Autopsy performed on teen from Illinois

Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 2:00 pm

An autopsy was done Tuesday on the Illinois man found dead in a University of Missouri residence hall, and police are waiting on a toxicology report to help determine the cause of death, MU police Capt. Brian Weimer said.

The toxicology screen will take two to three weeks, Weimer said, and combined with interviews and evidence gathered at the scene will help police learn what happened to 18-year-old Gregory G. Holthaus.

"That's a key part of our investigation we need to wait for," he said.

The medical examiner has not yet ruled on the cause of death, Weimer said. A forensic investigator at the medical examiner's office declined to release any information on the case.

Holthaus was found unresponsive at 9:07 a.m. Sunday in the Pershing group of residence halls. The Highland, Ill., native was visiting a friend and MU student.

Weimer said there still is no indication of foul play in the teen's death.

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Posted in Local on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 2:00 pm.
Autopsy performed on body of man found in MU residence hall

By Stephanie Smart

October 16, 2013 | 4:37 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Boone County Medical Examiner's office performed an autopsy Tuesday on Gregory Holthaus, the man who died Sunday after being found unconscious in an MU residence hall.

The MU Police Department is waiting to get the toxicology report back in order to determine the cause of Holthaus' death, police Capt. Brian Weimer said. There is currently no evidence of foul play.

Weimer said he was unsure of when the results would be returned, and the department will wait to release information until it knows more for certain.

"It is our job to do a thorough investigation, and we have no further information at this time," Weimer said.

Supervising editor is Allie Hinga.
MU employee charged with assaulting security officer

By Kelly Scanlon

October 16, 2013 | 8:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU employee has been charged with second-degree assault of a security officer at the Missouri Psychiatric Center.

Neil Hockley, 61, a business tech analyst with MU Health Care, was taken to the Missouri Psychiatric Center for an assessment on Sept. 29, according to a probable cause statement filed in the 13th Circuit of Boone County by the MU Police Department.

Hockley was arrested after his release from the hospital and was released Tuesday night from the Boone County Sheriff’s Department and Jail on a $25,000 bond.

According to the statement, here's what happened:

Hockley refused to take any medication and became angry at the center's staff members. Hospital security responded when Hockley tried to punch a staff member who was standing in his way.

When a security officer entered Hockley's interview room to restrain him, he broke her elbow. Security officers restrained him and took him to a seclusion room.

While there, Hockley threatened a staff member by saying that he was going to go to the staff member's home and urinate on his children before shooting them in the head. Hockley also threatened to go to the staff member's children's school to shoot them and other children so the police would kill him.

MU Police, who arrested Hockley, said he might have gained access to that staff member's file through his employment at the university, as the threats he made included accurate information about the staff member's family and what school his children attended.
Younger girls learn from relationship mistakes of older sisters

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 16 (UPI) -- Older sisters often take roles of confidants, sources of support and mentors to younger sisters, who learn from their sibling's mistakes, U.S. researchers say.

Lead author Sarah Killoren, an assistant professor of human development and family studies at the University of Missouri, said sisters most frequently played the role of confidant, giving information about themselves and asking for more information about their sisters' lives.

Disclosures made during their conversations revealed levels of intimacy between sisters, Killoren said.

"Our findings indicate that sisters play important roles as adolescent girls form ideas about romantic relationships and sexuality," Killoren said in a statement. "Sisters are important communication partners when it comes to these sensitive topics."

The second role, as source of support, was displayed when sisters encouraged siblings' ideas about dating and sexuality.

The mentor role was displayed when sisters served as role models for one another, most frequently by giving advice.

"Given their age, older sisters were more likely to have advice to share and have romantic relationships and sexual experiences from which their younger sisters can learn," Killoren said.

Younger sisters commonly reported learning from older sisters' experiences, especially their older sisters' negative dating and sexual experiences, Killoren said.

"Younger sisters frequently commented on their older sisters' negative experiences, such as teen pregnancy and abusive relationships, and made decisions to be different," Killoren said.
"Learning only from negative experiences could occur because younger sisters only consciously identify the experiences of their sisters that they do not want to repeat."

The findings were published in the journal Family Relations.
Missouri court OK's Jayhawks fan's anti-Mizzou license plate

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. • A state appeals court says a Missouri man who roots for the University of Kansas Jayhawks may keep his personalized license plate expressing disdain for the University of Missouri Tigers.

The Administrative Hearing Commission last year rejected an effort by Missouri's Revenue Department to recall Toby Gettler's plate, which reads "MZU SUX." The Revenue Department had issued the plate, but tried to recall it on the ground that "SUX" is obscene.

Gettler presented evidence, including a dictionary definition, that the word has gained common usage as slang for "subpar or inadequate."

The Missouri Court of Appeals' Western District on Tuesday upheld the hearing commission's decision in Gettler's favor. The appellate court said there is evidence to support the commission's determination.
Court sides with anti-Mizzou plate owner

By STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 2:00 pm Comments (3)

JEFFERSON CITY — A state appeals court said a Missouri man who roots for the University of Kansas Jayhawks may keep his personalized license plate expressing disdain for the University of Missouri Tigers.

The Administrative Hearing Commission last year rejected an effort by Missouri's Department of Revenue to recall Toby Gettler's plate, which reads MZU SUX.

The Revenue Department issued the plate in 2009 but attempted to recall it after receiving a public complaint about the plate, citing a statute that says no personalized license plate shall be obscene or profane.

The department argued that the word "sucks" derives from a demeaning sexual connotation, according to documents.

The commission, however, cited the Merriam-Webster's definition that says "sucks" is slang for "objectionable" or "inadequate."

Gettler, a St. Charles resident, had presented evidence, including a dictionary definition, that the word has gained common usage as slang for "subpar or inadequate."

The Missouri Court of Appeals' Western District yesterday upheld the hearing commission's decision in Gettler's favor. The appellate court said there is evidence to support the commission's determination.

Mary Jo Banken, spokeswoman for MU, said the university had no comment on the matter.

The Revenue Department said a statement about the decision is forthcoming, but the statement was not received by the Tribune's deadline.
MU Homecoming king candidate pushes gender boundaries

By Molly Duffy

October 17, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Josie Herrera is heavily involved at MU: leading an Alternative Spring Break trip, serving on two Tap Day societies and participating in a sorority. When Herrera decided to apply for Homecoming royalty, getting involved became more complicated.

As a student who identifies as "gender queer" — as neither man nor woman but encompassing parts of both — Herrera was stuck with choosing between running for king or queen.

"I got there, and it was two different sheets, men and women," Herrera, a journalism student from Miami, said. "So I signed up anyway under the men's category." From there, Herrera was chosen as a Top 30 candidate out of 124 applicants. That's as far as Herrera thought it would go; Top 30 was the goal. Then the Mizzou Alumni Association called, saying Herrera, who used to go by Laura, made the Top 10.

"It was just really startling, and it was really intense," Herrera, 21, said. "I didn't really know how to react at first, and I feel like I didn't feel a lot for a few days because I was just in shock from it all happening. And everyone was super excited and pumped for me, like congratulating me, and I was just like, 'I don't even know what's going on. This is just happening right now.'"

Herrera, who is sponsored by the MU Women's Center, is in the company of Zach Beattie, Nick Droege, Paul Ehlinger and Alex Finck as a king candidate. Homecoming queen candidates are Lexie Cartee, Theresa Mullineaux, Rachel Newman, Meredith Norfleet and Paige Tenkhoff. The king and queen will be crowned during the Oct. 26 Homecoming football game against South Carolina.

"I'm really excited to represent myself, as just a person, but at the same time I'm very multidimensional," Herrera said. "I'm really excited to represent a lot of communities I'm a part
of ... I’m first-generation American Latino, I’m a part of the queer community, I’m a foreign language speaker — I’m not actually a native English speaker either (Herrera learned to speak English at age 4) — and I’m really excited to represent those communities." As far as Herrera and the Mizzou Alumni Association know, Herrera is MU’s first transgender Homecoming candidate. Todd McCubbin, executive director for the Mizzou Alumni Association, said the rules regarding Homecoming Court eligibility were unclear when it came to transgender issues. For Herrera, he and Aly Friend, who coordinates student programs for the association, had to interpret the situation.

"I think the biggest thing for us, too, along with the identification issue with Josie, was the alumni association and Homecoming want to be as inclusive as possible for the campus community and everything that we represent," McCubbin said. "That was certainly at the forefront of our mind when we were discussing the situation." After asking advice from alumni and others, McCubbin said they decided "it was best to let a student compete in the category that they identified with most" and that it was "a very comfortable decision to reach." Herrera said it was "almost too easy" to apply as a king candidate. Although Herrera considered running for Homecoming queen if that was the only option, they are grateful it didn't come to that. Herrera prefers "they" as a pronoun because of its gender neutrality.

"I kind of made the decision that I probably still would have (run as a queen candidate)," Herrera said. "And I wouldn't have felt very, or as much comfortable doing it, but I figured I might as well ask. I don't identify fully as both, but I feel a lot more comfortable in a setting where I can dress masculinely and not be the sore thumb out." Herrera hopes running for Homecoming king ignites a conversation on campus about transgender issues. Since the Top 10 candidates were announced, Herrera has been fielding a lot of questions.

"I've had a really great time in the past few days hearing everyone's really hilarious theories about my gender identity and sexual orientation and things like that," Herrera said. "I find it entertaining, so I'm like, 'Oh, that's not totally right, but that's really funny.' ... I'm finally at the point where I'm like, OK, we should probably start talking about it because theories are hilarious, but they're also not true."

Herrera has been out as queer in terms of sexual orientation for some time but started identifying as gender queer at the start of the year.

"Around January, I started what I called a 'gender identity crisis,'" Herrera said. "Where I was just like, everything started feeling really strange and started having to explore myself a lot —
even though I didn't have a lot of time to do a lot of thinking — and then feeling really strange about my body and about my identity and how that all fit in together." Spending the summer at an internship in Boston and around new people, Herrera had more time to explore their identity.

"It's still something I'm in the process of doing, which makes it also weird to do this very public process of doing Homecoming, but I think it will be beneficial," Herrera said.

Herrera is aware of some negative reactions to running for Homecoming king, but most reactions have been positive and supportive. For instance, Herrera had to explain the situation to executive board members of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority, of which Herrera is a member, so that the board could answer questions from members. At a chapter meeting, it was clear the executive board members "weren't going to deal with people having a vocal negative opinion," Herrera said.

"Some of my friends were like, 'Is that really their place to ask?' and I'm like, 'Yeah, I'm a member of their community,'" Herrera said. "They should know what's going on. So I was happy to do that, even though it made me super nervous and anxious." Herrera has no doubts some people will be surprised or angry about the candidacy.

"But I haven't had to experience that personally yet. ... I feel really comforted in knowing that so many student leaders ... as well as the university itself, like the alumni center, is being like, 'This is OK. We want this person to represent the university,'" Herrera said. By representing MU as a Homecoming candidate, Herrera hopes to educate the community about gender and the boundaries it can create as well as challenge those boundaries.

"What I'm trying to explain to people sometimes is, does gender even — I mean, it's important to people on a personal level — but societally, does it really matter? Why is that such a big deal? Why does it have to be such a mess to work through?" Herrera said. "Why do we even have what some people would consider really outdated views of, 'it has to be a king and a queen'? And they have to be 'this,' or they have to be 'that'?

"I'm excited to kind of mess with that, and be like, 'Well, I don't really identify as either. I just picked a box, essentially.' In order to even participate, I had to pick a box. There's no middle space, and I think that's kind of silly."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
Q & A with MU Homecoming king candidate Josie Herrera

By Molly Duffy

October 17, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Here are excerpts from an interview with Josie Herrera, a Homecoming king candidate at MU who identifies as "gender queer." Herrera appears to be MU’s first transgender candidate.

Were there any problems with your entering as a king candidate?

I had a friend on the Homecoming Committee, who's someone I trust a lot, and I was just like, "Hey, this is the situation: I identify as gender queer, and while that gives me some level of flexibility, I present myself very masculinely, so I'd feel more comfortable in this category. Could you ask if that's something I could do?" And he talked to his adviser ... (who) was like, "Yeah, whatever they feel more comfortable in, they can run for."

So I turned in my paper application and I ... (signed up for first-round interviews) under the men's category. I put Laura "Josie" Herrera, and then I emailed the committee. ... I basically said, "I'm not playing a practical joke on you guys or messing with you — it wasn't a mistake that I wrote my name down there. I'm running for king, and that's just where I feel more comfortable."

From there, people just ran with it. It was really surprisingly easy; no opposition. Everyone just kind of went with it. ... Honestly, I was expecting them to be like, "No, you can't do that." So it was kind of awesome.

Is your candidacy part of your coming-out process?

Yeah, (and) it’s very public. That’s not unusual for me to push myself to do that. The first time I ever even really mentioned to people that I was questioning my gender identity
was on a panel. Someone invited me to be on a panel at the LGBTQ (Resource) Center on ... a Trans 101 panel. And it included just gender nonconforming, and that was a category that I easily fit into.

But I ended up talking about, “Hey, I’m going through the process of questioning my gender identity” and not stuff I expected to talk about in an actually really packed room, ... and that was the first time I ever really mentioned to a group that I was questioning who I was. It was good. It was a necessary push to the door, like "All right, go deal with it." So that was helpful.

What's your opinion of situations like Kasey Caron's, a high school student in Pennsylvania whose school board did not allow a run as a Homecoming king because he was born female?

That’s always frustrating to hear. I know a lot of it has to do with the fact that a lot of people aren’t educated about trans issues or how gender identity works, and just keeping the door closed on people exploring who they are is really unfortunate. ...

It’s unfortunate, and what I feel — I can’t speak for a lot of people, I can only speak for the conversations I’ve had with friends and what I feel — I think that hurts the community. That hurts the community, the way I see it, on a national level. Talk about instilling fear in people. I hear about stories everywhere, and I’ve never had to face violence, which is really, really fortunate for who I am.

Sometimes people — I can walk down the street and people can think I’m a queer woman or a gay man because I’m pretty masculine sometimes — they can hate me for a variety of reasons. I’ve never had to experience that, but I know that’s very, very real. ...

Hearing stories like that definitely make me nervous to want to try things that I want to do, like run for Homecoming. Because what if I have to face that, what if it becomes a big issue? And then I have all of my personal stuff — this is a public, personal process — but what if this wasn’t going so well? Then it would be just as public, just as personal, but really negative.

If you do win Homecoming king, what kind of effect do you think that could have?
I have no idea. And on this campus, what I really want is to make this easier for some of my friends who are trans or gender nonconforming, or even just queer, to be able to do this. I have so many friends who congratulated me ... and have asked me, "Can I vote?" Some people don't even realize (they can vote) because they're so alienated from the Homecoming process. ...

I hope it makes it easier for other people to go through this process, regardless of their gender identity or regardless of what community they're in, and that they can feel confident that someone did this, it's going to be less scary. It is scary to be the first person who pushes the button or rocks the boat. ...

I hope it does make people start feeling safe in their community — that's a really big issue for people who are gender nonconforming or trans or gender queer, physically not feeling safe. Hopefully that sends a message that people here support you, and also sends a message that no, it's not OK to mess with the trans kids or queer kids or whatever kid that's different than you. I'm hoping it brings both of those messages.

**What do you hope is the takeaway of your candidacy?**

I want people to see that they can do anything on this campus and not be limited by, "Oh, well, it's usually this type of person who gets it." When you think of who usually gets it, like people who are involved in a lot of the government organizations or Tour Team or Alumni Center stuff — which are all valid — a lot of those people, and this is not to knock anyone or their identities, but a lot of those people are usually white, probably upper-middle class, that kind of stuff.

That's all super awesome and valid, but I want people to know that you can go through this process regardless and come out with a really positive experience like I've had, and people shouldn't be scared to try it because it can be done. And that's not just for the queer kids. That's for anyone on our campus.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
Genderqueer student Laura ‘Josie’ Herrera runs for Homecoming king

Senior Laura “Josie” Herrera is in the running to be MU’s first genderqueer Homecoming king, changing the long-standing tradition of Homecoming Royalty.

Herrera said the term “genderqueer” can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people.

“I feel I encompass both genders,” Herrera said. “I don’t identify fully as a cisgender woman — if you don’t know what cisgender means, it’s just when you identify with your biological sex, but I don’t fully identify that way. I also don’t identify as a trans man, so I kind of feel like I fall into this kind of strange, kind of confusing middle space.”

Herrera, who prefers to take the pronoun “them” or “they,” has identified as queer and as part of the LGBT community since they were in middle school. They have identified as genderqueer since spring.

Herrera was named one of the top 10 candidates for Homecoming Royalty earlier this month. They said making the top 10 was completely shocking. Their original goal was to make top 30.

“Everyone was congratulating me on making top 10, but I still couldn’t believe it for at least a few days,” Herrera said. “I wasn’t feeling all of the impact yet. It took a while to understand, ‘Oh, wow, I’m actually doing this. This is a really big deal.'”

Herrera first considered running for Homecoming Royalty their junior year, but the idea to run for king instead of queen was first presented by a friend.

“A friend of mine kind of asked, ‘Hey, would you run for king or queen?’” Herrera said. “And I didn’t really think about it that way because I didn’t really think it would be an option.”

After discussing the idea with friends and mentors, Herrera said they decided to at least give running for king a try and submitted the application.

Herrera said being the first genderqueer candidate to run for Homecoming king has been a scary experience.

“I don’t know how people are going to react; I don’t know how it’s going to be seen in the public, if people are even going to understand what being genderqueer means,” Herrera said. “But … so far … the university and my friends and the overall community (have been) really supportive. It’s been really empowering and makes this whole process much less scary.”
Herrera said people around MU have been supportive since they came out as genderqueer.

“Even people I don’t know who either live in CoMo or (are) students, or even alumni who now live in other states, have stopped me around campus and have been like, ‘Oh, I’m super happy for you, and super excited,’” Herrera said. “I think it just says a lot about our university and the progress we’ve made and where we’re going. Not everything is perfect, but it’s clearly getting better.”

Homecoming Steering Committee adviser Aly Friend said since Homecoming is student-run, MU wants to be representative of the students’ diversity.

“It just says that we’re constantly changing and always trying to be very representative and respectful of the makeup of our student body,” Friend said. “And (we) just want to keep in mind the different diverse backgrounds that the students have.”

Herrera said they want to be transparent and truthful throughout the run for Homecoming king.

“In the perfect world and at the end of the day, I can only represent myself as a person and I feel like I am doing that honestly,” Herrera said. “And I’m happy to represent myself in this way. I’m not lying about my gender identity. I’m not pretending to be someone who I’m not. I’m trying to be very open and honest about it.”

However, as a genderqueer, Latino and first-generation American, Herrera said they feel like they are representing a larger community of students as well.

“I think, in the end, there is kind of an idea that I get to represent these communities,” Herrera said. “I’m really proud to be able to do that. It’s kind of a hard, weird position to be put in, but at the same time it’s also totally necessary.”

MU’s 102nd Homecoming celebration is Oct. 26. The king and queen will be announced during the football game against South Carolina.

“I think we’re all just really proud of the tradition we have and want to continue to represent it in the best way possible,” Friend said. “And by representing the students and their backgrounds and where they identify kind of helps keep the tradition alive.”

Herrera said they wouldn’t change anything about their experience as a Homecoming king candidate.

“It’s just been very, very vocal and supportive,” Herrera said. “I’m super lucky to have this great support system of people who are excited and are happy this is happening, regardless of how it goes.”
Don't Be the Next Mistake Our Country Makes

Crystal Duan, Freshman at the University of Missouri-Columbia

I'm two months into my time at the University of Missouri J-school, and I'm loving it. Never have I been so intellectually provoked by this many engaged, thoughtful peers. The competitiveness of the school, which admits based on academic achievements but retains based on level of ambition, only serves to fuel this drive to succeed.

Yet simultaneously I have begun to realize what differentiates those who are ready to succeed from those less likely to is not necessarily inborn intelligence or talent. It is instead, one's level of dedication and investment to becoming -- and being -- a useful citizen.

Apathy is apparently a generational thing, with each previous one blaming the next for caring less and less. And while there are arguments that there are plenty of young, bright strong-willed minds who will surely lead us to greatness in 20 years, there are just as many people who have potential who aren't using it.

Granted, changing the world may not be a freshman's top priority as we continue adjusting to college in different ways. But while that is understandable, a certain degree of ignorance is still inexcusable. One example is the fact that on Oct. 14, right before I wrote this piece, I somehow held a conversation with people who were unaware of the impending debt crisis, or worse yet, the fact that our government is currently shut down.

I don't fare well with politics, and confess I have consulted GoKicker.com and Buzzfeed to understand how messed up the government is. Nevertheless it was beyond me that people didn't care enough to find out; they had somehow managed to block out that the world outside our campus was being altered in a horrible way, one that would inevitably define our futures.

As I read over every news piece or furious column about Congress that various outlets keep putting out, I can't help but parallel Congress' inability to care about its people's voices to my own generation's dismissiveness.

If congressmen aren't bothering to read the thoughtful points the good people at the Times or the Post or Slate or Político are making about their unreasonability, then they are just furthering the journalists' arguments. And if they are reading them, yet still unmoved, then that is a worse, intentional ignorance.
Either way, I see elements of that attitude manifesting in my peers. It's not so much that they don't know what's going on -- it's scarier that they don't care to know or know to care.

As Congress has demonstrated, people who don't care about the big picture don't get things done. And if not enough people care about getting things done, or the wrong people don't care about getting things done, then we may end up with another crisis on our hands in the future.

The same day I cringed at my classmates' apathy, I had been feeling inspired by my peers discussing the principles of freedom of the press in one of our journalism classes.

Overall, with that freedom to say what we want, we should consider our abilities to listen and think about the content of these open discussions. Because otherwise, what use is talk with no one to listen?

America has done some questionable things throughout history in the name of furthering democracy, but it has historically let its citizens retain a voice. That voice may occasionally be silenced and unfairly shut down, but never has the government been able to get away with keeping its people in the dark for long.

But when the people yelling can't inspire the people who are supposed to be listening to act, then that freedom sure isn't of any use. Both to our government, and to the ones who will one day be sitting in their shoes.