COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Renowned MU anthropologist chronicles career, criticisms in new book

By Melissa Fogarty
March 12, 2013 | 9:14 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Napoleon Chagnon ducked through leaves surrounding the Yanomamo tribe. He stood up and was greeted by a line of tribesmen with green slime dripping from their noses. They pointed 10-foot-long bows and arrows directly at his face.

“I gaped in horror,” Chagnon said. “What the hell kind of reception is this?”

Napoleon Chagnon, National Academy of Sciences member, renowned anthropologist and author, presented his new book “Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes — the Yanomamo and the Anthropologists” to a crowd of 100 on Tuesday at the Bond Life Sciences Center. Chagnon joined MU as a research professor in the anthropology department on Jan. 1.

“He’s one of the big names in the whole area of hunter gatherers and small traditional cultures, so you can’t help but not hear about Napoleon Chagnon when you’re doing anthropology,” said Peter Warnock, an anthropologist who graduated from MU in 2004.

Chagnon’s “Noble Savages” describes his fieldwork experience in 1964 with the Yanomamo Indians in Venezuela’s Amazon region, one of the largest isolated tribal groups today, as well as his other anthropological experience.

Chagnon’s book describes the Yanomamo as a violent group in which men frequently engage in warfare, abduct women and kill their wives and offspring to avenge deaths.

That research has proven controversial at times.

During the lecture, Chagnon chronicled criticisms made against him, sometimes with jest.

His book said that Yanomamo men fought with neighboring tribes, which was controversial because the common theory at the time was that tribes didn’t fight until capitalism interfered.

He described the Yanomamo men as fighting over women, which contested the Marxist theory that tribal cultures would only fight over scarce resources.

Chagnon’s 1988 paper in the journal Science led to more criticism.

In it, he said he provided statistics that showed Yanomamo tribal men killed others during warfare. He said that men who killed had three times as many children and twice as many wives as those who didn’t.

Chagnon said he was labeled as a racist, as complicit and as ”causing academic genocide.”

The Washington Post review of “Noble Savages: My Life Among Two Dangerous Tribes - the Yanomomo and the Anthropologists” called many of Chagnon’s arguments controversial, including the assertion that Yanomamo killers had greater reproductive success than non-murderers.
Panel approves state bond issue proposal

Major MU projects are included in proposal.

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — A state bond issue measure asking voter permission to borrow $1.2 billion won unanimous approval on Tuesday in a House committee.

The measure, expanded from its original $950 million price tag, sets aside $600 million for higher education projects and $500 million for other state needs. The remaining $100 million could be used in either area, depending on needs and costs of other projects, said Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia and chairman of the House Appropriations for Infrastructure and Job Creation Committee.

The vote came after members heard a pitch for state help to pay for a new water supply lake in north-central Missouri. The bill was expanded so such projects could compete for funding, Kelly said.

"We are trying to be sensitive to both rural and urban economic infrastructure issues," he said.

Kelly has been pushing for a bond issue since he returned to the House in 2009. This year, the measure has the support of Republican legislative leaders and Gov. Jay Nixon, although Nixon made his support contingent upon changes in state tax credit programs to provide enough revenue to pay the debt.

The proposal approved today would, if it passes all legislative hurdles, appear on a statewide ballot. The state would not borrow the money without voter approval.

The University of Missouri expects to have four major projects, at an estimated total cost of $232.1 million, funded by the bond issue. Those are:

PRenovation and expansion of Lafferre Hall on the Columbia campus, $68.4 million.

PRenovation of Benton/Stadler Hall at UMSL, $60 million.

PRenovation of the School of Medicine and expansion of the Health Sciences Building at UMKC, $75.8 million.
PRenovation of the Chemistry and Biological Science building in Rolla, estimated to cost $27.9 million.

Before the vote, Rep. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, added an amendment requiring a minimum 10 percent local match for projects that are not built for state agencies. Two of the UM buildings already meet that goal, with $13.7 million in campus funds dedicated to the Lafferre Hall project in Columbia and $27.4 million of cash and pledges for the UMKC project.

The projects to be funded will not be part of the ballot measure. A list will appear in a separate resolution, which will not be binding, indicating to voters what lawmakers intend to use the money on, Kelly said.

"The specifics will not be precise in terms of dollars," he said.

Kelly said he doesn't expect any shortage of proposals. Two major non-higher education projects that have been discussed include rebuilding Fulton State Hospital and repairs on the Capitol.

"Trying to find the balance will be the problem," Kelly said.

This article was published in the Tuesday, March 12, 2013 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "$1.2 billion bond plan advances: Major MU projects are included in proposal."

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Posted in Politics on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 2:00 pm.
Sinquefields pledge another $1.4 million to MU music initiatives

Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at 2:00 pm

A donation from Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield will fund continued music initiatives at the University of Missouri.

The $1.4 million gift over the next three years will pay to continue and expand the Mizzou New Music Initiative and the Creating Original Music Project at the university. It is a continuation of support the Sinquefields — Westphalia residents known for their political and philanthropic donations — have provided for music composition at MU for more than eight years. The gift also will fund scholarships and other support for the MU School of Music.

According to a university news release, the Sinquefields' goal for the Mizzou New Music Initiative is "to create an incubator for the composition and performance of new music and to position Missouri as a major center for the music of tomorrow." The Creating Original Music Project is a statewide contest for K-12 student composers.

The gift was announced at last night's annual Chancellor's Concert at the Missouri Theatre. The concert featured the world premiere of this year's winner of the Sinquefield Composition Prize, "Missouri" by MU graduate student David Witter.

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Posted in Education on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 2:00 pm.
Missing Math Experts

March 13, 2013 - 3:00am

By Carl Straumsheim

Amid a national push to improve math and science education, a new study shows college and universities report they can’t fill faculty positions that focus on math education.

The number of unfilled positions has been halved since the study’s authors last explored the topic in 2006, but institutions surveyed during the 2011-12 academic year still reported they were unable to fill about one-quarter of their job openings. The study will appear in the April 2013 edition of the American Mathematical Society publication Notices.

“[W]hile there is not the excess of jobs for doctorates in mathematics in institutions of higher education that there has been in the past, there are still jobs for doctorates in mathematics education that were unfilled,” the survey reads.

Robert Reys, one of the co-authors of the study, said he was surprised the job market hasn’t fared worse. Reys has followed developments in the job market for doctorates in math education for more than a decade, and said this year’s survey was timed to measure how the field has changed after the recession led state legislatures across the country to trim their higher education budgets.

Beyond the evidence suggesting institutions are still actively searching for instructors in math education, Reys, who is professor emeritus of math education at the University of Missouri at Columbia, said the actual number of unfilled positions is likely to be higher still. The survey only looked at hiring announcements that were published on a national scale, and did not take into account regional and junior colleges.

“I think it’s an underestimate,” Reys said. “There are a lot of jobs that may be going unfilled, and we just weren’t able to capture them in the methodology that was used.”

Reys, along with co-authors Barbara Reys and Anne Estapa, identified 82 institutions between Sept. 2011 and April 2012 that listed 94 available tenure-track positions — 90 percent of them at the assistant professor level. The positions were about evenly split between openings in math and education departments, with a handful of joint appointments.

The study suggests faculty mobility between institutions has buffered the field against some of the repercussions of the recession. Of the 73 hires made during the academic year, 36 involved experienced faculty members.
While more than half of openings in math departments offered salaries in the $50,000 to $60,000 range, salaries offered in education departments were mainly split between the $50,000 to $60,000 and $60,000 to $70,000 ranges. Reys credited the gap not just to the different types of institutions hiring new professors in math education, but also to the fact that institutions have begun to value prior teaching experience.

**Reported Salaries for New Hires in Math Education, 2011-12 Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Education Department / College</th>
<th>Mathematics Department</th>
<th>Joint Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-60,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,001-80,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $80,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Most of the people in math education have done teaching in K-12 schools prior to working on their doctorate,” Reys said. “Departments are sensitive to having classes that are taught by people who have been involved in teaching.”

Education departments were more successful in their hunt for professors, filling 82 percent of their positions compared to 72 percent for math departments. The size and focus of the institution also proved important factors affecting hiring success; baccalaureate colleges, larger master’s programs and research universities were less successful than smaller master’s programs and doctoral universities.

**Available Positions and New Hires in Math Education, 2011-12 Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Classification</th>
<th>Total No. of Positions</th>
<th>Percent of Successful Searches</th>
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Reys partly attributed the unsuccessful searches to the fact that about half of the graduates from doctoral programs in math education never join the job market, instead returning to institutions they were on leave from or -- in the case of international students -- to their countries of origin. Over the past 15 years, Reys said only about 50 fresh doctorate recipients have joined the job market per year.

"I think that contributes to the shortage," Reys said. "We just need to be able to recruit. The job opportunities are there."

But Reys also said that some institutions, mindful of ongoing budget crunches, may have set artificially high standards for their applicants to meet -- that they are holding out for a dream applicant who may not exist in a narrow field of candidates.
“I know that some institutions weren’t able to get the person that they wanted, so they would ... hold off and wait until next year.” Reys said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

New MU website encourages student involvement in climate and energy goals

By Caroline Bauman
March 12, 2013 | 6:23 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — A desire to reach the widest audience possible led to the creation of a new website aligning MU’s 2013 master plan with its sustainability plan, MU master planner Linda Eastley said Tuesday.

MU’s master planning process began more than 30 years ago, Eastley said, but this year the decision was made to incorporate the sustainability plan, which includes a climate action plan, into the master plan. Eastley and climate action planning consultant Meredith Elbaum gave a joint presentation about the future of the two plans.

"Sustainability is a factor of planning on campus," Elbaum said. "We have to look at the two together. We will be covering more than just climate. We'll be looking at buildings, landscape, health and education."

New goals added

The climate plan update outlined new goals, to be completed by 2017. They are:

- Achieving a 45 percent carbon emission reduction from the 2008 emissions baseline.
- Targeting a 75 percent reduction of coal use, and increased use of biomass and natural gas.
- Continuing to purchase wind power and increase its renewable energy portfolio.
- Requiring energy modeling on all major construction projects.

"Our goal for a 45 percent carbon emission is aggressive, and we want to continue to look beyond the next five years," Elbaum said.

The university has seen a 35 percent carbon emission reduction as of 2012, Elbaum said. In total, energy conservation saves MU $7.5 million annually, she said.
Within the campus master plan, there are 25 projects in design, construction or planning, Eastley said. Several of the new buildings will use LEED principles, which certifies that the projects are energy efficient and sustainably constructed.

Future LEED certified buildings under construction include Gwynn Hall, the Johnston and Wolpers hall renovations and Virginia Avenue South Housing. From 1990 to 2012, the university had decreased water use by 60 percent and energy use by 18 percent, while increasing space by 35 percent, Eastley said.

**Increased student involvement**

A reason to develop the joint website was to reach a larger audience, particularly students, Eastley said.

"This forum has been around since the 1980s," Eastley said. "It doesn't attract a significant population of campus. We wanted a venue for students to explore."

Also, the creation of a student committee is intended to increase student input in sustainability decisions made in the future. Formed last month, the Energy Strategies Student Advisory Committee will help MU create a clean energy development plan, Elbaum said.

Student representatives on the committee are from Missouri Students Association, Sustain Mizzou, the Graduate Professional Council and Coal Free Mizzou.

The new website and student committee are a leap forward in transparency, junior Ben Datema said.

"MU is good at doing things well, but is not always good about telling people about it," Datema said. "The website will be a great source of information, and it says a lot about the administration to include students in future decisions."

Eastley said she encouraged people to visit the website over the next year, as they will take site traffic into consideration.

"If we see what sections are most visited, we can make changes or add more information in 2014," Eastley said.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
Tax glitch delays refunds, angers Block customers

By KEVIN COLLISON

H&R Block is the biggest tax-preparation service in the United States — and this year that may not be such a good thing.

From Feb. 14 to 22, the Kansas City-based firm made errors in possibly hundreds of thousands of federal tax returns by not properly following a change made this year in how to fill out Form 8863. That form is used to reduce taxes by giving taxpayers a credit for certain educational costs.

Now H&R Block customers throughout the country whose returns included that mistake are hearing that their refunds will be delayed by several weeks. Many of those affected are students or parents who need the money for books or their tax receipt to apply for financial aid.

Compounding the problem and angering many Block clients, many received the bad news from the Internal Revenue Service, which sent out letters telling them their returns needed to be corrected.

The mistake is affecting about 10 percent of the 6.6 million tax returns containing Form 8863, IRS spokeswoman Michelle Eldridge said Tuesday. She didn’t estimate how many of the misfiled returns came from Block, but the company was bearing the brunt of complaints.

Block first told customers of the problem on Thursday, and then only in a brief post on its Facebook site that apologized for the frustration the problem was causing.

Since then, more than 5,500 comments, many of them highly critical, have been posted on its Facebook page.

One Facebook user, Dustin Munson, wrote: “I have been patiently waiting for my education credit refund, which I need to pay tuition bills. I was aghast to learn of the delay ON THE INTERNET and not from communication issued from your company as soon as the problem was discovered.”
A followup post from Block on Friday assured customers that if they had already responded to a letter from the IRS, or had not received such a letter, they didn’t need to do anything further. Those who hadn’t answered the letter were encouraged to call Block’s customer service line.

Some public relations experts also were critical of H&R Block’s reliance on Facebook to get the word out.

When asked why Block didn’t directly get in touch with customers affected by the mistake, Gene King, Block’s director of corporate communications, declined to comment.

The postings weren’t any help to Benjamin Moore of Kansas City. He said Tuesday, “I’m not on Facebook and I never saw it. The first I heard about it was when we learned about it from the IRS.

“We then went to the H&R Block office and were told we didn’t have to do anything. They explained the delays about the educational tax credit, and now we’re looking at another six weeks for a refund.”

The IRS notice said refunds could be delayed six to eight weeks, but one Block posting said “we are assured it will not take that long.”

The IRS changed Form 8863 this year to comply with stricter reporting requirements from Congress, and the changes were noted on instructions to the form.

King said previously a tax preparer could leave boxes blank for some questions on the form, and if neither “yes” nor “no” was checked, the IRS considered that to be the same as answering “no.”

“But the IRS evidently needed a response,” King said. “Its computers read the two blank boxes as an error and held up processing tax returns.”

The first IRS alert to tax preparers that Form 8863 was not being filled out correctly came on Feb. 20. Block said it detected the problem Feb. 22, but the company didn’t alert customers until Thursday.

Block’s first Facebook posting said only: “As many of you are already aware, some clients who claimed certain education tax credits on Form 8863 have received notices from the IRS. We are in contact with the IRS to clarify the situation. We appreciate this may cause some problems for our clients and we apologize for the frustration it may be causing. We will continue to update clients as more information becomes available.”

A spokeswoman for Intuit, the maker of competing TurboTax software, said the company was not having the problem. But Forbes reported that delays and errors related to form 8863 were not restricted to H&R Block, though it was getting most of the complaints. Block handles millions of returns — more than 22 million last year.

A sampling of comments on Block’s Facebook page showed the limits of social media when it comes to informing people.

“Not all H&R Block Customers have access to Facebook,” wrote Tracy Bryant-Davis. “Why aren’t we receiving EMAILS or phone calls to advise us and keep us abreast of this 8863 problem and any other issue that is causing delays of refunds??”
Students or their parents must file Form 8863 to get a student tax credit under a law called the American Opportunity and Lifetime Learning Credits.

The credit reduces a tax bill dollar for dollar. It’s equal to 100 percent of the first $2,000 of qualified expenses and 25 percent of expenses over $2,000. The maximum is $2,500.

Having a completed federal tax return also is an important part of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, better known to millions of parents and college students as FAFSA.

On Block’s Facebook page, Monique Brown wrote:

“I really and truly just want to cry. Spring Break ruined, mine and my son’s birthday ruined and I also can’t file FAFSA!”

Late Monday, Block posted another Facebook entry noting: “If an affected client applies for financial aid through the FAFSA program and is waiting for their return processing to be complete in order to finalize the FAFSA application, there are manual steps they can take that will allow their FAFSA application to proceed while their return is still processing.”

It said that in that case, the Department of Education suggested manually entering the tax return data on the financial aid application online, and then returning later to the FAFSA form online and updating the information once the tax return had been processed.

Public relations experts weren’t surprised that people were upset by the tax problem, but they were taken back by Block’s reliance on Facebook.

“I’m shocked,” said David Guth, an associate professor at the University of Kansas who has written three public relations textbooks. “They should have alerted everybody the moment they knew they had a problem.

“Facebook is a great social media site to keep up with friends and post pictures, but when you mess up a tax return, it requires a more formal communication than this.”

Glen T. Cameron, who holds the Maxine Gregory Chair of Journalism Research at the University of Missouri, said Block’s reputation could suffer over the long run.

“It’s not right for tens of thousands of customers, and it’s not the right strategy in terms of managing a crisis,” he said. “It sends the wrong signal in terms of reputation and confidence.”

Guth agreed.

“They say 80 percent of your business comes from 20 percent of your customers,” he said. “This doesn’t engender a relationship when you have learned about the problem this way.

“And you don’t screw with people’s money.”
MU hosts 6th annual Women's Health and Wellness Fair

By Victoria Meador
March 12, 2013 | 4:20 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — For the first time representatives from the Citizen Jane Film Festival, the Office for Financial Success, and the MU Veterans Center participated in MU's sixth annual Women's Health and Wellness Gathering.

"We are here to provide resources to women," committee member Jordan Hoyt said. "The goal of the event is education but also so students, faculty and staff know the organizations at the fair exist."

The new organizations were chosen to fill information gaps in the resources offered in previous years, Hoyt said. The event, held 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in Stotler Lounge in Memorial Student Union, was hosted by the Chancellor's Standing Committee on the Status of Women and sponsored by the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative.

In total, more than 30 campus and community organizations set up tables and provided brochures about health, fitness, and volunteer opportunities. Additional offerings included a free manicure and a Jazzercise demonstration. Despite the organizers attempts to include new organizations in the fair, attendance dropped from about 250 students, faculty and staff to approximately 114 attendees.

Hoyt said she did not know the reason for the decrease in attendance. While organizers worked to include new organizations and educate the public, for many the event offered friendly reminders rather than new information.

"A lot of people know something needs improvement, but this helps bring it to their attention again," said Maureen Coy, health educator for Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services Department.

Representatives from the Health Department took blood pressures and checked body mass indexes and gave tips on how to improve those measurements.