Missouri cancer center announces partnership

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri cancer center is teaming up with a Houston-based medical group.

University of Missouri officials announced Friday that the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center in Columbia would become affiliated with the MD Anderson Cancer Network. The network is a program of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

MU Health Care CEO Mitch Wasden says the two centers share a common goal of eliminating cancer and called the network a "national leader in cancer care." Ellis Fischel's medical director added that the move would benefit patients with rare forms of cancer.

Last year, Ellis Fischel moved into a new $50 million facility at University Hospital. The affiliation was approved by the university board at a January meeting.

Two Worlds, One Problem

Colleges and the military face heavy criticism for their responses to sexual assault. Can they find a new approach?

By Libby Sander

NO MU MENTION

Colleges and the military have a problem in common.

Reports of sexual assaults and inadequate responses have roiled campuses and the armed services alike during the past two years, pushing college presidents and military brass into an
unwelcome spotlight. Congress, federal agencies, the White House, and victims of assault are calling not only for new, more-effective policies, but also for a broad change in institutional culture.

Both higher education and the military are backbones of society, with vital missions that include the development of young people. Now both face growing expectations that they heal a deeply rooted social ill. The call to chancellors and generals: Do better by the students and service members in your charge. Fix this problem.

The expectations bring many things: ample publicity, government interest, and a laserlike focus on process. What they don’t necessarily provide are answers.

Anu Bhagwati, a former Marine captain and company commander, testifies at a Senate hearing about sexual assault in the military. She is executive director of the Service Women’s Action Network, which presses for more equitable treatment of women in the armed services.

For decades, activists have raised the issue and argued for better resources for victims. Every so often, a high-profile incident has sparked outrage and promises of change.

This time the attention is acute. In both worlds, survivors—as many identify themselves—are driving the discussion. They are optimistic that a combination of grass-roots advocacy, legislative action, and sustained media exposure will lead to meaningful progress.

Some of the movements’ most effective tools are personal stories of trauma. A Coast Guard seaman whose supervisor harassed her, struck her, and later raped her, sued after leaving the military; her story was told in an Oscar-nominated documentary in 2012. A student at an elite private college published an account of her rape by a classmate and of the ensuing disregard by administrators, galvanizing survivors on campuses across the country.

In the two settings, survivors make similar claims: being brushed off, discouraged from reporting incidents, or subjected to an investigative and disciplinary process that is ineffective, inconsistent, harsh. What both colleges and the military should do, activists say, is try harder to prevent sexual assault, and when it does happen, protect and support the victim, investigate fairly, and punish the perpetrator.

Advocates are waging campaigns to hold both institutions accountable. Their efforts are getting traction in Washington. The Department of Education, spurred by a series of complaints on individual campuses, is investigating more than three dozen colleges for alleged civil-rights violations in their responses to sexual violence. In the Senate, debate over how the military-justice system handles sexual assault went on for months before lawmakers—though stopping short of more-stringent reforms—unanimously passed a measure this month that would change that process. Meanwhile, President Obama has urged colleges and military bases to focus on this problem.

The response so far has been uneven. Colleges have bolstered programs to prevent and respond to rape, hired and trained more staff, and convened conferences on the issue. But administrators
have also struggled to navigate an expanding web of federal regulations. And college presidents have stumbled publicly, inflaming student opinion with comments about whether rape is a problem they can—or should be expected to—solve.

Ending sexual assault is "probably not a realistic goal just given human nature, and that’s unfortunate," said Sally K. Mason, president of the University of Iowa, in an interview with the campus newspaper last month. Students quickly protested, condemning her remarks as "victim blaming"; the Board of Regents chastised her and told her to take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual assault. Ms. Mason apologized and announced plans for more prevention programs and tougher punishments for perpetrators.

The Pentagon’s official position on sexual assault within the ranks is that it affects military readiness and won’t be tolerated. The Defense Department’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, created in 2005, is responsible for expanding support for victims and increasing reporting and accountability. Reports, color-coded charts, strategic plans, and other documents refer to cultivating "an enduring culture of dignity and respect" and eliminating sexual assault within the military.

"Sexual assault is a crime that is incompatible with military service," Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel wrote to military leaders last spring. "It is a stain on our honor."

Campus by campus, colleges are reshaping their policies for responding to reports of sexual assault. At Dartmouth College, administrators have proposed training investigators to determine if an accused student is responsible. At the University of Connecticut, the president has required training to show students how to intervene when they see a classmate in harm’s way. Duke University has made expulsion the "preferred sanction" in cases of sexual assault. Hundreds of presidents, thousands of staff members—all trying to follow federal guidance and figure out what makes sense on their campuses.

In contrast, the military has two main advantages: centralized leadership and a real judicial system. With investigative services and a Judge Advocate General’s Corps, the armed forces are equipped to adjudicate criminal cases.

But making that system work for sexual assault has proved difficult. The Associated Press’s recent analysis of more than 1,000 reports of sex crimes involving U.S. military personnel over an eight-year period found "a pattern of random and inconsistent judgments," in which commanders frequently ordered "nonjudicial punishments" like docked pay and letters of reprimand. Last month the Army disqualified nearly 600 soldiers for "positions of trust" after a review of their credentials and backgrounds found infractions including sexual assault and child abuse.

Colleges aren’t courts of law, although some advocates would push them in that direction. Whether or not an alleged victim decides to report an incident to the police—and many don’t, or prosecutors don’t proceed—institutions are obligated to respond under federal civil-rights law. Their internal disciplinary systems, however, are generally designed for academic infractions, not crimes like rape.
The demand to create what amounts to a criminal-justice system has put colleges in uncomfortable territory, says David Lisak, a clinical psychologist and forensic consultant who advises colleges and the military on their handling of sexual-assault cases. "Is it legitimate to expect an attorney familiar, maybe, with college judicial systems to conduct this kind of criminal investigation?" he says. "I sense a fair amount of resistance in higher education to this, and I understand why."

But if colleges are required to investigate a rape case, he says, "then they have to do it well."

As colleges try to handle cases fairly, alleged victims and perpetrators, too, have filed lawsuits against their institutions arguing that proceedings went wrong. Some experts see such suits, with the prospect of damages or settlements, as a force for change.

Civil lawsuits aren’t much of an option for service members. Courts typically dismiss cases brought by military personnel against their supervisors, on the grounds that the judiciary shouldn’t interfere with the military’s affairs. The Coast Guard veteran, whose perpetrator got a 30-day restriction to the base after she reported the incident, was the lead plaintiff in a 2011 civil suit brought by 28 service members and veterans against former Secretaries of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates. While the allegations were "troubling," the judge said, he ruled that he couldn’t intervene in a case of military discipline. The case was dismissed.

Both systems are under continued scrutiny. Federal officials are investigating complaints against colleges, and the military is absorbing the impact of two high-profile cases. The court-martial this month of an Army general charged with sexually assaulting a junior officer took a turn when the judge said prosecutors may have been influenced by political concerns; the general agreed to a plea deal avoiding the most serious charges. Last week, the judge reprimanded the general and ordered him to forfeit $20,000 in pay.

Politics also figured in the court-martial this month of a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy charged with sexually assaulting a classmate. According to the defendant’s lawyer, a civilian, comments from Maryland lawmakers and President Obama about sexual assault in the military influenced the academy superintendent’s decision to recommend a court-martial. The judge last week found the midshipman not guilty.

The spotlight has brought changes in both worlds. Under the newest defense-reauthorization law, service members will see a variety of changes meant to improve conditions for victims of sexual assault. Military lawyers will run the hearings to determine if there’s enough evidence for a court-martial, for instance, and commanders will no longer be able to overturn findings of guilt.

The federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act took effect this month, requiring colleges to offer prevention programs and track incidents of stalking and of dating violence. Federal settlements with Yale University and the University of Montana have prompted new policies and more disclosure on those campuses and elsewhere. And dozens more investigations will very likely lead to other colleges’ having to change their ways.
College and military leaders alike have given the issue a high priority, declaring that the repercussions of sexual violence—undermining the educational experience and weakening the military’s effectiveness—interfere with their respective missions.

Leaders’ actions, and a willingness on the part of more victims to come forward, seem to indicate progress. In moments of impatience, however, some advocates reveal their skepticism.

"I see a lot of discussion, a lot of hearings and educational programs and presidential programs," says Laura Dunn, a law student at the University of Maryland at Baltimore who is a leader in the campus movement. "Yet what has been done? What has legitimately changed?"

Policies to address sexual violence mean little, she says, unless they’re backed up by laws that have teeth—and unless society’s most prominent institutions are willing to send clear messages about acceptable behavior.

Can colleges and the military reduce the prevalence of sexual assaults? Fairly resolve those that do occur? So far, pressure alone hasn’t solved the problem. But changes are under way, with more to come.

New chancellor seeks to protect Missouri brand

By MARA ROSE WILLIAMS The Kansas City Star

COLUMBIA, Mo. • About 1 p.m. on a recent Friday in the University of Missouri Student Union, the Missouri Tigers were battling the Florida Gators on a giant screen in the busy dining hall.

Below it, the university’s new chancellor, R. Bowen Loftin, was holding court, teaching a group of students the newest campus fashion trend — how to tie a bow tie. It’s a sartorial touch Loftin brought with him to campus about six weeks ago. More than a handful of students in the Union sported bow ties, and more students wearing them strolled on campus.

Spending time with students and making sure their needs are being met are among Loftin’s top priorities, he told The Star later that afternoon.

“I’ve talked with about a thousand students so far, one or two at a time,” Loftin said. “I asked each of them, ‘Where are you from, are you happy here?’ And 999 of them have said pretty quickly, ‘Yes.’ Only one hesitated.”
During the hourlong conversation, Loftin talked about online education, collaborating on degrees with other University of Missouri System campuses, protecting Missouri’s image, raising private funds and using social media.

Loftin, 64, a native of Hearne, Texas, announced his retirement from the presidency at Texas A&M University in July and in February took the reins as chancellor at Missouri. He’s so new that unpacked boxes still fill a corner in his office on the first floor of Jesse Hall.

Loftin had planned to return to the classroom after leaving the A&M presidency, but when the Missouri job came along, he couldn’t refuse. And so he came to Columbia with his bow ties and a host of ideas for moving the university forward.

Consider online education, which is changing the way students access knowledge in a big way, Loftin said.

“I’m a very big proponent of online instruction,” he said. For the 18- to 22-year-old undergraduate, he said, it’s a tool that allows students on campus to take needed courses they might not otherwise be able to fit into a packed schedule.

“We want students to graduate on time,” Loftin said. “We want students to manage their time well. So one key provision that online instruction gives them is flexibility.”

Between 35 percent and 40 percent of the students on campus are taking some type of online course. About 3,000 online learners are seeking a degree from a distance.

For now, though, few undergraduate degrees can be acquired fully online at Missouri.

“If we were to offer degrees totally online, we would begin to lose some of what makes us special,” Loftin said. College is not solely about academics, he said; it’s about acquiring social and leadership skills, too.

On the other hand, he said, “A big part of what we want to do here at Missouri is grow the access to online master’s programs for individuals who are working and can’t relocate here. But they want a name-brand degree.”

And although Loftin said he’s all about keeping tuition costs down and increasing access, don’t expect the cost of online education to drop any time soon. The $269.40 per credit hour tuition for Missouri residents is the same whether a student is sitting in a classroom in Columbia or with a laptop at their dining room table.

The same faculty teaches both. “We want to make sure that our brand is not damaged ... and that we have a quality graduate. If we turn out graduates who are not capable, that hurts our brand.”

As the nation’s educators experiment with new ways of delivering and measuring higher education, Loftin said protecting Missouri’s brand is a big part of his $450,000-a-year job.
For example, he said, competency education — which allows a student with real-world experience in a particular field to fast-track to a degree in that area — is not something he’s ready to push. Some other universities and colleges are trying it.

“I believe that in principle, it’s doable. But how do you contain the value of your brand? That is the problem I have,” Loftin said. “It is our asset. It’s what makes us who we are.”

And it’s key to persuading private donors to support the university.

Loftin, with his bass-heavy voice — a hint of southern drawl and charm — admits he’s good at wooing benefactors. In his last two years at Texas A&M, the school raised $1.4 billion.

With state support for public colleges and universities shrinking, donor support is crucial. “There’s a limit to how much you can cut,” Loftin said. “There are real limits on how far tuition can go up. You can’t squeeze blood out of a turnip.”

He started cultivating donor relationships — making calls to introduce himself — even before he was officially on the payroll.

His technique, he said, “is finding people who really want to change the world and have some money.”

Loftin said he’s likely to say to a donor: “Let’s get together and solve a really big problem. Let’s solve world hunger. This is an agricultural school: We can do that sort of thing.”

He’s talking too with the leaders of the University of Missouri System’s three other campuses and collaborating to offer more joint degree options similar to two already set with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, in pharmacy and public health. He’s talking about students walking away with a diploma that bears the names of two institutions or with two degrees from separate institutions attained at the same time. Such a dual-degree proposal, maybe even sharing faculty, is already in the works.

“No one school can be good at everything,” Loftin said. “So we can couple together assets. It’s good for the student.”

Loftin said everything that happens at the university comes back to the student. “It is very important to me, my highest priority,” he said. It’s why Loftin spends a chunk of time each day connecting with and listening to students on social media. With the twitter handle @bowtieger, he has about 11,300 followers.

“What I really want is to make this the best experience possible for them,” Loftin said. “It gives me encouragement to do my job. It reminds me why I am here.”
Colleges Should Step Up for Gay Athletes

By Michael Muska

Thank you, Michael Sam. Almost 16 years ago, The Chronicle "outed" me as the first openly gay male collegiate athletic director when I was hired by Oberlin College. I’ve waited all these years for someone like Sam to come out. The Southeastern Conference’s Defensive Player of the Year while at the University of Missouri, Sam acknowledged in February that he is gay. This has put the NFL brass into a quandary as to what to do with him in the coming pro draft. Does his draft status fall because teams aren’t comfortable with the publicity and how he’ll fit in, or will they judge him solely on his athletic ability?

It has also spurred welcome conversation about how colleges deal with gay athletes, and how they can do it better.

I’ve long argued that the Sam scenario— involving an outstanding college football or basketball player— would be the test case for breaking down the gay closet of college and professional sports. It blows away the myth that a gay athlete can’t compete at the highest level. In fact, we can rest assured that there have been closeted gay athletes on professional teams for many years.

The irony of all this is that athletes can be empowered and will most likely perform better after coming out. They don’t have to worry about denying who they are, or about someone outing them. They can finally focus on what they do best— excelling in their sport. Shouldn’t that be what all coaches want for every one of their athletes at whatever level they are competing?

But I also believe that any gay athlete must set his or her own timeline on when to come out. For the few pro athletes who have, it has been after their careers were over. But any timeline requires a support network, and it was evident that Sam’s teammates had his back. I suspect opposing teams might not have been so gracious to Sam if they had known. The ovation that Sam received at a recent Missouri basketball game also speaks volumes about the important support of the student population there.

That support is a reminder that the issue of gay athletes is a generational one. As we have also seen with gay marriage—a 2011 survey found that more than 71 percent of incoming college freshmen supported it— this generation of students asks what the big deal is. And as I’ve often discussed with college teams, I don’t believe many athletes today are truly homophobic, but rather are "gay uncomfortable," meaning they would not know how to deal with an unfamiliar locker-room dynamic that included a gay teammate. The reality is that they probably have been dressing with a closeted teammate for years.
Although the NCAA added sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination clause 14 years ago, the organization left enforcement in the hands of the individual institutions. It is time for every college athletic department in this country to take an affirming step forward to make sure all athletes feel safe in their programs. Each college should designate an administrator students can speak to if they have felt unsafe or uncomfortable on their team, whether the problem comes from teammates or from a coach.

Coaches must also take a leadership role on this issue. The days of telling male athletes they play like a girl, a pansy, or a bunch of little fags (yes, I’ve heard that!) are over. The members of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, required by the NCAA at each institution, must step to the front line for the welfare of all their fellow athletes. Finally, the NCAA must also crack down on negative recruiting that focuses on the sexual orientation of an opposition coach or athlete.

While at Oberlin, I learned from one of our prospects that a coach at a rival college was pointing to me as a reason not to attend our college.

A quick call to its athletic director with a veiled threat that I would go to its gay-student group and school newspaper put a quick end to that. Today’s college students are not going to tolerate that kind of behavior by anyone on their campus.

At my current institution, a prep school in Brooklyn, N.Y., I’m fortunate to have an administration that will not tolerate verbal abuse or bullying of any kind. We should expect no less from the colleges and universities that our students—athletes or not—move on to.

I was upset when The Chronicle outed me years ago, though I had not made a secret of my sexual orientation. In reality, however, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I have heard from hundreds of coaches and students over the years, and have spoken on college and high-school campuses about making athletics safe and supportive for all students so they can reach their full potential.

In gay culture, we use the terms "gay pride," "gay proud," and "gay strong." It is time for those outside the gay community to embrace those terms and recognize their relevance to gay athletes as well. I salute Michael Sam as a role model for coming out on his own terms and opening the door for others. And I challenge the sports establishment—on the campus and off—to respect, protect, and support all gay athletes who are as courageous as they are gay strong and gay proud in the years ahead.
Michael Sam, the University of Missouri defensive lineman who hopes to be the first openly player drafted into the NFL in May, had an impressive Pro Day at Mizzou on Thursday, mostly erasing a disappointing combine performance.

But first, he started the day with a deeply personal letter to the Columbia, Mo., community that supported him throughout his college career, writing: “You gave me a chance to live my truth without judgment, without hesitation and with great discretion and respect.”

The full text of the letter reads:

To my fellow University of Missouri students, athletes, faculty, alumni and supporters:

From my first recruiting trip to the University of Missouri, I felt something extraordinary and special — something I didn’t feel anyplace else.

I didn’t have a name for it then; I do now. It’s called family.

And to me that family is defined by unconditional love.

Certainly you cheered my successes, but you also picked me up when I fell.

Maybe most importantly, you gave me a chance to live my truth without judgment, without hesitation and with great discretion and respect.

When I came out last month, I did it with the confidence that my Mizzou “family” would always be there for me.

To put it mildly, the love and acceptance I felt was amazing.

The day after the announcement, my name was spelled out in the stadium; fraternities hung #StandWithSam banners; then when I went to the basketball game to honor the football team’s Cotton Bowl victory, I worked hard not to cry because of the amazing reception.

I have a long journey ahead of me, a lot of hard work and many dreams I want to fulfill.

But I do it with the confidence that my Mizzou family will be there for me every step of the way.
I will continue to work my hardest; I will strive to make you all proud.

And I will be a Tiger forever.

Love,

Michael

A little later in the day, he drew a crowd to his workout for scouts.

Although he tweaked his hamstring in the workout for scouts, his numbers showed improvement over his performance at the combine a month ago. His vertical jump increased to 32 inches (from 31) and his broad jump when from 114 to 120 inches. His 40 improved most dramatically, from 4.91 to 4.69, 4.70 and 4.75 on three officials’ stopwatches.

All in all, a pretty good day.

MU law professor involved in Hobby Lobby case

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - An associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Law is involved in a case that goes before the U.S. Supreme Court this week.

Josh Hawley is on a team of about 15 lawyers working on Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Inc., which addresses whether businesses can use religious objections to avoid a requirement to provide insurance coverage for birth control for employees.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports the case goes before the court Tuesday. Hobby Lobby objects to covering certain contraceptives in its health plans required by the federal health law.
Paul Clement, former U.S. solicitor general, will argue the case for Oklahoma City-based Hobby Lobby. Hawley has worked on briefs and oral arguments in the case for the Hobby Lobby legal team.

MU researcher studies how social workers can help military veterans

MU researcher is looking for links.

By Alan Burdziak

Saturday, March 22, 2014 at 2:00 am

Veterans with access to social workers might be less likely to enter the criminal justice system, according to University of Missouri researchers.

In addition, Kelli Canada, assistant professor at the MU School of Social Work, said veterans who have entered the criminal justice system have a better chance at success and recovery if they are able to get treatment from social workers at any point during the judicial process.

Those conclusions are included in a paper that reviews existing research on the subject and will be published in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Forensic Social Work.

Canada also is working on two research projects she expects to be published within the next year. One is a study of Boone County Circuit Court's nascent Veterans Treatment Court, and one is a study of veterans on probation or parole in Missouri.

Canada said veterans differ from the general population, but researchers are still determining the reasons behind that.

"The reality is we are still in a really early stage of understanding all the reasons they are being arrested and if they are specific to their military experience or not," she said.
To be effective, social workers would need access to veterans at some point, including before they enter the criminal justice system, while they traverse through it or as they re-enter society if they've been incarcerated. Each has a set of obstacles, with veterans in jails and prisons particularly difficult to reach. But overcoming cultural perceptions also can be difficult.

"There's a lot of stigma around help-seeking within the military culture," Canada said.

Columbia's Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital was not included in her paper, Canada said, but it is part of the two ongoing studies she is conducting. At Truman, Danielle Easter, a social worker and veterans justice outreach coordinator who also works with the Boone County Veterans Treatment Court, said she faces several difficulties in treating veterans.

Many who have been locked up don't have a driver's license, Easter said, making transportation difficult, and some have problems with permanent housing or finding enough support in the community. When someone is in custody, Canada said, it can disrupt their normal routine of medication and also forces them to see different doctors or clinical professionals, potentially exacerbating their condition.

A social worker's job is to evaluate the veteran when they first seek treatment and assess their needs in several areas, whether they need help for substance abuse, mental health problems or other conditions. "I think it helps to have that clinical perspective on the team to get a better understanding of an individual," Easter said of her role.

They can then schedule their appointments and set them up with professionals, medical or otherwise, to help them get the help they need, Easter said. At Truman, that can include various outpatient programs, an intensive inpatient addiction treatment program or referrals to other treatment centers such as Phoenix Programs or VA hospitals in other areas.

---

**Custom-made implants offer new possibilities in joint-replacement surgery**

By [Caroline Dohack](#)

**Sunday, March 23, 2014 at 2:00 am**
Knee pain had always been an issue for Irene Sackreiter.

"I've always been knock-kneed. When you have a misalignment, there is unusual wear and tear on one side of the joint, or arthritis sets in. There's soft-tissue tear and trauma. It's just like a snowballing thing," Sackreiter said.

Five years ago, Sackreiter had one of her knee joints replaced. Recovery wasn't easy.

"The surgery is truly barbaric. During the early rehab, the pain is just so tremendous, and that's why the patient has to be on these incredible narcotics just to do rehab," Sackreiter said.

It's understandable, then, that Sackreiter would be reluctant to have her other knee joint replaced after it started causing her discomfort. But when the pain became so unbearable that she couldn't sleep, she scheduled a visit with an orthopedic surgeon to discuss her options. She then scheduled a "second-opinion" appointment with Sonny Bal, an orthopedic surgeon specializing in hip and knee replacement at University of Missouri Health Care. Bal told her about ConforMIS, a company that uses digital imaging and 3-D models to create custom joint implants.

For Sackreiter, the idea of a just-for-her knee joint was appealing.

"There's no way a mechanical apparatus can feel like the one you were born with," Sackreiter said. "The off-the-rack knee, it clicks sometimes. It pops sometimes. It doesn't hurt, but it's a mechanical thing."

Bal said it makes sense that what he refers to as an "off-the-shelf implant" wouldn't be a perfect fit.

"Those designs are at least 30 to 40 years old now. They are based off anatomical information obtained from cadavers and also radiographs of the general population," Bal said.

Like so many other things, "general population" means Caucasian male.

This is problematic, Bal said, because women have different contours to their knees than do men, and race also can factor into knee shape.

"Asians, for example, have a knee that is bigger front to back and smaller side to side. African-Americans have a different shape to their knee," Bal said. "… As the diversity of our population increases, particularly in a cosmopolitan population like Columbia, most operations are compromised."

What's more, biomechanics is a complicated matter influenced not only by what's happening with the knee itself, but also with the hip and ankle. So, Bal said, surgeons must make allowances for the patient's other structural idiosyncrasies. This might mean removing some of the patient's bone to make the leg fit around the new joint.
Custom implants, however, can eliminate these limitations.

After a patient and his or her doctor have decided that a knee replacement is the best bet, image technicians take CT scans that show the critical angles of the patient's hip, knee and ankle. These images then are transmitted to software engineers at ConforMIS, who translate those variables to create a model of the patient's bones, as well as the knee-joint implant and the tools that will be used to perform the surgery on the patient. They use the model to test the implant and the instruments before shipping it to the surgeon.

Bal said the custom instruments that come with the new knee are a crucial aspect to this type of surgery. Generic instruments, he said, require a lot of maneuvering to fit onto the patient's bones correctly. But the custom instruments are designed to fit precisely over the patient's bones. This means there's less chance for error and thus less chance for repeat surgery.

"You get to do it right; you get to do it once," Bal said.

What's more, Bal said, the cost for a knee replacement using a custom implant is about the same as a replacement using an off-the-shelf implant because there's less workload for the surgeon and his or her staff.

Bal, who also is a consultant to ConforMIS, said that alignment comparison studies he has performed using data from both custom and non-custom implants show significantly better results for the custom implants. Bal has presented these findings at the International Society for Technology and Arthroplasty and the Clinical Orthopedic Society, and his reports are being peer-reviewed for the Journal of Arthroplasty.

Not many surgeons perform procedures using custom implants at this time, but Bal said he expects to see more adopt this method and for companies creating custom implants to expand their offerings to include more joints.

"That's where we're going with the future," Bal said.

Adam Hayden, vice president of marketing for ConforMIS, said the company already is looking into these possibilities.

"I can't disclose what those implants or joints would be, but our technology is broadly applicable to all joints in the human body," Hayden said.

As for Sackreiter, she's reporting a faster recovery this time around. After either surgery, she was able to resume daily activities after about eight weeks.

Still, she was able to resume her favorite activities much sooner than she anticipated. These days, she can take walks outside at a reasonable clip and hopes to be able to hike this summer. Although she hasn't resumed another favorite activity — bicycling on the trail with her husband — she is able to get some exercise in using a stationary bike.
Therapy dogs remind of animals' healing power

March 22

BY JOANNA HLAVACEK
Lawrence Journal-World

LAWRENCE, Kan. — It's an unseasonably warm March afternoon at Brandon Woods at Alvamar retirement community, and resident Marion Counts, 79, is in his room doling out snacks to a pair of hungry dogs.

Brahma, a 6-month-old Boxer and the more outgoing of the two, is the first to receive his prize. His sister, Shakti, at almost three years old, is a little more patient. The blue pit bull, a certified therapy dog, remains curled up under Counts' feet and calmly waits her turn.

"You're going to make him fat, Marion," says Raven Rajani, founder and director of Loving Paws Animal Assisted Therapy.

"Fat and happy," Counts retorts with a smile, offering up another treat to the puppy.

Brahma and Shakti, along with their owner Rajani, are some of Counts' most frequent visitors at Brandon Woods. The retired businessman suffers from Parkinson's disease, diabetes and a rare heart condition. Once an avid outdoorsman, these days Counts spends more time at the hospital than outside hunting or fishing.

He misses being active, Rajani says, and he misses having a dog.

That's where Loving Paws comes in. The nonprofit provides therapy services across Douglas County, including regular trips to Brandon Woods, Kansas University residence halls and the Lawrence Cancer Center, as well as in-home private visits.

Loving Paws consists of 12 dog-and-owner volunteer teams and boasts a variety of breeds, ranging from muts to pit bulls to Labradoodles. Each team goes through a certification process under the supervision of professional trainers before joining the group. The program offers open-to-the-public training sessions, the first of which took place in January.
Rajani, who also owns Lucky Paws Bakery in downtown Lawrence, founded the nonprofit in August.

"We can learn a lot from dogs. They don't sit and ponder and worry and stew," Rajani says. "They're just present. They are open and they embrace the moment."

Research shows there are numerous health benefits to the visits, too. Rajani says interacting with animals reduces blood pressure, anxiety, stress and depression. **And a recent University of Missouri study found that just a few minutes of stroking a dog causes a release of feel-good hormones including serotonin, oxytocin and prolactin.**

Rajani, who is pursuing her master's degree in clinical social work at KU, says her program offers a unique brand of healing to people like Counts. Loving Paws specializes in animal-assisted therapy, which is designed with specific goals in mind for each client.

"For example, if someone that I was seeing in Brandon Woods had a stroke and they started to recover and they're having mobility issues, say, with their right arm, we can create exercises that incorporate Shakti," she says. "It could be something like stroking the dog or throwing a ball for her. It engages them with the animal."

In Marion Counts' case, Rajani says, the idea is to bring a bit of comfort to a man struggling with immense pain. Counts and his wife, Geraldine, ran an oil company together for several years before retiring and moving to Lawrence three years ago to be closer to treatment facilities and their daughter, Jackie. Their son, Curtis, remains in Russell, where the two met in the 1950s.

"He was very smooth looking, and he had muscles," Geraldine, 72, reminisced of their first meeting at a dance. "And he'd always wear a white shirt on Saturday nights. That's a thing of the past."

A lot has changed for the couple over the past few years, Geraldine noted. After breaking his left arm in late January, Marion relocated from the Counts' Brandon Woods town home to the facility's health center to undergo physical therapy. His schedule includes three-times-a-week dialysis for his heart condition and almost daily trips to the doctor.

Watching her husband of 54 years endure the pain of a broken arm on top of everything else is "heartbreaking," Geraldine says.

"Whenever there's been a tragedy or something, he's always been there for me, and I guess for each other," Geraldine says to Marion, her eyes welling with tears. "Life changes. I mean, I always thought we'd die in Russell, but we're not gonna do that."
After feeding the dogs, Marion relaxes in his large, brown recliner, his sneakered feet propped on the foot rest. Sunlight peeks through the window blinds, illuminating a row of birthday cards on top of the armoire and the "Happy Birthday!" balloon brushing up against the ceiling. The mood in the room is tranquil, and even Brahma the puppy looks ready to doze off.

Geraldine is working on a quilt (she's already made one for each of her five grandchildren; this one's for herself) and reminds Marion about an upcoming family visit. A great-granddaughter, named after Marion, was born in August, but his illness prevented him from traveling to Colorado to see her. Now, she's coming to Lawrence for a visit.

"Some days are good days, some days aren't so good," Marion says.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/03/22/4908196/therapy-dogs-remind-of-animals.html#storylink=cpy

East Campus residents can’t reach consensus on permit-parking plan

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, March 22, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (10)

East Campus is no closer to getting its own permit-parking program after three information-gathering meetings.

At the latest meeting Thursday, there was little consensus on what type of program residents would prefer. The city has held meetings with East Campus residents to discuss a potential permit-only parking system similar to the one now enforced in the North Village Arts District.

While East Campus residents have long had problems with MU students, faculty and staff who do not live in the neighborhood parking their cars in the area and commuting to
Richard Stone, traffic engineer with the Columbia Public Works Department, outlined four proposals to the crowd of several dozen residents that gathered Thursday. One option was to provide two permits per building, available to residents at $20 per permit, without any meters except some possible just near campus. Another option was to make available $10 permits with no limit per building. The third option was for two free permits per unit with parking meters in "select locations." In all cases, the permit restrictions would be in place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The other option was to not establish a parking-permit program.

All of the options were proposed to apply to a section of East Campus that is predominantly student housing, and some residents thought that wasn't fair. Discussion about the parking meters took up a good portion of the meeting. Many residents asked why they would be expected to pay a meter to park outside of their own homes.

Stone said meters would help fund the program, which requires enforcement. Public Works projects an East Campus permit-parking program would cost about $27,000 and would generate about $34,000. Stone said this is considered "breaking even" as meter revenue could fluctuate. Without meters, Stone said the program would run a $10,000 deficit.

Dionne George, off-campus student services coordinator at the University of Missouri, said her office is working with the MU student government to gauge student interest. A student survey was conducted a few weeks ago and asked students who live on East Campus if they would continue to live there if a parking permit was required.

George said this issue is important to the university because "commuter issues are our issues, too."

At the end of the meeting when it was clear there would be no consensus or resolution, Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe, whose ward encompasses East Campus, suggested scheduling another meeting. A date for that meeting has not been set.
Many factors add to city's success

By Jeff MacLellan

Saturday, March 22, 2014 at 2:00 am

In my last column, I addressed the performance of the real estate market last year. It marked the second-straight year where the recovery in housing and construction elicited nearly audible sighs of relief from those serving the sector.

This month, we will look at some other indicators that taken together with the real estate column will give a more comprehensive look at the overall performance of the market.

The city of Columbia estimated that the population of Columbia reached 115,155. Our population was determined to be 108,500 by the 2010 census, the only year we have definitive numbers. That said, a population of 115,155 would represent an increase of 6,655 inhabitants over that timeframe, an annual increase of 2,215, or approximately 2 percent, which is in line with historical growth rates.

I dwell on population growth because it is the lifeblood of our existence. Our existing population and its growth is the core of our economy providing housing, transportation, goods and services for that number of people. It is our raw material, and it has driven our economic growth for years.

Our educational engine has driven the growth in recent years. The University of Missouri has had unprecedented growth for the past 10 years. In particular, enrollment amounted to 28,070 in 2007 and peaked at 34,748 in 2012. In 2013, the enrollment actually dropped by 90 students to 34,658. That said, enrollment is up 6,588 students since 2007, or 23.5 percent, contributing very significantly to the growth of our community.

Concurrent with the growth in our population, so did the number of jobs in the community. That growth was particularly strong in the fourth quarter of 2013 based upon numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Fourth-quarter jobs in 2013 averaged 96,500 as compared to 94,300 in the fourth quarter of 2012, an increase of 2,200 jobs or 2.3 percent. The growing number of jobs also had a very positive effect on our unemployment rate.
Unemployment averaged 3.8 percent in the fourth quarter, with both November and December showing unemployment rates at the 3.7 percent level.

The unemployment rate had not reached those low levels since the 2006-07 timeframe and is approaching the historical rate of 3 percent seen during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Another positive number in last year's economy was the increase in local retail sales to the level of $2.255 billion from $2.173 billion the previous year. That represented an increase of $82 million in sales or 3.8 percent.

An increase in retail sales has a direct effect on local coffers as the sales tax take for the city of Columbia increased from $20.841 million to $21.628 million, again an increase of $788,000 or 3.8 percent.

For many recent years, a weak number was the business licenses issued at the city. Business licenses peaked at 5,008 in 2008, the year of the financial collapse. Since that time, business licenses showed a decline until last year, when they showed very modest growth of 37 licenses to the level of 4,886. The good news is that business licenses last year totaled 5,040, an increase of 154 to reach an all-time high. That represented a more reasonable growth of 3.2 percent and the first time we have had significant growth since 2007.

There was one negative trend. Our cost of living, which for most of the years I have observed it, has run 7 percent to 10 percent under the national average. This past year, that difference narrowed 96.9 percent of the national average, or 3.1 percent below average. That is probably a small price to pay for a healthy economy such as ours that is the envy of many around the state and the nation.

In summary, with the very positive developments in the real estate segment of our economy added to our continued growth in population, in our education engine, in jobs, in retail sales and in business licenses, all of those factors contributed to the best year economically in many.
Cairns delivers poems, psalms by word-of-mouth

By Aarik Danielsen

Sunday, March 23, 2014 at 2:00 am

Place any number of Scott Cairns' poems beside each other, and they read like a liturgy for seekers, a common prayer book for those who realize that understanding — let alone trying to put into words — a transcendent being is an uncommon thing, indeed.

There is, then, a rightness to the way his work is presented on "Parable," a new album in which Cairns' readings are framed by meditative music from composers Jeff Johnson and Roy Salmond. A self-described "God-obsessive," the University of Missouri professor views poetry as something of a spiritual discipline. Here, his utterances, the reverent and irreverent, are connected by music that similarly spans a variety of tempos and temperaments.

"Parable" is just one of several Cairns projects to hit the atmosphere recently, along with the books "Idiot Psalms" and "Endless Life: Poems of the Mystics."

Johnson and Salmond worked from prior recordings of Cairns' poems, captured on a single day several years ago in Vancouver, to create music that is interstitial, never incidental. Cairns' words are not set to music; rather, the music sets a tone and context in which to receive his sentences and stanzas. Cairns praised his cohorts, calling them "astonishingly good listeners" who paid due attention to pattern, cadence and "rhythmic recurrences" within the verses. They composed by taking cues from him rather than forcing their musical vision onto his work.

This kindred intent and reciprocal interest furthers rather than detracts from a poem's purpose — to act "as a scene of meaning-making," Cairns said. Other texts, even those that purport to be poems, can exist as "documents of meaning made" and are shaped to lead readers to one particular end and one only. True poems allow readers to participate in the process and "can be read repeatedly" because there is always more to be delivered and received, he said.
Cairns wanted to leave the listener the same possibilities here, his pauses and emphases acting as an aural equal to line breaks and curious word choices. The two work as one — his delivery is soulful and sharp; the music of Johnson and Salmond is like a stretching exercise for the spirit, preparing the listener for the work of engaging the words. Violin, piano, keyboards, guitar and ukulele swirl and swoop beautifully in lament and jubilation, reflection and revelation. "Parable" can, then, be heard repeatedly, amplifying that necessary element of poetry.

After an initial prelude, the aptly titled "Possible Answers," Cairns makes a curious opening statement. "The Spiteful Jesus" is, by his own admission, "a very cranky poem." Cairns' inspiration — or, perhaps, his discouragement — came during a drive to visit an Eastern Orthodox community in Wichita, Kan. Stretched parallel to the highway was a series of billboards that conflated and, in Cairns' mind, confused messages of eternal love and damnation. Upon arriving, he settled in with a cup of coffee and penned hard phrases about a strain of religion that has embraced misanthropy to the detriment of philanthropy.

One phrase particularly stings: "I saw Him when, as a boy in a church, I first met souls in hell." In those words, he traces the heritage between such billboard prophets and the saints-in-name-only he encountered as a boy perched in a pew. Believers who have constructed their own, implacable Jesus also have constructed their own personal hells, he is saying. The persecution that brings them pride is not owed to their fidelity to an unpopular God, but rather their wrong-headed actions toward others.

Central to the album are Cairns' "Idiot Psalms"; six appear on "Parable" from a larger group of 14 unifying the book that shares their name. Threads followed here spring from twin traditions within Cairns' own Eastern Orthodox faith, those of "idiorhythmic monks" and "holy fools." The former are cut off from society, following their own rule. The latter will sacrifice name and reputation to aid another's spiritual progress. In these poems, Cairns bears witness to one man's movement from an isolated existence to a connectedness that cuts deep, introducing us to "an idiot on his way to being a fool," he said.

"Endless Life" revisits out-of-print material in which Cairns provides "poetically enhanced versions" of writings by Western and Eastern church fathers: Paul, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa and others. These adaptations and translations allow him to add his voice to a conversation that has taken ages and is not finished. "That's how I compose," he said. "I read and respond."

Cairns' faith tradition is one that calls just a few theologians, and those who are called must be poets, not dogmatists. They must regard and work within a language that "reminds us that we don't know anything," he said. So, it's in navigating the unknowable, responding to an ancient dialogue and the one within himself, that Cairns finds pathways to his work. In that way, his poems retain a constancy even as they expand and contract, evolve and consider.

"It's just the one thing," Cairns said with a wry half-smile. "Ideally, it's a more satisfactory grappling with the one thing. ... Since I was a little kid, I had certain questions and joys, and those haven't really changed. It's coming to new terms — quite literally — with what I perceive to be an endless obsession. It's God's love and how that figures — also that's quite a literal thing.
too — how it figures, how one figures it through language, embodies it, performs it in your life. ... So, yeah, it's just the one thing. There is no other thing.”