University of Missouri student reports rape

By the Tribune's staff

Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 7:56 pm

The University of Missouri Police Department is investigating a reported rape that happened in the 800 block of Richmond Avenue late Saturday or early Sunday.

MUPD said in a Clery release that a female student told Residential Life early Sunday that she was raped sometime overnight. No other information was released.

Anyone with information is asked to call the MUPD at 573-882-7201.

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Posted in Crime, Local on Sunday, March 9, 2014 7:56 pm.

Petition in support of relocating day care from University Village has hundreds of signatures

Saturday, March 8, 2014 | 6:44 p.m. CST

BY JOE GUSZKOWSKI

COLUMBIA — An online petition urging MU to move the Student Parent Center day care away from University Village has received more than 200 signatures since it was created Friday.
The day care for the children of graduate and undergraduate students is at University Village, where a walkway collapsed Feb. 22 and killed a firefighter.

A report by structural engineering firm Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc. released Wednesday indicated that the walkway of Building 602, which houses the center, was on the verge of "catastrophic collapse," and in need of immediate repair. Wooden supports have been installed beneath the walkway to provide extra stability. MU spokesman Christian Basi has said these supports will stabilize the walkways and keep them safe as the university decides the future of University Village.

According to previous Missourian reporting, parents whose children attend the day-care center have emailed MU officials asking that the center remain open but at a safer location. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin responded to one email with assurance that the university was discussing plans for the day care and that it would make an announcement about its future soon.

Kimberly Bodner, a clinical psychology doctoral candidate whose 4-month-old son attended the center before the collapse, created the online petition.

"We feel like our children are in danger," Bodner said. As a busy graduate student, Bodner said she feels that the day care is a vital resource that she and other parents need, she said.

After the collapse, though, she decided to take her son out of the day care. She said the idea of walking with her son underneath the walkways terrified her.

The petition is intended to keep the day care open but to move it to a location where parents feel comfortable leaving their children, Bodner said. By Saturday evening, the petition had 234 signatures.

Bodner said she planned to print the petition and that she and other student-parents would present it to Loftin and the MU administration. For now, there is no set goal in terms of number of signatures.
Some University Village residents request transfers as MU considers fate of complex

By Andrew Denney and Ashley Jost

Friday, March 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (4)

The University of Missouri has not decided the fate of University Village.

In the two weeks since part of a walkway on Building 707 collapsed, killing Columbia firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt, six residents of the apartment complex have requested to terminate their leases, MU spokesman Christian Basi said. There are four or five more students who have started to fill out lease termination paperwork, as well, he said.

Basi said the university is working with these students to help them find new housing, and they face no financial penalty for ending their leases.

As for the complex itself, university officials are still discussing its fate.

"We are discussing the long-term future of University Village and that area," Basi said. "We will obviously be keeping it open for the next few months, but I can't speculate on the long-term future."

For University Village residents, the proximity to campus and cheap rent are what made the complex so attractive.

In the current fiscal year, MU charges $410 for one-bedroom apartments at University Village and University Heights, which sits just south of University Village on a higher elevation. Two-bedroom units range between $504 and $614 per month. The two complexes offer housing for graduate students, students with families and undergraduate students older than 21. Manor House and Tara Apartments are the other two MU complexes that cater to those same students.

University Village residents are predominately international students. Four days after the walkway collapse, Basi said there were 109 residents in the complex.
For some, such as Hayder Al-Behadili, an MU doctoral candidate in computer engineering who hails from Iraq, University Village is their first home in the United States.

Al-Behadili, who lives in Building 702 with his wife and two children, said he was ready to leave the complex before the Feb. 22 walkway collapse. The walls of his apartment are paper-thin, he said, and he can hear his neighbors' conversations. He said the walkway collapse made his decision final. "With my family here, I am not feeling safe," Al-Behadili said.

University Village also is Nayereh Ghazanfarpour's first home in the United States. Originally from Iran, she lives with her husband at University Village and works as a researcher at MU. They moved there at the beginning of the semester, but she said the walkway collapse has made her consider moving.

"For the events that happened, we would like to move, but we are not sure," Ghazanfarpour said.

Adegbuyi Adekunle, a sociology major in his final semester who came to the United States from Nigeria, said he planned to move out of the complex when he is finished with classes, and he said he feels safe enough to stay until his lease is up. He said he was pleased with the fact that MU moved quickly after the walkway collapse to reinforce the walkways with lumber supports. "These are old structures," he said with a shrug.

During its first general assembly meeting since the walkway collapse, the Graduate Professional Council, the governing body for graduate and professional students, passed two resolutions, including one that requested MU administrators renovate or replace the University Village complex. The second resolution honored Britt and the Columbia Fire Department.

Jake Wright, president of the Graduate Professional Council, said he has had discussions with some senior university administrators about the council's concerns and concerns he has received directly from some University Village residents. Wright said he has received about 10 emails about the complex during the past 24 hours.

Discussions with administrators are ongoing.

"We're still looking for ways we can help out and things we can do," Wright said. "The most important thing for us is that graduate and professional students have safe and affordable places to live, and that includes University Village."

This article was published in the Friday, March 7, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Fate of apartments unclear; Some students are requesting to end leases".

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Posted in Education on Friday, March 7, 2014 2:00 pm.
COLUMBIA — Hanaa Almohammed has crossed the concrete walkway countless times since moving into her second-floor apartment at University Village in January.

But it wasn't until part of a nearby walkway crumbled and fell two weeks ago, that she began to notice cracks and chips in the concrete beneath her feet.

Now, she walks more slowly, more carefully. She sometimes feels the walkway shake as she walks. Inside her apartment, she can feel the floorboards creak.

Almohammed has felt less safe since a walkway collapsed, resulting in the death of a firefighter, at Building 707 on Feb. 22. She and her husband, Mouayed Al-Toki, are among the many residents of University Village now faced with the decision to stay in their apartments or move elsewhere.

If one walkway collapsed, many wonder, why not another? Why not ours?

Despite these concerns, Al-Toki said his family will stay in their apartment in building 603. For the time being, their circumstances demand it. University Village is within walking distance of the MU College of Engineering, where Al-Toki is a graduate student. The family doesn't have a car, and moving might mean the three children would have to change schools.

The university is allowing all University Village residents to terminate their leases without penalty.

"We're trying to make sure they have any resource available to them to find alternative housing," MU spokesman Christian Basi has said.
Some have already left. A few days after the collapse, Jorge Durand, a graduate student from Peru, watched his neighbors pack their belongings into a U-Haul. They moved because they were worried about the safety of their children, he said. Their apartment is now vacant.

Durand and his wife hope to follow suit. They will not renew their lease in May, he said, but he doesn't know yet where they'll go.

It's not like the apartment complex is in chaos right now, Durand said, but he still can't shake the fact that someone died.

Kim Bemrose and her husband, a student at MU, have requested a transfer to Tara Apartments.

Bemrose lives on the second floor of Building 601 and said she has been scared to walk under the walkways since the collapse.

Although wooden supports have been installed, "I don't feel safe here," Bemrose said. For other residents, the supports, which were installed beneath all University Village walkways the day of the collapse to provide extra stability, have been a comfort.

Adam Fahncke, who has lived on the first floor of Building 603 for two years, said he didn't think the university would let people live at University Village if the buildings weren't safe.

"I think the two-by-fours are an eyesore," he said. "But I'd much rather look at an eyesore than a building falling on top of me."

These wooden supports were recommended by Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc., a structural engineering firm hired by MU to assess the buildings at University Village immediately after the collapse. The supports will provide stability and allow residents to continue living there safely for the next few months, Basi said.

Beyond that, though, the future of University Village remains uncertain. Basi said the university is discussing plans for what to do with the complex but said he did not know what those plans were.
University Village was built in 1956 and is one of four MU-owned complexes intended for graduate students and families. Its proximity to campus, affordable rent and access to child care make it desirable for older students, especially those with families, but in its almost 60 years of existence, it has fallen into disrepair.

An MU housing plan from 2008 recommended that the buildings be vacated and demolished by August 2011, citing widespread structural damage to walls and floors and identifying walkways in particular as safety hazards. During the past 10 years, repairs have been made to various walkways at the complex, according to reports released Wednesday by MU.

Basi said that the university chose to keep University Village open because of its low cost, proximity to campus and community atmosphere.

When Almohammed visits friends at University Heights, another MU-owned complex that sits on a hill overlooking University Village, she does not feel the same things she feels at her apartment. She doesn't have to walk gingerly, the floorboards do not creak, and she can't feel the earth shake.

She'd like to that sense of security again. But for now, it's a waiting game to see what the university will do and what their options are.

"We don't have another place to move," she said. "But we will see what they do to our apartment."

ESPN spotlights Missouri’s Antlers in report on rowdy cheering groups

COLUMBIA — Missouri’s unsanctioned student cheering group for men’s basketball, the Antlers, was the subject of an ESPN “Outside the Lines” report on Sunday morning.
The newsmagazine explored the issue of fan conduct in an episode entitled “The Art of Noise.” Watch Shelley Smith’s report here.

Rowdy student cheering groups at other schools — including Oregon’s Pit Crew, which famously rained down “Gary Coleman” chants on former Washington star Nate Washington and frequently harassed UCLA’s Kevin Love — also were profiled, but the Antlers were the focus of the panel discussion.

The Antlers were kicked out of back-to-back games in late November for cheers deemed inappropriate by the school, including some profane or sexually explicit and sexist or racist chants.

“We have high expectations for our students and our staff at the University of Missouri,” Tigers athletic director Mike Alden said after ordering The Antlers to be escorted from Mizzou Arena during a win against IUPUI. “Our core values are respect, responsibility, discovery and excellence. It is critically important that we represent those values every day in everything that we do.”

Darren Hellwege — who is the sports director of KBIA, an NPR station in Columbia — said he believes the Antlers embarrass the school and had crossed the line.

Former Duke star and ESPN college basketball analyst Jay Williams admitted that sometimes fan taunts hit home and affected him as a player.

Still, Ken Paulson, the president of the First Amendment Center and a dean at Middle Tennessee State, said Missouri had no legal standing for ejecting the Antlers.

As a public university, which is considered a government entity under the law and subject to the first amendment, Alden’s decision to deem speech inappropriate and sanction The Antlers might have run afoul of the Constitution’s freedom of speech protection.

Meanwhile, the Antlers, who haven’t been kicked out of a game since Nov. 25, weren’t about to apologize for supporting the Tigers.

“I think we’re the best fan group in the country,” said Emmett Delaney, a Missouri junior and the Antlers’ grand poobah. “I think we have the same effect, if not greater effect than the Cameron Crazies. There’s 200 Cameron Crazies. We do it like a special forces team — small, but effective.”
Higher education leaders address Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge

Women's group hosts dialogue.

By Ashley Jost

Friday, March 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Leaders from four area higher education institutions outlined the challenges they face and touted some of their unique programs and missions while addressing a traveling women's leadership group Thursday.

The Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge, an annual traveling symposium for women, finished its three-day Mid-Missouri journey yesterday with the higher education panel. The group brings together women leaders across the state to visit different Missouri cities to learn about different issues. In Mid-Missouri, the group talked about education at all levels and policymaking through a trip to the Capitol, among other things.

The higher education discussion centered on the panel of local leaders, including University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe, Stephens College President Dianne Lynch, Columbia College Executive Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs Terry Smith and Moberly Area Community College Vice President for Instruction Paula Glover.

Challenges and changes were the themes.

For Columbia College, Smith explained that one of its biggest challenges is dealing with compliance and accreditation standards as the college has 34 locations across the country and online programs in every state. Keeping track of each state's differences along with the national standards is a task, he said.

As he has before, Wolfe said the decrease of state funding is one of the biggest challenges the UM System faces and that the burden tends to fall on the backs of students to help make up that lost funding.

While Glover's institution faces similar state appropriation issues, she said one of the biggest challenges her institution faces is staying afloat on technology.

"Brick and mortar is a lot less important to today's students," Glover said. "They can access their library from home now. Our professors have to stay ahead of that technology and be prepared, and we have to invest in training for those faculty and staff, which is another cost."
This change to the traditional concept of higher education was a focus for Lynch, too. She said higher education has shown a reluctance to change with the marketplace by responding to the changes as they come instead of getting out ahead of the curve.

"Change is the new common; it's the new constant," she said.

This is the first of four trips the Leadership Challenge will take this year before participants "graduate." Jan Grossmann, executive director for the organization, said the next trip is to Kansas City in June to learn about not-for-profit organizations and poverty. In the fall, the group visits Kirksville to learn about agriculture and small town life. During the winter, they finish the state tour in St. Louis learning about global issues and how those issues are related to the organization's sponsors, including Boeing, Ameren and Monsanto.

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Study: Schools hold back youngest kindergarteners more

Research studies kindergartners.

By Catherine Martin

Saturday, March 8, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (4)

A study by a University of Missouri researcher found the youngest kindergartners are about five times more likely to be held back in kindergarten than their older peers.

Francis Huang, assistant professor in the MU College of Education, said he has done other research looking at how age affects how children perform in school, but wanted to focus on some of the youngest students this time.

"It might not seem like such a big deal, but comparing somebody that just turned 5 to somebody that is 5 years and 11 months, that is 20 percent of their life, if you think about it," he said.

Huang said he read literature that indicated younger kindergartners were more likely to be held back, but he wanted to quantify the difference between younger and older students. He found the younger kindergarteners were much more likely to be held back, which he said results in a cost for parents and the school district.
"The youngest children are four to five times more likely to be retained than the oldest children … to me that is a big difference," he said.

Huang suggested two steps districts can take to deal with the issue. Simply acknowledging the problem is "a good first step," he said.

"It's one of those things that aren't really spoken much about," he said. "The first step in addressing an issue like this is acknowledging that this is happening."

The second step, he said, is to look at differentiating instruction in the classroom.

"It's gone by other names in the past, like varying instruction to meet the needs of individual students," Huang said. "Basically, it's just a teacher adapting to the different needs of kids in the classroom."

In Columbia Public Schools, Peter Stiepleman, assistant superintendent of elementary education, said local schools use differentiated instruction, giving students specialized attention in group and individual settings.

Stiepleman said age is among more than 25 markers on a scale that determines whether or not a student will be held back for a year. In the 2012-13 school year, four kindergarteners were held back, Stiepleman said, and three of those students had July or August birthdays.

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**Author Skloot to speak at symposium**

*Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 1:59 am*

**Author Rebecca Skloot, who wrote the New York Times bestseller "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," will discuss her book Monday during the kickoff event of a science symposium at the University of Missouri.**

Skloot's book is about a woman whose cells were taken without her knowledge and used to develop the polio vaccine and gene mapping, among other breakthroughs.

The book talk is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Monday in Jesse Auditorium. The event kicks off the 10th annual MU Life Sciences and Society Program Symposium, which seeks to bridge the gap between highly technical language associated with scientific research and the public's need for simpler explanations. This year's theme is "Decoding Science."
Oprah Winfrey and Alan Ball are working on turning Skloot's book into a film for HBO.

Admission is free and open to the public, but attendees must have a general admission ticket.

**Downtown Columbia developers willing to pay for sewer main upgrade**

Plan would foot sewer main cost.

By Andrew Denney

Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 1:59 am Comments (5)

The Columbia City Council will hold a special meeting Wednesday for a first reading of three development agreements for new student housing apartment complexes proposed near the University of Missouri campus. City leaders said the projects' developers are willing to cover the cost of needed infrastructure improvements to serve the area.

Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine said staff will present the council with development agreements from American Campus Communities, Collegiate Housing Partners and The Opus Group to build housing with a combined total of about 1,300 beds.

The agreements will be presented as bills that need at least two separate meetings for final passage. St. Romaine said a public hearing will be held at the council's regular meeting March 17, and then the bills will be presented for final passage March 19, the second day of a scheduled council retreat where the topic du jour will be financing infrastructure improvements to serve the wave of new downtown residents.

St. Romaine said the developers will pay "100 percent" of the cost of replacing an 8-inch sanitary sewer main running roughly along Providence Road and Flat Branch Creek with a main measuring as large as 18 inches. He said a dollar figure for improvements hasn't been determined.

"Needless to say, that's going to be a fairly substantial investment to improve the sewer system," St. Romaine said.
St. Romaine said the city put the rush on the agreements because the three developers want to meet an April 1 deadline for finalizing contracts to acquire property and to get construction underway.

American Campus Communities and Collegiate Housing Partners want to construct complexes with 718 beds and 350 beds, respectively, at Fourth and Fifth streets and Conley Avenue. Opus has proposed 250 beds near the intersection of Eighth and Locust streets.

St. Romaine said Collegiate Housing Partners' project should be the first off the starting block, with a timeline of opening for the fall 2015 semester. He said even though a portion of the sanitary sewer infrastructure would be improved, additional work will be needed further upstream on Flat Branch creek.

A rezoning request for American Campus Communities' project will be presented to the council at its March 17 regular meeting for a final vote. St. Romaine said the city is still waiting to see final designs for Opus' project.

Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala said he was pleased to hear the developers have indicated that they will shoulder costs for infrastructure improvements, but said he will wait to see the details of the development agreements before he makes a decision on whether or not to give them his vote.

"I don't want to come off as saying they should pay for it all," Skala said. "But on the other hand, neither should the public."

Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas said he was encouraged.

"Something like this is one of the requirements for my support," Thomas said. He also said he was pleased that Collegiate Housing Partners and Opus have proposed to purchase bus passes for tenants and construct fewer parking spaces at their respective sites, which might encourage tenants to depend on alternative transportation modes.

Wednesday's meeting will be at noon in the council chamber at City Hall, located at 701 E. Broadway. The council's two-day retreat is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 18 and from 8 a.m. to noon March 19 at the same location.

Pig virus expected to cause higher pork prices
JOPLIN, Mo. — A fast-spreading virus that can kill 80 percent of the piglets that contract it is rapidly spreading across Missouri hog farms and is expected to cause an increase in pork prices this summer.

In some cases, entire nurseries in Missouri containing thousands of piglets have been wiped out.

The Joplin Globe reports (http://bit.ly/1fhL44A ) that porcine epidemic diarrhea has killed 4 million to 5 million pigs nationwide, or about 4 percent of the pigs that would go to market later this year,

A swine specialist at the University of Missouri says the first case in Missouri was reported in the northwest in December. Marcia Shannon says since then, the virus has spread quickly, especially north of Interstate 70.

Shannon says any of the 3,000 farms in Missouri with pigs is susceptible.

BLACK WOMEN ROCK! event grows as it honors women's contributions

COLUMBIA — One woman raises money to assist rape victims in the Congo. One is the director of a nonprofit that teaches children about global issues. Another is a poet who uses the power of her words to blend artistry and activism.

These women and others were honored Saturday at Black Women Rock!, an annual event that recognizes black women in Columbia who have made a difference in the community and inspired others.

The keynote speaker and a recipient of the Black Women Rock! Award was Mary Nelson, who graduated from the MU’s School of Law in 1981 and the first African-American woman to be appointed to Missouri's Administrative Hearing Commission.
The event was coordinated by a committee of students and is meant to celebrate the accomplishments of black women who wouldn't otherwise be honored.

"Black women are often invisible, but the work we do is so vital," said Amina Simmons, who served as the graduate adviser.

Now in its fourth year, Black Women Rock! has honored more than 70 women in the Columbia area, including Lyah Beth LeFlore, a New York Times best-selling author and a member of the Stephens College Board of Trustees.

"The show is supposed to encourage and empower black women," said Kelsey Harris, design coordinator for the event.

"We never want to get lost in the shadows," Harris said. "We do so much for others, and we forget to stop and acknowledge ourselves."

Valencia Seuell received the Young, Gifted and Black Award. The MU sophomore started volunteering when she was in fourth grade, when she raised money for Hurricane Katrina victims.

"Embrace who you are, and you can do anything," she told audience members after receiving her award.

Hundreds of people filled the seats at MU’s Conservation Auditorium. The event included musical performances in addition to acceptance speeches from the honorees.

Bianca Merriwether coordinated the talent for the event, which included dancers from Boys & Girls Club in Columbia and singers from the Legion of Black Collegians' gospel choir.

Merriwether sang at the first Black Women Rock! and has enjoyed watching the event grow each year.

"It started as just a normal Mizzou classroom with one microphone. We take it up a notch every year," Merriwether said.

She recruited Columbia resident Aaric Wright to get more people involved.

"I don't know how anyone can come and not want to be a part of this," Wright said.
He believes the event encompasses everything that is good and positive about black culture. He said his mother has always been an inspiration to him.

"Not only does she rock; she is my rock," he said.

Simmons praised the committee who organized the event, calling them "some of the bravest, most tenacious and hardworking women I've ever met."

She said she thinks the event is important because it emphasizes that black women thrive in the community.

"Part of this is about claiming space in a place where black women were not expected to survive," she said.

**Niche: A weekly peek at an area artist**

**Stephanie Shonekan**

By [Amy Wilder](mailto:awilden@columbiatribune.com)

**Sunday, March 9, 2014 at 1:59 am**

Stephanie Shonekan has mastered the art of building bridges, though she is neither an engineer nor a construction worker. A writer, ethnomusicologist and University of Missouri professor, she innovatively links artistic expressions, both between mediums and between the African continent and African-American cultural traditions.

A child of the old and new worlds herself — she claims both Nigeria and Trinidad as homelands — she navigates the tides that have carried instruments like the banjo, and revolutions in music-making and poetry, back and forth across the Atlantic. She has a deep appreciation for both forms, though her own musical practice doesn't extend beyond childhood piano lessons.

"Growing up in Nigeria," she said, "the arts are not valued in the same way they are here. And even here, now, I think the arts are being devalued, … eroding."
In spite of pressure to become an engineer, doctor or lawyer, Shonekan found herself drawn to literary traditions, earning a bachelor's degree in English at the University of Jos and a master's degree in African-American literature at the University of Ibadan.

It was during graduate school that her passions for language and music began to connect. As a child, she was introduced to a wide range of music, from Abba and Boney M to Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton, "so by the time I got to studying African-American literature, I saw a way to connect African-American music to literature — and that's how I started on my path to ethnomusicology."

She connects the two not only through textual analysis of messages but also through the cadence of poetry and song.

"For people who grew up in places like West Africa — or Nigeria, to be specific — music is always part of what you're doing," she said. "The music is always functional. Even if it's just hearing women pounding yam, there's a rhythm that's functioning to help with the process of pounding yam. And then the text also … is telling a story, or a history, or it's urging change. I remember at that time, the person who I was most influenced by when I was becoming more aware of the importance of music was Fela Kuti."

Kuti, a famous Nigerian musician, activist and social critic, developed an unusual style of music known as afrobeat. He used his music and his infamous nightclub in Lagos, the Shrine, as a forum for criticizing corruption in his country's government.

"So while I was listening to some great African-American music, soul music, … I was also listening to Fela, who was talking about what we were going through in Nigeria at the time," Shonekan said. "So the music was functional on that level, too. I started to study African-American poetry — people like Langston Hughes … and all of those great African-American poets from the 1920s, from the Harlem Renaissance — what they were saying about the experience of being black in America. Then I would listen to Louis Armstrong's voice and even follow the cadences of the poetry alongside the music. I was beginning to see that the musical and poetic expression of African-Americans was tightly interwoven. When you listen to … a Langston Hughes poem, you can hear those tom-tom drums in your head. You can hear the cadence of the music."

She compared poets to musicians: for example, Amiri Baraka, who died this January, to Miles Davis. It was an easy step from these natural comparisons to her doctoral study at Indiana University in ethnomusicology. But before she made the journey across the sea, she worked for a management consulting firm and, often out of sheer boredom, wrote.

"I dabbled. … I always wrote things and put them away, like short stories," while in school, she said. A short story she created to entertain co-workers in a particularly boring meeting was submitted by a friend to a Nigerian newspaper and subsequently published.
Now, in addition to preliminary work on a book about the American afrobeat group Antibalas, Shonekan has been attempting to publish a novel about what might have happened with slaves who jumped ship during the middle passage.

"Did they die, or did they not?" she wondered. "It's reimagining the existence of those African slaves, ... going back to that geographic space and historical time. It's what I study. It's what I write about. It's what I teach — the bridge between Africa and America — so why not write a story about that?"

"I grew up in a society where there was modernity, … but also a lot of strong tradition," she added later. "I could go to school and read the literature that was on the curriculum, but I could also go to the market and shop and hear the women talk and laugh and tell stories. … I think there's so much power in being brought up in a culture that has retained its traditional values as well as accepted the modern."

FROM READERS: International athletes deal with distance off the track

Monday, March 10, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY JI-HO LEE/MISSOURIAN READER

Ji-Ho Lee is a freshman at Rock Bridge High School. His sister, Ji-Sung Lee, a seventh-grader at Gentry Middle School, is the photographer for this article.

Eight members of the Missouri track and field team belong to a unique club. They all have hometowns in countries other than the U.S.

Eric Dillon and Merid Seleshi are both distance runners from Ontario, Canada. Long jumper Kerri Furbert is from Bermuda. Three athletes come from small islands in the Caribbean. Jerrad Mason, middle distance, is from Barbados; Alex Pascal, javelin, hails from the Cayman Islands; Shinelle Proctor, high jump, calls Anguilla home. The last two Tigers have to cross the Atlantic Ocean to return home. Triple jumper Jonathan Ilori is from the United Kingdom. Katrine Haarklau, who competes in pole vault, javelin and combined events, is from Norway.

Haarklau’s hometown of Bergen, Norway, on the west coast of the country, is over 4,000 miles from the Mizzou campus. In order to reach Columbia, she has to make three
flights, first to a major European airport, then to New York, Minneapolis or Atlanta, and finally to St. Louis or Kansas City. “It takes ... 16 to 20 hours,” she said.

The process of coming to Mizzou was long and difficult. “It was quite confusing and complicated to get all the documents required sent over to (the) U.S.,” Haarklau said. She credits associate head coach Dan Lefever with helping her make the transition to Columbia. She also knows previous MU track and field athletes from Norway. “They did talk very warmly about this university and team, and that made me believe that Mizzou was the right place,” she said.

It is also difficult being so far from home for so much of the year. “I go home four weeks during Christmastime and 10 weeks in the summer,” Haarklau said. "Of course, it is challenging and sometimes painful to only see your family and friends in Norway only two times per year. But here, my team is like my family.”

Haarklau is also the only member of the team whose native language is not English. “English was the only class I did really struggle with and did hate all the way through primary school and high school,” she said. Despite the language barrier, Haarklau’s love and dedication to track and field pushed her to come to Mizzou.

“I wanted to start track when I was 6 years old because I saw it on TV, but I had to wait until I turned 10,” she recalled. Haarklau also played team handball until 17. At that point, the decision between handball and track was “the toughest decision ... in my life. I will miss handball, but track and field is simply something I can’t imagine a life without.”

For Haarklau and her international teammates, it is difficult living so far away from family and friends. But they have their own family here in Columbia. “One team, one Mizzou, one family,” Haarklau said.