symphony Society, and the University of Missouri. Though MOSS finished an impeccable restoration in 2008 and reopened the theater to much fanfare, it was unable to raise enough money to repay the entire amount of renovation costs, which topped out around $10 million. In September, the university and symphony society reached an agreement that allowed MU to lease the theater and pay overhead costs for MOSS; after three years, MU has the option to purchase the theater for $3.7 million.

Although it is a bittersweet ending for one volume in the history of the Missouri Theatre, it also is a new beginning. — as could be seen Dec. 12, when the theater was opened for a festive and
raucous holiday open house, drawing in a motley collection of MU students, MOSS supporters, downtown dwellers and holiday shoppers. Music lovers have been able to hear many of MU’s ensembles on the stage of the theater this fall, MOSS just held a holiday symphony concert, and the partnership between the two societies is keeping the doors of the beautiful historic building wide open. “What we’re so happy about,” said MOSS Maestro Kirk Trevor in September, is that “there will be either students or outside people using the theater on a daily basis and realizing what a gem it is.”

A TALE OF TWO (OR MORE) FESTIVALS

Columbia’s most-celebrated cultural festivals outdid themselves this year, proving that although you can have too much of a good thing, you won’t if the right people are in charge. In its eighth year of existence, the True/False Film Fest has further cemented its place as a singular experience within the world of documentary film. T/F continues to be ahead of the pack in terms of its taste, proving a thought-leader among thought-leaders. Two of the festival’s most talked about selections — “Buck” and “Project Nim” — made the Oscars’ documentary shortlist, and several more have received incredible acclaim. As if it weren’t enough to excel at curating evocative films, T/F throws one of the best parties in town, with brilliant buskers and feasts for the eyes and palates. The 2012 fest only promises to expand enjoyment, as T/F has added Jesse Auditorium and Missouri United Methodist Church as downtown venues.

In its fifth go-round, there’s no question the Roots ’N Blues ’N BBQ Festival presented music lovers with its best effort yet. A crackerjack lineup included legends Ralph Stanley and Mavis Staples, up-and-comers such as Fitz and The Tantrums and David Wax Museum, and stalwarts Los Lobos and Robert Randolph and the Family Band. Roots ’N Blues has grown to the point where it can embrace a unique sort of tension — the acts that come to downtown Columbia are increasingly big-name, yet the homegrown, dare we say “rootsy,” feel the festival retains allows for impromptu, intimate moments, such as when string guru Sam Bush sat in for much of Los Lobos’ set.

Perhaps equally memorable — though for diametrically opposite reasons — was the first (and, even to those with the most elastic imaginations, last) Missouri Muzic Fest. In July, a seemingly too-good-to-be-true lineup of hip-hop and dance music all-stars was announced for a Labor Day blowout at the Boone County Fairgrounds: Nicki Minaj, LMFAO, T-Pain and DJ Pauly D were among the names initially broadcast. Turns out it really was too good to be true — Tribune reporter Jodie Jackson Jr. dutifully stayed with the story, pointing out discrepancies and lineup changes along the way. As Labor Day Weekend came and went, so did promoters’ estimates for a turnout in the tens of thousands. Citing weather-related concerns, the festival was canceled on its second night, sparking an outcry from the few hundred ticketholders who actually existed. It’s safe to say that if festivals such as True/False and Roots ’N Blues displayed how well-oiled their machines were this year, Missouri Muzic Fest provided a textbook case of how not to make the news.
2011 saw the return of the Hot Summer Nights Music Festival and excellent episodes of the Citizen Jane Film Festival, **Mizzou New Music Summer Festival**, Art in the Park and several others, further establishing Columbia as a community with much to offer its residents — and visitors — in the way of artful experiences.

**STORY CONTINUES...**