Illinois man injured in Columbia balcony collapse

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A University of Missouri student is in critical condition after falling from a second-story balcony at a weekend party.

The Columbia Missourian (http://bit.ly/1vWk5n4 ) reports that 19-year-old Jack Lipp, an Illinois resident, fell 15 feet onto a gravel driveway early Saturday at a downtown home.

Columbia police want to talk to some of the 100 partygoers who fled the scene when officers arrived.

Resident Mike Novak told the newspaper that the balcony's railing was broken and he told guests it wasn't safe to stand on. He said no one witnessed Lipp's fall.

Lipp remained in critical condition Tuesday at University Hospital in Columbia.

MU to grant 2,570 degrees, Hindman to get honorary degree

COLUMBIA -- The University of Missouri's flagship campus will grant 2,570 degrees this weekend, including an honorary Doctor of Laws degree to alumnus and former Columbia mayor Darwin Hindman.
That number includes 1,916 bachelor's degrees, 474 master's degrees, and 152 doctorates.

Each school and college holds its own graduation ceremony. Speakers at the various ceremonies will include MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, Missouri State Parks Director Bill Bryan, and John Haskins, a J-school alumnus and editor of magazines at The New York Times.

Former Columbia Mayor Darwin Hindman will receive his honorary degree at the Honors Ceremony Saturday at the Missouri Theatre, at which he will also speak. Hindman, a former five-term Columbia mayor, is known for his advocacy of parks and recreational programs. He is closely associated with Katy Trail State Park.

Hindman earned degrees in political science and law from the university in 1955 and 1961. As mayor, he worked to make Columbia more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly.

Friday commencement ceremonies include those for nursing, business, journalism, and engineering.

Saturday exercises include honors; human environmental sciences; agriculture, food and natural resources; health professions; graduate studies; natural resources; and arts and sciences.

The ROTC commissions its officers on Sunday.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Former Mayor Darwin Hindman to receive honorary degree at MU commencement

Tuesday, December 16, 2014 | 4:46 p.m. CST BY ALEKSANDR GORBACHEV

COLUMBIA — Darwin Hindman, a former mayor of Columbia, will be presented with an honorary degree from MU as part of the upcoming weekend's commencement ceremonies.

Hindman will receive the degree Saturday at the Missouri Theatre during the Honors Ceremony. Other ceremonies will be held from Friday to Sunday at the Missouri Theatre, Hearnes Center and other locations.

In all, 2,367 students will be presented with 2,570 degrees, including 1,916 bachelor’s degrees, 474 master’s degrees, 152 doctorates, seven law degrees and 21 education specialist degrees. The university will also recognize 276 honors graduates.
"The University of Missouri is confident that our graduates have much to contribute to the state, nation and world," said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment at MU, according to a news release from the MU News Bureau.

Twelve ceremonies will be held during the weekend, many of which will include addresses to graduates from notable MU alumni as well as university and city officials.

Other speakers include MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who will speak Saturday at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources ceremony; John Haskins, managing editor of magazines at The New York Times and an MU alumnus, who will speak Friday at the School of Journalism ceremony; and Bill Bryan, director of Missouri State Parks, who will speak Saturday at the School of Natural Resources ceremony.

There will be a live stream of Missouri Theatre ceremonies in Keller Auditorium in the Geological Sciences building. That stream can also be watched online.

Hindman, the recipient of the honorary degree, served five terms as the mayor of Columbia from 1995 to 2010. As mayor, he managed to secure a $22 million federal grant that helped to promote cycling and walking in the city. Hindman also established numerous community physical activity programs, curated the reconstruction of Stephens Lake Park and was instrumental in the creation of the Katy Trail State Park.

An MU alumnus who received his degrees in political science and law in 1955 and 1961, respectively, Hindman has already been recognized with other honors from MU, including a Mizzou Alumni Association Faculty-Alumni Award and an MU College of Arts and Science Distinguished Alumni Award.

The full schedule of the commencement ceremonies and events can be found at the University Registrar’s website.

$1 million grant to help train mental health professionals

Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm
The University of Missouri School of Social Work and University of Missouri-St. Louis School of Social Work have banded together to expand training for mental and behavioral health professionals across the state with the help of a $1 million grant.

The grant comes from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, and the project is focused on the health needs of young adults ages 16 to 25 in Missouri and East St. Louis, Ill. The grant will provide 84 master’s students from the two schools with $10,000 while they train on the job. In addition to the living stipend, the grant also funds on-site and Web-based training for health professionals across the state.

Flu cases jump early in Boone County

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (1)

Influenza has hit hard and early in Mid-Missouri, with the virus mutating slightly to dodge at least one strain in this year’s flu vaccine. The result is a significantly higher number of flu cases reported compared to this time last year.

“We’re in the thick of it,” said Andrea Waner, spokeswoman for the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Public health officials on Tuesday said Boone County had 271 new cases of flu during the week of Dec. 7 to Dec. 13, compared to only 16 confirmed cases for the same period last year. Waner said 267 of those new cases were Influenza A, and the other four were Influenza B.

For the previous week, the city/county health department reported 170 new cases compared to only 13 a year earlier.

“There’s a very obvious spike that started mid-November,” Waner said.

Boone County had 289 flu cases to this point in 2013, with the count beginning the last week of August. This year’s total count to date is 709. Waner said the virus is prevalent in children ages 5 to 14 this year.

“The shot doesn’t work as well this year,” said Michael Cooperstock, medical director of the University of Missouri infection control program. “There’s a reduction in the effectiveness of the vaccine.”
But that doesn’t mean people who have not yet been vaccinated should put off getting the shot.

“It’s not too late to get the vaccine, but I would hurry,” Cooperstock said. The local flu epidemic, he said, is only half over.

The flu shot or flu mist spray is recommended for anyone age 6 months and older.

“These are the things you need to do,” Cooperstock said. “Any protection you can get against influenza is worth it.”

University of Missouri Health Care did not provide specific numbers for influenza-related emergency room visits or hospitalizations, but Cooperstock said “the numbers have gone up fairly quickly” during the past three weeks.

Columbia Public Schools is seeing a typical, seasonal increase in students and staff getting flu and cold-like symptoms, said Michelle Baumstark, community relations director.

“All students are offered free vaccinations, and the district’s health services coordinator works with the health department to monitor flu and other seasonal illnesses.

Baumstark encouraged parents to keep children at home if they show symptoms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned earlier this month that the dominant influenza virus is H3N2, which typically leads to a more severe flu season that could result in more deaths and hospitalizations than usual. In addition, the CDC announced that about half of the H3N2 viruses detected so far are different strains from the ones included in this year’s vaccine, which means flu shots will be less effective.

The early flu spike is “particularly worrisome” to public health officials, Waner said, because of upcoming holiday gatherings where additional exposure to flu viruses will be possible. She said that in addition to the vaccine, proper hygiene — good handwashing habits and covering coughs and sneezes — are the best ways to prevent getting the flu.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Nixon, key lawmakers endorse plan to finance Capitol repairs**

By **Rudi Keller** Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (7)
JEFFERSON CITY — The state should borrow $40 million to $75 million for repairs to the Capitol building, Gov. Jay Nixon said Monday after touring basement areas where stalactites have formed and walls are stained green and red with rust from copper and iron.

Water is the main culprit undermining the building, which is nearing its 100th anniversary, Nixon said. A bipartisan group of legislative leaders who said they support the repair effort joined him on the tour.

“As we have seen today, critical structural elements of the Capitol have fallen into disrepair,” Nixon told reporters after the tour. “Leaking stonework has led to cracks and rusting of the reinforcing structural steel. Needless to say, the stalactites we just saw in the basement were not decorative.”

Nixon wants to use new bonding authority granted under a law passed this year that allows $200 million to be borrowed for college and university repair needs and $400 million to be borrowed for state facilities. He has endorsed campus projects included in a list that was part of a Senate resolution, including $36 million to repair and renovate Lafferre Hall at the University of Missouri.

The Capitol repairs will be included in a request to borrow funds for existing state facilities, Nixon said, adding that he will ask lawmakers for flexibility to use some or all of the remaining $200 million for new construction.

The Capitol was built after a 1911 fire destroyed the previous Capitol building. Senate Majority Leader Ron Richard, R-Joplin, has been an advocate of the repairs for several years.

“We have got water infiltration that is undermining the foundation of the building, and it is going to cave in upon itself if something is not done in the not too distant future,” Richard said after the tour.

The other lawmakers on the tour were Senate Minority Leader Joe Keaveny, D-St. Louis, House Minority Leader Jacob Hummel, D-St. Louis, incoming House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, and Sen. Mike Kehoe, R-Jefferson City.

The Capitol building last underwent major repairs to prevent leaks in 1980 and 1981, said Cathy Brown, director of Facilities Management for the Office of Administration. Needed work includes replacing all the silicon material between stones, sealing vertical facades and repairing structural steel holding up the grand staircase leading from the south face of the building to the third floor.

“It goes all the way to the top and all the way to the bottom,” she said.

Some repairs are underway with current funding. New heating and ventilation systems are to be installed, and window work is underway in some offices. The state’s low debt and the opportunity to borrow at historically low interest rates make borrowing attractive to finance the major work necessary to prevent deterioration, Nixon said.
“This the most cost-effective time we could make these necessary long-term investments,” Nixon said. “Plus, I think, as Sen. Kehoe said, as we are come upon the 100th anniversary of this august building, I think all of us are thinking about a little bit of history here and trying to leave it better than we got it or at least as good as we got it.”

Interest rates for the bonds are expected to be about 4 percent, said Linda Luebbering, state budget director. Repaying the bonds over 25 years will cost about $7 million annually for every $100 million borrowed, she said.

Kehoe, a former Jefferson City automobile dealer, said he is encouraged by Nixon’s interest and said it has been lacking in past governors.

“I have been under this building many times, even before I was in the legislature, with chamber of commerce groups and for various things,” Kehoe said. “Today was the first time I have been under this building with a governor, and I have been around this building with several governors.”

Missouri backs off proposed scholarship change

By DAVID A. LIEB

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri higher education officials are backing off an attempt to make scholarships available to students at an online university, after the proposal drew opposition from some traditional institutions and sparked plans for a legislative hearing.

A joint House and Senate panel had been scheduled to meet Wednesday to consider blocking a proposed rule change for scholarship eligibility that would have redefined what it means for an institution to be "located in Missouri." The intent was to make Access Missouri scholarships available to students at Western Governors University-Missouri, an online-only school.

But the hearing was canceled Tuesday after the Department of Higher Education withdrew the proposed rule change. A memo from the department to the legislative committee said the agency wants to "provide additional time to discuss the issues further with interested parties."

Gov. Jay Nixon had directed the agency to ensure WGU-Missouri students could receive state financial aid when he signed an executive order in February 2013 establishing a Missouri branch of the online university, which is based in Salt Lake City.

The rule change was opposed by the Independent Colleges and University of Missouri, a collection of 21 private institutions. That group contends that any scholarship changes should require passage of a law, not merely a rule by a state agency. It also has raised concerns that other out-of-state institutions could use of the
scholarships, thus expanding the pool of eligible recipients and ultimately resulting in a smaller amount of aid available for each student.

The decision to drop the proposed rule marked an abrupt change for department officials.

The independent colleges group had sent the department a letter outlining its concerns in June. As recently as Dec. 10, the agency's deputy commissioner, Leroy Wade, had sent a letter to the legislative panel defending the proposed rule change and dismissing the objections raised against it.

The Associated Press published an article about the proposed rule change over the weekend. The memo withdrawing the rule was dated Monday.

"We've decided that rather than go forward with this — if there are these level of questions — we're better to take the time to talk to them and see what kind of compromise position we can meet," Wade said in an interview Tuesday.

If the department later decides to pursue the rule change again, it will have to start from scratch. That process can take six months or more.

"We're still optimistic that there will come a point where we're able to have our students access those funds — it's just a matter of time," said Angie Besendorfer, the chancellor at WGU-Missouri.

Students at the online university are not currently eligible for state scholarships because WGU-Missouri is not considered to be located in Missouri. Under the proposed rule change, an accredited institution whose main campus is elsewhere could have qualified if it had a building in Missouri, employed at least 25 Missouri residents, enrolled at least 750 Missouri students, had a Missouri-based oversight board and agreed to supply data to state officials. All of those criteria would have been met by WGU-Missouri, Besendorfer said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

First night of Hanukkah draws dozens to MU Student Center
Tuesday, December 16, 2014 | 8:53 p.m. CST
BY TIM TAI

COLUMBIA — Several dozen students and faculty gathered Tuesday night for a menorah lighting ceremony in the MU Student Center to mark the first night of Hanukkah.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin lit the middle candle, or shamash, on a 9-foot menorah furnished by Chabad of MU and Mid-Missouri, which hosted the event. Ben Trachtenberg, the group's faculty adviser and an associate professor at the MU School of Law, lit the rightmost candle to mark the first night of Hanukkah.
After the menorah lighting, attendees snacked on latkes, or fried potato pancakes, and doughnuts.

"It's nice to see a celebration of a fun holiday in the student center on campus," Trachtenberg said. "There's a lot of fun stuff about (Hanukkah)."

This is the third year that Chabad of MU and Mid-Missouri has hosted a menorah lighting event at MU. The group will also hold a public menorah lighting at 5 p.m. Sunday outside the Daniel Boone City Building.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

First-graders from Lee Expressive Arts Elementary spread holiday cheer at MU concert

Tuesday, December 16, 2014 | 6:02 p.m. CST; updated 7:35 p.m. CST, Tuesday, December 16, 2014

BY NEETA SATAM

COLUMBIA — More than 40 Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School first-graders dressed in colorful hats and gloves braved cold weather to sing holiday carols at MU’s Memorial Union on Tuesday. Parents cheered for their kids while passing students and university employees couldn’t help but stop to watch the performance.

The students and their teachers, Ann Mehr and Elizabeth Tummons, gathered in the lobby of the Memorial Union to warm up before the noon performance. The show was a part of the Partners in Education program between Lee School and the State Historical Society of Missouri.
Wind and temperatures in the low 30s didn't deter the students from tapping their feet and clapping their hands to "Sleigh Ride," a popular light orchestral piece composed by Leroy Anderson. Students also performed other holiday carols, such as "Jingle Bells."

Man who transferred money to Iraq nears release

12/16/2014 6:10 PM

COLUMBIA, MO. - A Columbia man serving a three-year federal prison sentence for sending money to relatives in Iraq, in defiance of U.S. sanctions, has been released to a local halfway house.

Shakir Hamoodi will be eligible to complete his sentence, which ends in April, under home detention if he can show proof of employment and a permanent residence, the Columbia Missourian (http://bit.ly/1w4oido ) reported.

The Iraqi-American was sentenced in May 2012 for sending more than $200,000 to family, friends and charities in Iraq while sanctions were in place between 1994 and 2003. He said his family needed the money for food and health care. Investigators found no proof Hamoodi was aiding the Iraqi government.

The Bureau of Prisons said Hamoodi will not be allowed to return to the family business, a Columbia international grocery store, to meet the requirements for home detention under federal law.
Family and friends have advocated for the release of Hamoodi, who spent much of his sentence in a Kansas federal penitentiary. Supporters have sent letters to newspapers and contributed to a trust fund to support his family. More than 8,000 people have signed a petition started by the family to ask President Barack Obama to commute his sentence.

In 1985, Hamoodi moved to Columbia to pursue a doctorate in nuclear engineering and worked in the University of Missouri's College of Engineering before opening World Harvest Foods in 2003. He started sending money to his family after they told him they couldn't afford the cost of medical care.

Federal investigators began looking into the matter in 2006. Hamoodi's lawyers argued throughout his trial that he sent eight sisters, two brothers and his mother money for food, medical costs and other necessities that became expensive because of the U.S. sanctions.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/news/state/missouri/article4510805.html#storylink=cpy

December 17, 2014

Campus Police Departments Struggle With Issues of Race

By Peter Schmidt

NO MU MENTION

The head of the University of Pennsylvania’s police union was not pleased to hear how Amy Gutmann had ended up lying on the floor this month at her own holiday party.
Ms. Gutmann, the university’s president, had lowered herself onto her back to show solidarity with student demonstrators who staged a "die-in" at her party as part of national wave of protests over the killing of unarmed black men by police officers. The high-minded rationale for her action was exactly what inspired Eric J. Rohrback, the president of the Penn Police Association, to regard it as a faux pas.

In a letter published by The Daily Pennsylvanian, the student newspaper, Mr. Rohrback said Ms. Gutmann had delivered "a slap in the face to every person that wears this uniform and serves this university." His letter accused the protesters of ignoring how the grand jury examining the shooting of Michael Brown of Ferguson, Mo., had "fully exonerated the officer."

The tensions that have surfaced at Penn are similar to those found at many of the nation’s colleges at a time of heightened attention to how the police treat members of minority groups. Several colleges’ police forces have also been the subject of recent controversies stemming from allegations they had engaged in racial profiling. How to equally protect all appears to be a task many continue to struggle to get right.

Vassar College, in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., was accused last year of racial profiling after campus security officers confronted two black women enrolled there for using their dormitory laundromat, and called the town police on a group of local black children and teenagers who had been noisy in the library. Catharine B. Hill, Vassar’s president, in August announced that the college had taken several steps to deal with the problem, such as amending its anti-discrimination policies to explicitly prohibit racial profiling and hiring a consulting firm to assist in a review of campus security practices.

As reported in The Chronicle of Winston-Salem, N.C., students at Wake Forest University held a town-hall meeting last month to discuss black students’ perceptions that the campus police ask them for their identification far more than they ask other students, and give disproportionate scrutiny to parties held by black fraternities and sororities. Regina Lawson, the university’s police chief, told the audience that her department had established a new bias-reporting system and plans to train its officers to avoid unconscious discrimination.

Police Backup

As proved by the case with President Gutmann of the University of Pennsylvania, however, college administrators who take a stand against alleged police misbehavior run the risk of alienating those they depend upon to maintain order on the campus.

In his letter criticizing Ms. Gutmann’s participation in the "die in" protest, Mr. Rohrback, the police-union president, said, "As a supervisor of law-enforcement
employees, she should at the very least remain neutral and not give in to mob mentality."

Instead of trying to refute him, the university’s administration scrambled to mend relations with its police officers. Maureen Rush, vice president for public safety, said in a letter to the campus police department that was also published in The Daily Pennsylvanian that Ms. Gutmann merely had responded "instinctively" to the protesters and "is 110 percent supportive of each and every member of our police department, and law enforcement in general."

At the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, administrators have stood behind the university police department in a much more concrete and controversial sense, refusing demands from black faculty, staff, and student organizations that the campus police stop routinely publishing the race of suspects in campus crime alerts.

In a letter sent to Eric W. Kaler, the university’s president, a year ago, the campus’s Black Faculty and Staff Association had joined the departments of African-American and African studies and other groups in protesting what they described as a surge in campus crime alerts that described suspects as black males.

Saying the alerts had led to a rise in racial profiling on and around the campus, they called for the university to either remove the suspects’ race from crime alerts or give a written justification for providing such information. They argued that "efforts to reduce crime should never be at the expense of our black men."

In an interview on Tuesday, Steve Henneberry, a spokesman for the University of Minnesota, said that there were "ongoing discussions between the administration and some groups on campus" about such concerns but that the university continued to have a policy of using racial descriptors in its crime alerts.

"The belief is that a well-informed community is an asset to public safety," Mr. Henneberry said, "and that involves providing as much information as we can to our community."

**Fighting Bias**

The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, which counts among its members the public-safety departments of about 1,200 American colleges, has sought to push colleges to end racial profiling through voluntary accreditation standards for its members.
Under a standard that it adopted in 2012, the association requires that colleges have a written directive that prohibits officers from engaging in "bias-based enforcement activity" and profiling based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or socioeconomic status.

It says such a directive should require that all officers receive entry-level and biennial training to prevent profiling, that all complaints of biased enforcement be investigated, and that such complaints be reviewed annually to identify trends or training needs.

It’s unclear, however, how much weight such standards have. Just 18 college agencies have earned the group’s accreditation, while 23 others have earned accreditation jointly through the association and the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

Christopher G. Blake, chief staff officer of the law-enforcement administrators’ association, said agencies without accreditation may well have developed profiling policies on their own.

The effectiveness of anti-bias training programs for the police also remains in question.

Maria (Maki) Haberfeld, who studies racial profiling as a professor of police science at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, part of the City University of New York, says when police officers are caught engaging in biased enforcement, "the first and easiest thing to say is ‘We are going to retrain them.’"

She said she was skeptical, however, of the belief that police officers can be taught to operate without bias in a few training sessions because bias against certain groups can be so entrenched in their thinking. Moreover, she said, "you can come up with the most wonderful training program, but if you are not offering it to the right people, it is not going to improve anything."

David L. Perry, president of the law-enforcement administrators’ association and chief of police at Florida State University, said one of the main factors keeping more campus agencies from being accused of racial bias or excessive use of force is "our foundation in community-oriented policing." He said campus agencies have been at the forefront of the community-policing movement, which they have embraced easily because they routinely interact with students and other people on their campuses on a daily basis.
Gary J. Margolis, a former chief of police at the University of Vermont who now consults with campus police departments, said such agencies "tend to be a little bit more sensitive to the dynamics of race just because of the nature of an academic learning environment," where topics related to race are more often discussed.

If there is a major change that the recent police-shooting controversies is likely to bring about among campus police agencies, it may be in the popularization of the body-worn police cameras being advocated as possible deterrents to bias and other bad police behavior.

About 350 campus agencies have watched a webinar on such cameras that the law-enforcement administrators' association offered in September, according to Tom Saccenti, who helped organize the presentation as chief of police at Furman University. He said the cameras, which his own agency began using in 2013, have helped in enforcing both laws and campus codes of conduct—not just by documenting what an officer is seeing, but by changing the behavior of those being filmed.

"It is accountability for both sides," Mr. Saccenti said. "The officer knows he is being recorded, but you can clearly see that there is a camera on the police officer. We have seen a change in behavior in a lot of people who we talk to because they know they are on a recording."