

MAY 01 2012



MU Student Center evacuated after trash compactor fire

Tuesday, May 1, 2012

The MU Student Center was evacuated Monday night after a fire was discovered in a trash compactor on the loading dock.

The Columbia Fire Department responded to the center at 901 Rollins St. at 8:05 p.m., according to a news release. Firefighters found smoke and flames coming from a commercial trash compactor in the loading dock on the east side of the building.

Firefighters extinguished the fire in the 30-cubic-yard compactor. Smoke from the fire triggered the building's smoke alarm system, and occupants were evacuated for about 30 minutes.

There were no injuries, and fire damage was contained to the trash compactor, the release said. Fire crews were on the scene for about an hour.

Representatives from the Columbia Public Works Department removed the compactor and transported it to the Columbia Landfill. The cause of the fire is undetermined, the release said.

MISSOURIAN

Trash compactor next to MU Student Center catches fire

COLUMBIA — A 30-cubic-yard trash compactor outside the MU Student Center caught fire about 8 p.m. Monday.

Smoke from the fire triggered the smoke alarm system inside the student center, which was evacuated for about 30 minutes after the fire was reported, according to a news release from the Columbia Fire Department.

Firefighters spent an hour on the scene and extinguished the flames in the trash compactor, located in the loading dock on the east side of the center. Afterward, members of the Public Works Department took the trash compactor to the Columbia landfill.

There were no injuries from the fire, which did not spread from the trash compactor. The cause of the fire is unknown.



The Bright Side of Death: Awareness of Mortality Can Result in Positive Behaviors

ScienceDaily (Apr. 30, 2012) — Contemplating death doesn't necessarily lead to morose despondency, fear, aggression or other negative behaviors, as previous research has suggested. **Following a review of dozens of studies, University of Missouri researchers found that thoughts of mortality can lead to decreased militaristic attitudes, better health decisions, increased altruism and helpfulness, and reduced divorce rates.**

"According to terror management theory, people deal with their awareness of mortality by upholding cultural beliefs and seeking to become part of something larger and more enduring than themselves, such as nations or religions," said Jamie Arndt, study co-author and professor of psychological sciences. "Depending on how that manifests itself, positive outcomes can be the result."

For example, in one study American test subjects were reminded of death or a control topic and then either imagined a local catastrophe or were reminded of the global threat of climate change. Their militaristic attitudes toward Iran were then evaluated. After being reminded of death, people who were reminded of climate change were more likely to express lower levels of militarism than those who imagined a local disaster.

"The differences seen in this study resulted from the size of the group with which the test subjects identified," said Ken Vail, lead author and psychology doctoral student. "In both cases, they responded to the awareness of mortality by seeking to protect the relevant groups. When the threat was localized, subjects aggressively defended their local group; but when the threat was globalized, subjects associated themselves with humanity as a whole and became more peaceful and cooperative."

After real catastrophes, such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the Oklahoma City bombing, people's heightened fear and awareness of death had both positive and negative effects.

"Both the news media and researchers tended to focus on the negative reaction to these acts of terrorism, such as violence and discrimination against Muslims, but studies also found that people expressed higher degrees of gratitude, hope, kindness and leadership after 9/11." Vail said. "In another example, after the Oklahoma City bombing, divorce rates went down in surrounding counties. After some stimuli escalates one's awareness of death, the positive reaction is to try to reaffirm that the world has positive aspects as well."

In their personal lives, people also were influenced to make positive choices after their awareness of death was increased. Studies found that conscious thoughts of death can inspire intentions to exercise more. Other studies found that keeping mortality in mind can reduce smoking and increase sunscreen use.

Even subconscious awareness of death can more influenced behavior. In one experiment, passers-by who had recently overheard conversations mentioning the value of helping were more likely to help strangers if they were walking within sight of cemeteries.

"Once we started developing this study we were surprised how much research showed positive outcomes from awareness of mortality," said Arndt. "It seems that people may be just as capable of doing the opposite and 'looking on the bright side of death,' as the Monty Python song says."

The paper "When Death is Good for Life: Considering the Positive Trajectories of Terror Management" was published online on April 5, 2012, in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, a journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP).

Missourinet

Research: Missouri losing hundreds of millions in sales taxes (AUDIO)

May 1, 2012 By Bob Priddy

New research suggests Missouri fails to collect enough sales taxes each year to finance the budgets of eight state agencies

The study estimates Missouri loses about \$468 million every year because it does not collect taxes on internet sales—and that's just for internet merchants outside our borders.

That's more money than Governor Nixon recommend the state spend on the elected officials, legislators, and state judges combined (about \$380 million). It's three times the revenue department's proposed budget of \$145 million; eleven times more than the agriculture department budget of about \$40 million; more than triple Nixon's proposed conservation budget (\$146 million). It's one third more than the combined budgets of the Revenue, Agriculture, Labor, and Conservation Departments, which totaled \$343 million in Nixon's January budget recommendations. .

The study has been done by University of Missouri professor David Valentine, who was the head of state senate research for 24 years. It estimates the state will miss out on \$1.4 billion in possible tax income in the next three years.

The study has been released as lawmakers consider what programs to cut because of lack of state tax collections.

Seven of our eight neighboring states have joined the 24-state streamlined sales tax compact that does collect internet sales taxes. Missouri lawmakers have shown little interest in being the 25th state. They're waiting for Congress to do something and a federal internet sales tax does not appear very high on the congressional radar although Senator Blunt is co-sponsoring a bill that lets states enter the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement or create their own system. The bill would give states more enforcement powers to increase collections.

MISSOURIAN

MU student found dead in Kirkwood after weekend party

COLUMBIA — MU political science freshman Carolyn Dolan, 19, was declared dead at 5:48 a.m. Sunday at a family member's home in Kirkwood, said Suzanne McCune of the St. Louis Medical Examiner's office.

Dave Smith, a spokesman for the Kirkwood Police Department, said there was nothing suspicious about Dolan's death but that it is being investigated as a possible suicide. A medical investigation is ongoing.

The Kirkwood Police Department notified the MU Police Department that Dolan had died after attending a rave, said Major Tom Reddin of the Boone County Sheriff's Department. Reddin said the MU police were told Dolan's death was not caused by an overdose.

Dolan is survived by her parents, Kevin and Vicki Dolan, and a sister, Erin Dolan..

Services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Clement of Rome Church, 1510 Bopp Road, in Des Peres. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. at Bopp Chapel, 10610 Manchester Road, in Kirkwood.

Memorials can be made to the Carolyn Dolan Scholarship Fund in care of Cor Jesu Academy, 10230 Gravois Road, St. Louis, MO, 63123.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Guest commentary: College aid grants get cruel

By Faith Sandler and Lisa Orden Zarin | Posted: Tuesday, May 1, 2012 12:00 am | [\(0\) comments.](#)

NO MU MENTION

This is a week of heartache for students and families across the St. Louis region. Several months ago students began celebrating their college acceptances. This week, some very tough conversations have occurred at kitchen tables and in program offices like ours. The first of May is decision day, and this year is crueler to low-income families than any that came before.

Over the summer and into next year, the effects of escalating costs, declining aid and dangerous amounts and types of debt will be evident. St. Louis ranks 24th of 35 large metropolitan areas in degree completion; but the economic vitality of our community depends upon an educated workforce.

Education for all is a shared investment; that concept inspired the founding of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis 92 years ago. Students who live in poverty, are the first in their families to graduate high school and pursue postsecondary education or who have suffered the effects of substandard schooling travel a treacherous route to success in college. The realization that such students need significant and additional personal, academic and financial support fueled the beginnings of College Bound in 2006. While both organizations are deeply invested in degree completion, the practices and policies of financial aid have shifted entirely away from the benefits we all gain when our sisters and brothers are educated.

Financial aid policies at the school, state and federal levels that were borne out of community interest instead have become an unfortunate part of the "purchasing" of students to benefit the rankings, branding and fundraising potential of colleges. Much of the financing of higher education now is based on the premise that a degree is a commodity benefitting the individual. Students not born into privilege are expected to find a way to finance the ever-growing gap between total cost and available grant aid. More and more, the financial aid award packages of students are overloaded with loans. When those loans require an adult family member to be credit worthy, the next generation of low-income students is doubly disadvantaged.

In this season, our staff members see hundreds of financial aid letters from all types of institutions, and many reveal infuriating practices. Many letters fail to identify the total or true cost of attendance. Often, the financial aid letter that begins "Congratulations" depicts a calculation resulting in a zero balance (appearing as if the total cost is "covered"), but buried in

the detail is a frightening level of debt and types of debt that students cannot or should not accept. Students who have no parents share with us financial aid offers that rely upon parent loans. We have met with students enthusiastic to enroll but whose aid packages are for one year only. Families struggle mightily with financial aid "offers" that are so complex and full of technical terms that even conscientious high school guidance counselors have to find experts to help decipher them.

Across the St. Louis region, students are faced with the possibility of dreams denied. While it is unquestioningly painful for a parent (or program officer) to explain to a student that her admission to a college is meaningless without a way to pay, the cumulative costs to our community are still worse. In time, an undereducated community will see the economic effects in business closings and relocations, job loss, health care for the uninsured, incarceration and other costly social services that weaken the economy.

Four recommendations could make this season a time of hope for St. Louis students.

- First, financial aid should be awarded to promising students with financial need. No state, federal or institutional dollar should be awarded for the purposes of "purchasing" a student who does not need it. Individuals and corporations that endow scholarship funds should ask tough questions about who gets the money and how it is awarded.
- Second, financial aid award letters should be simplified and standardized (College Bound has advocated this at state and federal levels, and the Department of Education has attempted to implement this — to no avail).
- Third, postsecondary institutions should drive costs down and not up. Student loan debt can be a part of the solution, but it should not be the primary share of financing for those unlucky enough to have been born without wealth.
- Fourth, the race for rankings should stop, or at the very least should include consideration of a college's demonstrated commitment and success in educating and graduating the neediest of students in reasonable proportion.

Most important, our policymakers and community leaders should return to an understanding that educational attainment is not a private commodity but a public interest.

Faith Sandler is executive director of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis. Lisa Orden Zarin is CEO and founder of College Bound.