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MU researcher discovers animal effigy mounds in Peru

By JANESE SILVEY

Sunday, April 1, 2012

A University of Missouri researcher is making international news after he released a series of images and findings that reveal prehistoric animal effigy mounds in South America.

It's the first time anyone has identified the piles of rocks and soil as effigies, says Bob Benfer, who stumbled on the discovery by accident.

Benfer, who is retired from teaching but still conducts research, was using Google Earth to scan satellite images of Peru for an unrelated project. That's when he noticed from a mound shaped like a condor.

Animal effigy mounds dating back some 1,200 years are known to exist in the central United States and several now double as state parks. In Iowa, for instance, there are 191 known prehistoric mounds, 29 of which are bears or birds, located in Effigy Mounds National Monument, according to that state's Department of Natural Resources.

They're thought to have been used in religious ceremonies or to track time and seasons.

Benfer's discovery shows ancient civilizations were sculpting giant animal shapes as early as 4,000 years ago — about the same time the pyramids were being built in Egypt.

Benfer said when he first saw the bird-like image from an aerial view, he was skeptical and thought it might be a "huge coincidence."

But when he began to find more animal shapes looking down at Peru, he traveled to the sites to check them out. He's since found dozens of small effigy mounds and about 10 large ones, including a mound shaped like an orca — a killer whale that hunted off the Peruvian coast before industrial fishing removed their prey.

In another large mound, Benfer found the shape of a puma monster that also shows up in art and drawings from prehistoric Peruvian cultures. That mound included carvings of teeth that locals thought were irrigation canals.

Benfer believes the mounds were used as astronomical orientations — the Milky Way is directly overhead of that area.

Last week, he released images and findings to the journal *Antiquity*. He's trying to spark interest from residents in that area in hopes that the mounds will be preserved rather than bulldozed — which has happened to most of the animal effigy mounds in the United States.

In the 19th century, he said, there were 10,000 animal effigy mounds in the United States.

"They're being removed before my very eyes," Benfer said. Farmers and developers "don't think they're important, so they're being destroyed very rapidly now."

Benfer thinks the latest identified animal effigy mounds could be a tourist draw for Peru.

The mounds are among his top discoveries, but the longtime archeologist has made other major finds. In 2006, he discovered a 4,200-year-old observatory high in the Peruvian Andes used to mark summer and winter solstices.

FDA rejects call to ban BPA from food packaging

By MATTHEW PERRONE/The Associated Press

March 31, 2012 | 4:31 p.m. CDT

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration has rejected a petition from environmentalists that would have banned the plastic-hardening chemical bisphenol-A from all food and drink packaging, including plastic bottles and canned food.

The agency said Friday that petitioners did not present compelling scientific evidence to justify new restrictions on the much-debated chemical, commonly known as BPA, though federal scientists continue to study the issue.

The Natural Resources Defense Council's petition was the latest move by public safety advocates to prod regulators into taking action against the chemical, which is found in everything from CDs to canned food to dental sealants. About 90 percent of Americans have traces of BPA in their bodies, mainly because it leaches out of food and beverage containers.

Some scientists, including a researcher at MU, believe exposure to BPA can harm the reproductive and nervous systems, particularly in babies and small children, potentially leading to cancer and other diseases. They point to results from dozens of BPA studies in rodents and other animals.

But the FDA reiterated in its response that those findings cannot be applied to humans. The agency said the studies cited by NRDC were often too small to be conclusive. In other cases they involved researchers injecting BPA into animals, whereas humans ingest the chemical through their diet over longer periods of time. The agency also said that humans metabolize and eliminate BPA much more quickly than rats and other lab animals.

"While evidence from some studies have raised questions as to whether BPA may be associated with a variety of health effects, there remain serious questions about these studies, particularly as they relate to humans," the agency said in its response.

The Natural Resources Defense Council petitioned the FDA in 2008 to ban BPA as a food additive, including all uses in food or beverage packaging. Petitions on various safety issues

are routinely filed by advocacy groups, companies and even individuals. When the FDA failed to respond within the required timeframe, the environmental group sued the agency. In December a federal judge ruled that the agency had to respond by the end of March.

"The FDA is out-of-step with scientific and medical research," said Dr. Sarah Janssen, NRDC's senior scientist for public health. "This illustrates the need for a major overhaul of how the government protects us against dangerous chemicals."

FDA officials stressed that their assessment of BPA is ongoing, and they expect to issue another update later this year based on their most recent findings. The agency's last official statement was that there is "some concern" about BPA's effects on infants and young children.

The government is spending \$30 million to conduct additional studies on the chemical's impact on humans. Several federal studies published in the last two years suggest that even human embryos retain far less BPA than other animals.

Many companies have already responded to consumer demand by removing BPA from their products. In 2008, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Toys "R" Us said they began phasing out bottles, sippy cups and other children's items containing BPA. By the end of 2009, the six leading makers of baby bottles in the U.S. went BPA-free. Earlier this month Campbell's Soup said it would begin removing BPA from its most popular soups, though it did not set a time frame.

But the vast majority of canned goods in the U.S. are still sealed with resin that contains BPA to prevent contamination and spoiling. Canned food manufacturers have used the chemicals since the 1950s, and the practice is approved by the FDA. The chemical industry says BPA is the safest, most effective sealant. Some manufacturers have begun switching to alternatives. Heinz reportedly uses BPA-free coatings for its Nurture baby formula cans, and ConAgra and General Mills say they have switched to alternative sealants for some canned tomatoes.

The federal government has been grappling with the safety of BPA for more than four years. The FDA revised its opinion on BPA in 2010 saying there is "some concern" about the chemical's impact on the brain and reproductive system of infants, babies and young children. Previously the agency said the trace amounts of BPA that leach out of food containers are not dangerous.

While older children and adults quickly eliminate the chemical through their kidneys, newborns and infants can retain it for longer. Scientists pushing for a ban on the chemical argue that BPA mimics the effects of the hormone estrogen, interfering with growth.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH MISSOURIAN

Editorial: Why is Missouri lagging behind economically? Education

By the Editorial Board | Posted: Thursday, March 29, 2012 12:15 am | (4) comments.

NO MU MENTION

Imagine if St. Louis didn't rank 76th out of the nation's 100 largest cities in percentage of job growth since the Great Recession in 2007 to the end of last year.

Imagine if Missouri's growth in total income last year wasn't 48th in the nation.

Imagine if Missouri's college degree attainment rate was better than 34th in the nation.

Missouri has to dream. The future of our state depends on it.

The nation slowly is recovering from the recession. And while there are nuggets of good news in some statistics — Missouri's unemployment rate is declining — our recovery is slower than much of the rest of the country.

Missouri's poor performance measures, relative to other states, are nearly all education-related. While Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, spends much of his time touting anecdotal successes in certain business sectors that take advantage of tax credit programs, and while Missouri Republicans continue to spout the fallacy that inoculating corporations from environmental and discrimination laws will somehow spur a revival, both are focusing on the wrong things.

The story lies in the numbers.

Missouri's economy is lagging in large part because of workforce deficiencies. Missouri needs more college-educated employees ready to fill the jobs that corporations need.

This week, the Lumina Foundation released a report titled "A Stronger Nation," pointing out that key to the entire nation's economic revival is building a workforce with the skills businesses need in the 21st century. Missouri is not the only state lagging, but cuts in state spending on higher education, thus making college less affordable, contribute to its poor ranking.

"Our long-term problem is human capital. We have not enough workers who are highly educated and too many of the poorly educated," Lindenwood University economics department chairman Howard Wall told the Post-Dispatch's David Nicklaus this week.

You'd think the state's business leaders would make it their highest priority. Instead, they continue to push for tax breaks and regulation rollbacks, not investing the state's dollars where they are needed: in better education.

Slightly more than a third of Missouri working-age adults have at least a two-year college degree, a couple of percentage points below the national average. It's no coincidence that many of the cities and states that rank highest in college attainment in the Lumina study also rank highly in a Brookings Institute report released this week comparing relative economic recovery levels.

Missouri performs poorly in both rankings.

Missouri can accept that reality, or it can do better. The state's poor performance in education and economic indicators foretells a story of continued Rust Belt decline unless our civic and elected leaders decide to do something about it.

There should be no partisan disagreement that improving Missouri's higher education system and making it the centerpiece of a statewide economic development strategy should be among the state's top priorities.

Instead, our elected leaders bicker over funding levels that barely keep the state's rankings from falling off the map completely.

"It all comes down to education," Mr. Wall told us.

We dream of a Missouri that builds the future one college degree at a time.



MU professors recognized

BY THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Saturday, March 31, 2012

Four professors in the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources recently received awards.

The college's Golden Apple Award was given to three professors: Fabio Chaddad, assistant professor of agricultural and applied economics; Chris Boessen, teaching assistant professor in agricultural and applied economics; and Bryon Wiegand, associate professor of animal science.

Mary Hendrickson, Extension associate professor of rural sociology, was honored with the National Farmers Union's Meritorious Service Award at its 110th anniversary Convention. The award recognizes two individuals each year who have made noteworthy contributions to agriculture, humanity and the farmers union.



MU institute provides unmatched expertise

Saturday, March 31, 2012

NO MU MENTION

Editor, the Tribune: Whatever your opinion of nuclear weapons and nuclear power, it would seem prudent to have a qualified group of people to control and safely manage radioactive materials. If we choose to expand or dismantle America's nuclear systems, we'll need nuclear engineers. If we wish to guard against other nation's nuclear ambitions, we'll need nuclear engineers able to interpret those threats.

The nuclear engineering degree in the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Educational Programs. Obtaining a nuclear engineering degree with medical physics accreditation guarantees students can attain board certification to practice medical physics. The nuclear engineering degree has superior training in radiation transport and engineering aspects absent in the nuclear science degree.

The men and women concentrating their study in this field of nuclear engineering design, calibrate and operate the diagnostic machines and radiation therapies that pervade our modern medical culture. Anyone who has had a mammogram, an MRI, CAT scan, PET or has been tested using radiation, radioisotope or received radiation therapy for cancer has crossed paths with a medical physicist.

These professionals make life and death decisions every day. Given the number of accidents that have occurred — including a series of radiation overdoses in Springfield (not by a MU-trained medical physicist) — I would prefer that, if needed, my treatments would be from the more rigorously trained specialist.

We need the expertise of the NSEI faculty.

Rosemary Szejkowski Roberts, P.E., 506 Laurel Drive



MU faculty seek another way to honor veterans

By JANESE SILVEY

Sunday, April 1, 2012

A University of Missouri group is brainstorming ways to better recognize MU-affiliated veterans who lost their lives in World War II and later wars.

Already, MU honors affiliated fallen soldiers in the archway of Memorial Union, where names are etched in the stone walls and passers-by are asked to salute or tip their hats.

"I've walked through the breezeway many times and have seen the prominent names of World War I soldiers," said Craig Roberts, a plant sciences professor and member of a faculty task force studying a new veterans' exhibit.

Veterans killed during service are honored with a plaque. That's fine, Roberts said, but "not at all like a monument. We're trying to make sure there is more of a monument than a plaque for those Mizzou soldiers who died in these wars."

Marty Walker, director of administrative services for the College of Engineering, outlined some ideas at a Faculty Council meeting last month. Whatever is decided should honor everyone with MU ties who died during conflict and should fit into Memorial Union's architectural style, he said.

The committee also is recommending MU purchase a computerized kiosk that would include a database of all veterans who have ties to MU. That would give visitors and students the ability to find out more detailed information about service members. It's also a cost-effective way to honor those who have served, Walker said.

One idea was to place the kiosk in the vending room just inside the doors of the north tower. That's not necessarily a fiscally sound location, though — the vending machines make \$45,000 a year, Roberts told the council.

"If this goes into the union, we need to have someone who's an authority there who can help us understand the best place to put this," Roberts told the Tribune later.

There are also costs to maintain the kiosk that have to be sorted out, he said.



Kelly's bonds

By HENRY J. WATERS III

Saturday, March 31, 2012

NO MU MENTION

As this year's state legislative session winds down, I'm glad to see Rep. Chris Kelly continues to push for a large state bond issue to fund public capital projects. As he accurately notes, the moment is right.

The state's credit rating is excellent, allowing for substantial new debt without adverse implications, and the recession has produced low interest rates and competitive construction costs. Kelly says if we don't take advantage of the moment the future is against us, making a bond issue harder or even impossible.

Kelly's idea resurrects memories of a successful \$600 million statewide bond issue promoted by then-Gov. Kit Bond that financed needed construction all over the state. Those bonds will be paid off next year and the time is right for a re-do. Kelly mentions a figure of \$800 million though the state could well afford more. After decades of additional needs and unfulfilled maintenance, we should borrow a billion or more.

Kelly wants to put the issue before voters. A bond issue of this type has a good chance for approval because it would underwrite popular projects throughout the state. Kelly wants to concentrate on projects associated with higher education. I would like to see another unrelated issue designed to rebuild crumbling transportation infrastructure, but that's a separate subject.

When he recently spoke again in favor his bond issue, majority House Republicans seemed in favor and even began to mention some needed projects, such as repair of the state capitol building. University officials are enthusiastic, and a host of other needs have legitimate support around the state.

Kelly's bonds should be one of those rare issues with bipartisan support. The time is perfect. Let's do it and not be too timorous about the size of the issue. The b-word makes sense to me and has a nice ring to it. If we must price this issue like bacon in the supermarket, how about \$990 million?

HJW III



Vessels take shape for cardboard regatta

BY JANESE SILVEY

Next month, the only thing sitting between Jessica Schlosser and Philips Lake will be layered pieces of flimsy cardboard held together by duct tape and caulk.

"It's kind of scary that this is going to be in water, and I'm expected to survive," she said, eyeing a cardboard boat being constructed in the back of her pet store.

Schlosser, who co-owns Lizzi & Rocco's Natural Pet Market with her husband, Kyle, signed up to participate in Columbia's first cardboard boat regatta.

The event, slated for April 21 at Philips Park, 5050 Bristol Lake Parkway, is sponsored by the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and benefits the Food Bank of Central & Northeast Missouri.

"I think it's such a fun fundraiser," Schlosser said. "Obviously, the food bank is a wonderful organization, and anything we can do to support them, we'd love to."

The regatta requires teams to construct floatable boats made out of corrugated cardboard — that's the old-fashioned kind, not the fancy waxed cardboard. Using wood, metal, Styrofoam or any other material — including that liquid rubber in a can shown on TV floating a screen-door paddleboat — is a no-no.

A team of friends and customers was helping Schlosser build her boat yesterday at the pet store using instructions from a website.

"We thought about winging it, but considering it's a survival issue here, I thought we'd go to the experts on Google and see what we could find," she said.

Ultimately, the team plans to add ears, a tail and decorations to make the boat look like a dog paddling in the water. She also hopes to bring her store's namesakes, Lizzi and Rocco, along for the ride.

Boats will be judged for best use of cardboard, creativity and a special Titanic award for the biggest boat failure. Prizes include money, gift baskets and trophies made of cardboard.

"Ultimately, we're looking to have a good time, but if we take home one of the fabulous cardboard trophies, I'm good with that, too," Schlosser said.

Twenty teams have registered for the event, which met CAFNR's goal, spokesman Randy Mertens said. Teams pay admission fees, and money also is being raised through donations and sponsorships. "Since we're just getting started this year, raising awareness for the food bank and need for healthy food is the real goal," Mertens said.

Last year, pantries in the 32 counties under the umbrella of the food bank served, on average, 200 new families each month, spokeswoman Rachel Ellersieck said. Food bank administrators were thrilled when CAFNR approached them with the idea of the regatta, she said.

"It's awesome when people come to you with enthusiasm and excitement about an idea," she said. "It's exciting for us to just sit back and say, 'Thank you.'"

'Military friendly' college lists prompt concerns, mislead veterans

NO MU Mention

By JUSTIN POPE/The Associated Press

April 1, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

In press releases and ads, colleges love boasting they're "military friendly" and "veterans friendly" — and that isn't just because veterans are usually good students and campus leaders.

It's also because the newly expanded Post 9/11 G.I. Bill will pay colleges of all types around \$9 billion this year to educate nearly 600,000 veterans, and virtually every school wants to expand its slice of that pie.

But some schools touting their spots on proliferating lists of "military friendly" colleges found in magazine guides and websites have few of the attributes educators commonly associate with the claim, such as accepting military credits or having a veterans organization on campus. Many are for-profit schools with low graduation rates. The designations appear on rankings whose rigor varies but whose methods are under fire. Often, they're also selling ads to the colleges. Some websites help connect military and veteran students with degree programs that may match their interests, but don't disclose they are lead aggregators paid by the institutions — often for-profit colleges — whose programs they highlight.

"They're not real rankings," said Tom Tarantino, a veteran who is deputy policy director of the advocacy group Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "What they are is advertisement catalogs." Labeling them "a huge problem," he called for standards to be established for proper use of the term "military friendly" schools.

There are signs something like that may happen. But as with the U.S. News & World Report college rankings, demand for signaling devices to help consumers shortcut complicated choices could make such lists tough to dislodge. Many experts say the lists are symptoms of a wider problem: Service members aren't getting the advice they need to make sound decisions on using the substantially expanded education benefits. It's no surprise businesses are stepping into that void.

At a large military education conference last month in Florida, some educators criticized the lists and pushed for a sharpened definition of "military friendly" colleges to be developed either by the federal government or an education coalition called Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges. Meanwhile, Washington is paying increasing attention to the broader problem of veterans getting reliable guidance. In recent weeks, a slew of bills on the subject have surfaced.

The latest, unveiled Tuesday by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., is called the "G.I. Bill Consumer Awareness Act" and would push colleges and the Department of Veterans Affairs to disclose more information on questions like licensing and job placement rates, and to develop policies to prevent misleading marketing.

Another bill would boost education counseling resources at the department, and separately, 14 senators have asked the department to trademark the term "G.I. Bill" so it will have more power to crack down on misleading advertising.

"It's not only these major lists, but all of these pay-to-play websites that come up with these nefarious rankings," said Jim Sweizer, vice president of military programs at American Public University System. APUS operates two for-profit online universities, American Military University and American Public University. Founded in 1991 by a former Marine, it calls itself the largest provider of education to the military, with two-thirds of its nearly 110,000 students in the Reserves, active duty, or veterans. But last year it boycotted the best-known "military friendly" list, published by G.I. Jobs magazine, saying the system had too many shortcomings.

"The people who suffer from this are the service members who don't know any better," Sweizer said. "They see an ad that says, 'No. 1 ranked school,' but they don't say, 'by whom?'" Officials at other institutions say they don't like the lists but can't afford not to be on them, for fear of appearing "military unfriendly."

"Some schools feel 'I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't,'" said Ramona McAfee, assistant dean of military and federal programs at Columbia College in Missouri, a critic of the lists whose school still participates.

But for some lesser-known colleges, such lists can get their names in front of prospective students — which, they say, expands veterans' horizons. Last year, when G.I. Jobs magazine published its list, a flurry of colleges shared the news in press releases, and local newspapers often followed with stories.

"We certainly aren't going to change the landscape of our campus by seeking out tons of veterans but we wanted to make sure we were giving them every opportunity and making this transition easier for them," said Sarah Palace, assistant dean for adult enrollment at one school that put out such a release, the College of Notre Dame in Ohio (not to be confused with the larger University of Notre Dame in Indiana, which also put out a release). The smaller Notre Dame has only about 20 full-time veteran students but hopes to recruit more. Palace listed practices she says make the place military friendly: encouraging transfers, examining military transcripts and working with a local veterans service center.

It's impossible to say whether veterans are widely misled by "military friendly" lists. Some educators say it's patronizing to suppose military people read the lists uncritically.

But there are worrisome signs that, more broadly, veterans aren't making informed decisions and could waste their benefits on low-value degrees. While for-profit colleges may be a good choice for many, on average they cost more, have lower graduation rates and in some cases have accreditation limitations. They also recruit aggressively. In the first two years after the new G.I. Bill was passed in 2008, they enrolled 25 percent of veterans using the benefits and collected 37 percent of the payments to colleges. After former Marine Cpl. Moses Maddox finished his first tour of duty in Iraq, he started — and ended — his college search with an Internet query.

"I looked up 'GI Bill friendly schools' and it said 'hey, come to the University of Phoenix,'" Maddox said. He won't single out Phoenix, which collected \$133 million from the G.I. Bill in 2010-2011, but it wasn't a good fit, and he later dropped out, re-enlisted and returned to Iraq. After his second tour, he enrolled in Palomar College in California, but discovered his Phoenix credits wouldn't transfer. He now gives education counseling to veterans at Palomar.

They're "just so lost after getting out that they just show up with a DD214 (military service record) and say, 'I want to go to school. How do I start?'" he said. When the benefit's 36-month expiration passes and they're stuck with credits they didn't realize were worthless, "it's the hardest part of my job to tell these vets you have to start all over again."

The G.I. Jobs "Guide to Military Friendly Colleges" is probably the best known list, with annual circulation of 135,000 and reaching more through its website, militaryfriendlyschools.com. The publication insists it's far more rigorous than the apparently fly-by-night options that show up for pages in response to a Google search for "military friendly colleges."

G.I. Jobs sends questionnaires to 8,000 institutions, says it gets about half back, and lists the 1,500 most military friendly (it claims that's the top 20 percent, though of the responses, it's more than one-third).

Unlike others, G.I. Jobs does share the general formula used to select military friendly colleges: 45 percent in one "effort" category, measuring things like flexible learning programs and academic credit, 35 percent for financial effort (including tuition benefits and the percentage of recruiting budget directed to veterans), 15 percent for results (such as percentage of military students enrolled) and 5 percent for a category that includes accreditations.

"We're the most stringent and transparent out there," said Sean Collins, who directs the publication for Victory Media. It has now begun surveying students about their experiences, and is beginning to include that data in its website, though it isn't used to determine which schools make the list. Collins said the magazine consults an advisory board of veterans education professionals on the survey questions. Yet while G.I. Jobs discloses its general formula, and its website offers extensive raw data with college responses, it doesn't disclose a cutoff score or quantify what it takes to make the "military friendly" cut.

Its list includes some schools that, the magazine's own charts reveal, check hardly any of the boxes that comprise the magazine's criteria for inclusion — for example the Academy of Cosmetology in Florida, which doesn't offer credit for military services, has no veteran-specific campus resources and where just three of the 75 students are veterans. Such schools may well be military friendly, but their inclusion raises questions about how 2,500 claimed respondents failed to make the cut. In print, the guide from a leading rival, Military Advanced Education (MAE) magazine's "Guide to Top Military-Friendly Colleges and Universities," says of its formula only that any college wishing consideration can submit answers to a questionnaire.

The magazine sent the questionnaire to 1,800 institutions and received 362 responses. Of those, 289, or about 80 percent, made the cut, said officials of the publication and its parent company, KMI Media Group. Before this year, whether a school made the cut was up to editor Maura McCarthy, who reviewed the submissions and decided without using a point system.

"Maura had a good idea in her head as to what would make somebody military friendly," said Kirk Brown, publisher at KMI. This year, he said, it will move to a more objective system.

"Each year that we've done this, we've attempted to raise the bar in terms of the criteria and our evaluation process."

Other sites that turn up on online searches, such as www.militaryfriendlycolleges.org, say nothing about their criteria. Typically they feature eclectic lists of colleges and sometimes ads for for-profit schools. An email sent via the "Contact Us" portion of that site went unanswered, as did a telephone call to the California phone number where the website is registered. In fact, critics say, there's no right way to quantify whether a college is military friendly; a subjective judgment, like MAE's, may actually be more appropriate if well-researched. The objections are to false precision, and the criteria used.

Factors like whether a college offers online courses or gives credit for military work can be important. Still, few highly selective colleges offer course credit for military work; that doesn't mean they don't welcome veterans, said Jim Selbe, who has worked for decades in veterans education and is now an administrator at the University of Maryland University College, a large military education provider. A small school, meanwhile, could have few veterans, no veterans "club," and few resources just for veterans — yet still be very welcoming culturally, just as a large school with lots of resources on paper might not.

Selbe says none of the current designators of "military friendly" colleges are transparent enough that students should rely on them to make a decision. His advice: Spend time talking to a well-qualified academic adviser, to pick a school that's a good fit in terms of culture and expected outcomes.

"There are just too many variables in that decision to make it on a school being recognized by a publisher as military or veteran friendly," he said.

Maddox, the former Marine, advises students to go straight to www.gibill.va.gov and avoid any site mentioning veterans or the GI Bill ending with ".com."

Most critics would find the lists unobjectionable — even valuable — if they presented themselves simply as resources for information, and dropped the claim to identify who is "military friendly."

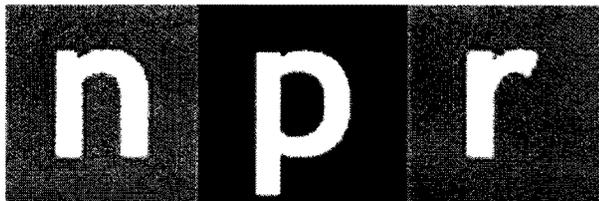
One site, Military.com, has done just that, and stopped using the term "military friendly."

"We stepped back and looked at it, and said the loose criteria we've allowed to become this term 'military friendly' isn't serving our members," said managing editor Terry Howell. "We can't make that promise, that guarantee, that that's going to be the service member's experience."

AP Associated Press

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

The★Star
THE KANSAS CITY STAR



6 CBS NEWS

In South Korea, US Education Means Split Families

MU MENTION PAGE 2

by The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — As American teenagers go, Sally Kim is pretty typical. She's crazy about singer Bruno Mars and the Plain White T's rock band, spends way too much time on Facebook and can't wait to start college in the fall.

Yet when it comes to that familiar bane of her fellow high school seniors — uncool parents — Kim has few worries. Hers are nearly 7,000 miles away in Seoul, South Korea. They sent their only child to live with relatives in Missouri a decade ago, when she was just 8.

The three keep in touch over Skype, but Kim craves personal contact even more than when she first arrived.

"As I get older, it definitely gets harder," said Kim, who lives with an aunt and uncle, a college professor, and returns to her native country in the summer. "I look back, and I think I've missed out on so many years of being with my mom and dad."

Such relocations, known as early study abroad, have surged in popularity in South Korea, where a rigid, test-driven education system, combined with intense social pressure to succeed in an English-first global economy, often means breaking up families for the sake of school.

Some children, like Kim, live with relatives or family friends. Others move with their mothers and siblings while the fathers remain alone in Asia to work. Among Koreans, the families are known as kirogi, or "wild geese," because they visit home briefly once or twice a year before returning to their overseas outposts.

The Korean Educational Development Institute reports that the number of pre-college students who left the country solely to study abroad increased from just over 2,000 in 1995 to a peak of nearly 30,000 in 2006. And that number did not include students whose parents work or study overseas.

The number has since declined to more than 18,000 in 2009, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

Unlike American students who usually wait until high school or college to study abroad — and generally limit the experience to a semester or two — 77 percent of Korean students in the U.S. in 2009 were in elementary or middle school, a time when they are seen as best able to learn English.

Wild geese families are particularly common in college towns such as Columbia and Champaign-Urbana, Ill., where researchers are studying the effects on family life, culture and the economy in both countries.

Sumie Okazaki, an associate professor of applied psychology at New York University who previously taught at the University of Illinois, said that many young Korean students feel intense pressure to succeed and are reluctant to share any doubts or misgivings, whether the topic is family finances or their own well-being.

"The parents are so motivated by what they think may be helpful to the kids," Okazaki said. "Because they know the family has sacrificed so much, that the parents are stretching themselves, they feel like they can't complain."

The students often isolate themselves. "We hear a lot of problems with depression, distress and worries," she added.

Sending their children to school abroad can also strain marriages, particularly when the father stays behind.

Hyoshin Lee, a mother of four, is now back in Columbia for the third time since she and her husband came to study at the University of Missouri 25 years ago. Each time, her husband either eventually returned to Korea or did not accompany the family at all.

Their two oldest children are grown and studying at American graduate schools. Another child is a high school senior soon headed to college. The youngest is a ninth-grader who wants to finish high school here.

Lee, once again, is torn.

"There are pros and cons," she said. "I strongly believe it was my turn to support my children. I had to follow my children ... I feel like it's his turn now. He sacrificed his wife for three years."

Mastery of English isn't the only reason Korean parents send their children abroad. In South Korea, a single-minded emphasis on college-entrance exams means students frequently leave home at dawn and do not return until late evening. The school day is followed by long sessions with private tutors at "cram schools."

And status-conscious American parents who proudly display their children's college choices on bumper stickers have nothing on their Asian counterparts, Lee and others said. In South Korea, a prestigious college is seen as even more vital to prosperity, social standing and marital prospects. That message is driven home early.

"If you are not a very good student, they treat you like you're nothing," Lee said. "That kind of pressure gives too much stress to children. They are not happy."

Kim, a senior at Columbia Independent School who's been accepted to the University of Illinois' honors program but hopes to attend Brown, recounts a similar experience as a young student in Seoul, where her father is a marketing executive and her mother owns an Italian restaurant.

In high school, she's been able to study martial arts, join the orchestra, work on the yearbook, play varsity tennis and participate in the model United Nations club.

Back in Korea, she said, she would have far fewer extracurricular choices.

Many American parents would struggle with sending away their children so young or leaving a spouse behind. But Rick Williams, a former dean of students at a private Christian school in Champaign, cautioned against making judgments based on U.S. attitudes.

At Judah Christian School, the number of high school students from Korea increased tenfold from 2000 to 2007.

"That was a hard call for us, as an evangelical school," Williams said. "I had my students and families take me to task for not being able to understand the fabric and structure of Korean families. We were often called to task for having too much of a Western perspective."