Columbia Tiger fans celebrate bowl victory
by Mark Slavit

View the story at:

View the pregame broadcast at:
http://s3.amazonaws.com/TVEyesMediaCenter/UserContent/177478/4416987.8892/KRCG_01-01-2015_12.00.33.mp4

COLUMBIA, MO -- Tiger fans all across the country are celebrating the Citrus Bowl victory over Minnesota University including fans in Mizzou’s hometown of Columbia.

While some Tiger fans are down in Florida at the Buffalo Wild Wings Citrus Bowl, others were at Columbia’s Buffalo Wild Wings Restaurant and Bar where Tiger fans enjoyed every second of the game.

Tiger fans had a lot to say about the victory.

They said, “It was a good game. I thought we started out a little rough but I think everything picked up. Mauk started off a little rough. After everything came together it went really well.”

“I love it. Any victory is a wonderful victory.”

“This is great. This is what we needed after that last one.”

“I liked seeing Maty Mauk pop that boy in the end zone. He knocked him a little silly. It was a good tough run, absolutely.”

“I was glad to see the SEC represented well today.”
“It was great. It was nice to see them do this well.”

“M-I-Z-O-U! M-I-Z-O-U!”

Chancellor Loftin on ABC’s live coverage of Citrus Bowl Parade

Watch the Citrus Bowl Parade coverage at:
http://s3.amazonaws.com/TVEyesMediaCenter/UserContent/177478/4424173.4319/KMIZ_01-01-2015_09.18.33.mp4

Missouri victory saves SEC from further bowls embarrassment

George Diaz
ORLANDO SENTINEL
gdiaz@orlandosentinel.com

Thank you, Missouri.

The SEC is extremely appreciative, as the rest of the family drips in apologetic sweat. A dominant 33-17 victory against Minnesota in the Buffalo Wild Wings
Citrus Bowl has a Hair-of-the-Dog feel to it on New Year's Day.

What's your most painful hangover, SEC peeps?

TCU, 42, Poor Ole Miss 3 in the Peach Bowl?

Georgia Tech 49, Mississippi State 34, in the Orange Bowl, to double-down on the state's pain?

Notre Dame 31, LSU 28 in the Music City Bowl?

Or the pièce de résistance on New Year's Day, Auburn losing 34-31 to Wisconsin in the Outback Bowl after Daniel Carlson's 45-yard field goal hit the right upright and bounced away?

Boink.

It's the soundtrack for the mighty SEC this bowls season.

The SEC entered the Sugar Bowl contest 4-4 overall and 2-2 in games involving ranked teams. Most notably, the SEC West — a division that's had six different schools ranked in the top 10 at some point this season — is 2-4, pending the outcome of the Alabama-Ohio State game late Thursday night.

At least Missouri — which competes in the SEC East — didn't crash and burn.
"That's one of our goals, why this game is so important to us," Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said. "We're representing the SEC. Our players are very proud members of the SEC and that's certainly something we had mentioned."

Every game has its own subplots, of course. What happened in Orlando isn't relevant to what transpired in Atlanta or Tampa. But taking the aerial view — all that noise from SEC fans screaming this is the most dominant league of all — adds quite a bit of unfriendly fire in social media conversations.

"State of Mississippi had some real highs in October, but this is an abject embarrassment. SEC West coming up small so far," tweeted Pat Forde of Yahoo Sports.

The SEC even was mocked after LSU lost to Notre Dame in a chicken-wing eating contest.

How does humble pie taste SEC?

It seems like only weeks ago, SEC fans were ranting and raving about the possibility of two or three SEC teams qualifying for the four-team playoff. The pressure all shifted to Alabama late Thursday night to save a monumental freefall.

A conference that had won seven consecutive national championships until last season is feeling the parity, or it parody?
How low can you go as the best division in college football during the 2014 regular season? Although Missouri wasn't exposed as Paper Lions, um Tigers, everybody who has been waving the rah-rah pom-poms about SEC dominance needs to go their room immediately.

Sit a spell.

Be quiet.

We'll let the Tigers have their say because they deserve as much.

"I love the SEC, but it's about Mizzou first," said defensive lineman Markus Golden, the game's MVP. "We had to come here and prove ourselves showing what we do at Mizzou. The scoreboard showed it tonight."

The scoreboard was the only thing that Golden didn't crush New Year's Day. He finished with 10 tackles, four behind the line of scrimmage and 1.5 sacks.

Missouri has been on a nice roll lately. The Tigers (11-3) have now won three consecutive bowl games to reach 11 victories for the fourth time in school history. The Tigers will also move up a few notches from its No. 16 ranking.

"We want to win it for Mizzou, but now it's SEC," quarterback Maty Mauk said. "We want to see all the
SEC schools win."

Unfortunately, it has not worked out that way.

Respectfully so, Mr. Mauk, I suggest this is all about Missouri. You've earned it. You won't leave Orlando with an egg-in-your face omelet.

On behalf of the SEC, thank you, Missouri.

McCaskill wagers ice cream on Mizzou bowl game

Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill is laying a bet on the Missouri Tigers.

McCaskill and Sen. Amy Klobuchar, (D) Minnesota, joined in a friendly wager on the Citrus Bowl game between the University of Missouri Tigers and the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers on New Year's Day in Orlando, Florida. Klobuchar wagered her trademark “frozen” dessert hotdish while McCaskill offered Buck's Tiger Stripe ice cream.

“Our Tigers are going to perform so well that the poor Minnesota Gophers are going to wish they'd never poked their heads out of the ground,” McCaskill said. “And I'm confident enough that I'm willing to wager Tiger Stripe ice cream produced by the best school of Agriculture in the country. Good luck to one of my besties in the
Senate and her team - I'm afraid they're going to need it.”

“The Gophers brought their A-game this season under the inspiring leadership of Coach Jerry Kill, who has guided this great team all the way this year’s Citrus Bowl in Orlando,” Klobuchar said. “While I know Senator McCaskill would enjoy a slice of my frozen hotdish, it wouldn’t last long in that Florida sun, and I’m looking forward to celebrating a Gopher victory with some Missouri-made ice cream.”

Klobuchar’s “‘It’s So Called My Hotdish Froze’ Dessert Hotdish” tied for second place in the 2014 Minnesota Congressional Delegation’s annual Hotdish Off.

McCaskill boasted Buck’s Tiger Stripe ice cream is “produced by the best school of Agriculture in the country.”

(Stories air on more than 60 radio stations in Missouri) Many Mizzou fans miss out on fan rally after the event gets started before published time (VIDEO)

January 1, 2015 by Bill Pollock

Watch live video from pep rally: http://youtu.be/EwWV1ArCWUU

“I thought this started at four?” asked several people clad in black and gold on Wednesday afternoon as they descended on the fan area set up at Orlando Pointe, by Buffalo Wild Wings Citrus Bowl organizers. Pep rallies featuring both Marching Mizzou and Minnesota’s band, along with mascots, cheerleaders and appearances by both head coaches Gary Pinkel and Jerry Kill were scheduled the day before the game.

All media and public information released stated the Mizzou pep rally would begin at 4 p.m. ET, with Minnesota scheduled to follow at 4:45
ET. Yet when I arrived at 3:45, to set up go shoot some video (see below), the cheerleaders along with Truman and the Golden Girls were already dancing.

The event continued with Marching Mizzou performing the fight song twice along with Eye of the Tiger and the Missouri Waltz. Pinkel event made a brief appearance to thank the fans who arrived.

However, by 4:15, the Mizzou event had ended and Minnesota fans were filling up the plaza area.

“We were a couple of minutes behind, but when I got there I saw the Golden Girls and then the Golden Gopher showed up and that was it!” said one disappointed Mizzou fan.

For those of you who missed the event or couldn’t be here for the game, you can watch some of the highlights.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Bello suspended indefinitely, Gant enters starting five for Mizzou basketball

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 | 4:48 p.m. CST

BY MITCHELL FERMAN

KANSAS CITY, Missouri – The Missouri basketball team had one fewer reserve Tuesday against Oklahoma State. Coach Kim Anderson suspended guard Deuce Bello indefinitely.

Bello's absence didn't seem to derail Missouri (5-7), which narrowly fell 74-72 in overtime to Oklahoma State (10-2) at the Sprint Center in Kansas City. Freshman Jakeenan Gant
moved into the starting lineup, which gave the Tigers' starting five a lot more energy, athleticism and shooting ability.

The decision to start Gant was made easier for Anderson because of another front-court injury. Here are some notes from Tuesday's loss to the Cowboys.

**Bello suspended indefinitely**

The redshirt junior guard wore a black warmup Tuesday and did not suit up for the Tigers. Anderson said after the game that Bello was suspended for "some academic issues." Anderson gave no indication of when Bello will return.

This is Bello's first season with the Tigers after sitting out last season upon transferring from Baylor. The high-flying guard has averaged 2.9 points in 10.7 minutes per game this season.

Since his hire in April, Anderson has disciplined several players. He kicked Torren Jones off the team, parted ways with Cam Biedschied and has suspended Wes Clark, D'Angelo Allen, Gant and now Bello.

**Anderson encouraged with new starting lineup**

In just his third game for Missouri after sitting out the first nine due to a review of his eligibility, Gant joined the Tigers' starting lineup Tuesday. The 6-foot-8 athletic forward scored six points and grabbed four rebounds in 22 minutes against Oklahoma State.

Gant joined a starting lineup of Clark, Keith Shamburger, Montaque Gill-Caesar and Johnathan Williams III.
"I thought Jakeenan did a good job," Anderson said. "I was worried, throwing him in there, that he might foul or something, but he did a good job. He's still learning stuff, he's still trying to figure some things out, but certainly I liked that lineup. I liked those three guys – J3, D'Angelo and Jakeenan – rotating around."

Williams had a career-best 22 points Tuesday and is the clear leading forward. He has grown substantially this season. And the decision to start Gant was made easier for Anderson because Allen suffered a sprained ankle on Saturday.

"I didn't think he was going to play," Anderson said. "This time last night he couldn't have played. Today when he woke up he felt a lot better.

"But I'd already decided to go with Jakeenan – I probably was going to go with Jakeenan anyway. I think D'Angelo gives you a big boost coming off the bench because he plays kind of a reckless style, which is good."
KOMU’s Year in Review top story:
Walkway collapse at University Village

Watch the story: http://s3.amazonaws.com/TVEyesMediaCenter/UserContent/177478/4416931.3/KOMU_01-01-2015_06.30.10.mp4

MU Health Care implements new hiring policy

Watch the story: http://s3.amazonaws.com/TVEyesMediaCenter/UserContent/177478/4416942.9526/KMIZ_01-01-2015_06.36.26.mp4
Librarians at dozens of colleges have been scrambling to reorganize their subscriptions to academic journals after a company that manages subscriptions abruptly filed for bankruptcy this fall.

The Netherlands-based company Swets Information Services B.V. declared bankruptcy in September in Amsterdam. The company’s North American branch filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in New Jersey at the end of November.

That means recent orders and payments made to Swets from libraries may not reach publishers, who will likely lose money, and libraries that had money tied up in Swets accounts likely will see only part of it returned, possibly without the subscriptions they paid for.

Swets' bankruptcy filing lists more than 100 colleges among its creditors. That number doesn’t include large state systems with multiple contracts among their campuses, such as the State University of New York and California State University. Several Canadian colleges are also listed among the creditors. About 20 of the largest research libraries in the U.S. were significantly affected by the company’s failure, said Ann Campion Riley, president-elect of the Association of Research and College Libraries.
Riley is the Associate Director for Access, Collections and Technical Services at the University of Missouri at Columbia libraries, which has a claim amount of $1,051,224, according to the filing.

Local news reports about the University of Colorado at Boulder and Utah State University said legal teams at both universities are working to recover as much of the $3 million and $2 million, respectively, that they paid to Swets.

Virginia Commonwealth University said in a statement that its lawyers are working with outside counsel to decide how to proceed. The university has $1,467,240 at stake.

Other universities with more than a million dollars in claims, according to the filing, include Michigan State University, the University of Southern California, the University of Missouri at St. Louis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Washington University in St. Louis. Many other colleges have claims ranging from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand. Some publishers have announced they’ll honor subscriptions even if they haven’t received a payment from Swets, Riley said.

Otherwise, libraries will have to call publishers and ask for payment plans or a grace period of a few months.

That’s no small task, either. Large university libraries could have between 20,000 and 40,000 journal subscriptions. One large publisher may oversee a couple thousand journals, but for a library operation the size of the University of Missouri at Columbia’s, the staff is looking at calls to probably 800 different publishers, Riley said.

The timing of the bankruptcy in the journal subscription renewal cycle fell just as libraries were paying their fall invoices for a Jan. 1 subscription start date, Riley said.

Her library still has a few weeks of work ahead to contact all the publishers with whom it has subscriptions. She’s optimistic that there
won’t be any gap in access to journals, but other colleges and universities -- particularly those that can’t get additional money to pay publishers -- will likely see at least a short pause.

Swets was a big player in the world of subscription agents. The company was well-established and had a reputation as a solid serials vendor, Riley said.

The company claimed just over $4 million in assets and nearly $98 million in liabilities in its bankruptcy filing.

Swets 2013 annual report said the company failed to meet its requirements for long-term financing and closed fiscal year 2013 with a net loss of 51.1 million euros ($61.9 million), according to Library Journal. (The Swets website, where the annual report was posted, doesn’t appear to work any longer.) Part of the explanation for Swets’ failure is likely an overall shift in the market as the cost structure of publishing has changed, Riley said. After the influx of digital journals, there are fewer dollars flowing through vendors, because publishers can manage those themselves.

The bankruptcy should force libraries to be more cautious depositing money with vendors, said Kevin Smith, director of the Office of Copyright and Scholarly Communications at Duke University libraries and a blogger about library issues.

Some libraries will lose money they paid to Swets that was owed in invoices. Others, though, likely were in the habit of sending in large deposits to the company in anticipation of placing orders in the future, Smith said.

Smith understands why libraries feel the need to do that, since they could lose unspent money if they close out the fiscal year with a surplus. But it’s risky, and as unsecured creditors, libraries are at the back of the line for repayment, he said.

Smith thinks the ultimate solution is requiring a system in which money deposited with a vendor is secured in a type of escrow account. He wrote about the suggestion in a blog post for Library Journal.
This isn’t the first time libraries could be on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars because of a third-party bankruptcy.

In 2003, RoseCom and its Faxon Library Services filed bankruptcy. Initial loss estimates for U.S. libraries ranged from $30 million to $80 million, although publishers, who granted access without being paid, ended up taking the biggest hit.

A few years later, after all the court proceedings were settled, the library Smith worked for at the time received about 30 cents on the dollar of what it had paid to the company.

Even for those colleges that didn’t have money tied up in the company when it declared bankruptcy, the fall of Swets is still a game-changer, Smith said. Any college that used Swets to manage its journal subscriptions will have to place orders directly with publishers or switch to a new agent. That means that the largest companies, such as EBSCO Information Services, will get larger, putting more influence over scholarly publishing in the hands of fewer companies, he said.

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( AAU’s research news website )

PETS BRING KIDS WITH AUTISM OUT OF THEIR SHELLS

Pet dogs are known to improve the social skills of children with autism, but new research suggests that any pet may offer the same
benefits.

“When I compared the social skills of children with autism who lived with dogs to those who did not, the children with dogs appeared to have greater social skills,” says Gretchen Carlisle, research fellow at the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction (ReCHAI) at University of Missouri.

“More significantly, however, the data revealed that children with any kind of pet in the home reported being more likely to engage in behaviors such as introducing themselves, asking for information, or responding to other people’s questions.

“These kinds of social skills typically are difficult for kids with autism, but this study showed children’s assertiveness was greater if they Pets often serve as “social lubricants,” Carlisle says. When pets are present in social settings or a classroom, children talk and engage more with one another. This effect also seems to apply to children with autism and could account for their increased assertiveness.

“When children with disabilities take their service dogs out in public, other kids stop and engage,” Carlisle says. “Kids with autism don’t always readily engage with others, but if there’s a pet in the home that the child is bonded with and a visitor starts asking about the pet, the child may be more likely to respond.”

FISH, FARM ANIMALS, AND RODENTS

The longer a family owns a dog, the more the child’s social skills increases, Carlisle says, but older children rate their relationships with their dogs as weaker. When children were asked, they reported the strongest attachments to smaller dogs.
“Finding children with autism to be more strongly bonded to smaller dogs, and parents reporting strong attachments between their children and other pets, such as rabbits or cats, serves as evidence that other types of pets could benefit children with autism as well,” Carlisle says.

For the study, published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 70 families who have children with autism between the ages of 8 and 18 were surveyed. Almost 70 percent of the families that participated had dogs, and about half of the families had cats. Other pets owned by participants included fish, farm animals, rodents, rabbits, reptiles, a bird, and a spider.

“Dogs are good for some kids with autism but might not be the best option for every child,” Carlisle says. “Kids with autism are highly individual and unique, so some other animals may provide just as much benefit as dogs.

“Though parents may assume having dogs are best to help their children, my data show greater social skills for children with autism who live in homes with any type of pet.”

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Pets help autistic kids improve social skills
Plenty of research shows pets -- especially dogs -- bring psychological benefits to patients with a range of health conditions. And increasingly, experts are observing the unique impact pets have on children with autism. New research finds autistic children who have a pet at home have much more advanced social skills and are more assertive and communicative than autistic children who do not have an animal companion.

"The skill of assertion is that ability to introduce oneself, to be able to ask to join an activity, to be able to ask a question, those are things that many children with autism struggle with," Gretchen Carlisle, research fellow at the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction at the Missouri University College of Veterinary Medicine and lead author of the study, said in a press statement.

For the study, published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, Carlisle and her team surveyed 70 families with autistic kids between the ages of 8 and 18. All of the children were patients at the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Nearly 70 percent of the families that participated in the study were dog owners, while the remaining families had a variety of pets including fish, farm animals, rabbits and reptiles. One family had a bird and another kept a spider in their home.

"The data revealed that children with any kind of pet in the home reported being more likely to engage in behaviors such as introducing themselves, asking for information or responding to other people's questions," said Carlisle. "These kinds of social skills typically are difficult for kids with autism, but this study showed children's assertiveness was greater if they lived with a pet."

The researchers say pets serve as a catalyst that provides an opportunity for an autistic child to interact with other people and not even realize it. "Dogs are considered a social lubricant," said Carlisle. "They tend to increase conversation, that's actually among adults as well as children."

In recent years, animal therapy has become more widely popular and used for patients of all ages with a range of health conditions including epilepsy, cancer, survivors of heart attack and stroke, as well as psychiatric conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.

Dogs often receive all the credit when it comes to the therapeutic benefits of pet ownership but Carlisle says dog ownership may not be right for every family because they require a great deal of patience, time, care and may overwhelm some autistic children with their boundless energy. Thankfully, she found cats,
rabbits and other animals can also have a lasting impact on autistic children.

Other clinical research indicates that a broad range of patients can benefit from interaction with less conventional animals as well. A children's hospital in Portland, Ore. employs a llama and alpaca to keep spirits high. Other examples of more unique therapy animals include miniature horses, elephants -- used in Thailand to also help some children with autism -- as well as monkeys and even animals that also have disabilities.

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

*(No. 3 international newspaper)*

**Physical inactivity can damage blood vessels**

*PTI | Jan 1, 2015, 02.20PM IST*

WASHINGTON: Even a few days of inactivity can cause damage to blood vessels in the legs that can take a prolonged period of time to repair, scientists have found.

*The researchers from the University of Missouri School of Medicine found that reducing daily physical activity for even a few days leads to decreases in the function of the inner lining of blood vessels in the legs of young, healthy subjects causing vascular dysfunction that can have prolonged effects.*

Paul Fadel, associate professor of medical pharmacology and physiology, and John Thyfault, associate professor of nutrition and exercise physiology, also found that the vascular dysfunction induced by five days of inactivity requires more than one day of returning to physical activity and taking at least 10,000 steps a day to improve.

"We know the negative consequences from not engaging in physical activity can be reversed," said Fadel.
"There is much data to indicate that at any stage of a disease, and at any time in your life, you can get active and prolong your life.

"However, we found that skipping just five days of physical activity causes damage to blood vessels in the legs that can take a prolonged period of time to repair," said Fadel.

The researchers studied the early effects on the body's blood vessels when someone transitions from high daily physical activity - 10,000 or more steps per day - to low daily physical activity, less than 5,000 steps per day.

The researchers found going from high to low levels of daily physical activity for just five days decreases the function of the inner lining of the blood vessels in the legs.

"The impairment we saw in just five days was quite striking. It shows just how susceptible the vascular system is to physical inactivity," Fadel said.

The research was published in the Journal of Applied Physiology.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Top 10 Sports Stories of the Year: No. 1: Michael Sam announces he is gay
Thursday, January 1, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CST
BY ERIK HALL

COLUMBIA — In August 2013, Michael Sam told his Missouri football teammates that he is gay.
On Feb. 9, 2014, Sam told the world.

The Tigers' All-American defensive end revealed his sexuality publicly in interviews with The New York Times, ESPN and OutSports.com on that Sunday night.

"I believe it’s the right time," said Sam, who earned the 2013 Southeastern Conference Defensive Player of the Year Award. "It’s a time I can finally tell my story and how I want to tell it."

Some NFL players previously announced they are gay at the conclusion of their careers, but Sam became the first openly gay player drafted in the NFL. The St. Louis Rams selected him in the seventh round with pick No. 249. Sam received attention in that moment for sharing a kiss with his boyfriend Vito Cammisano, a former Missouri swimmer.

"I’m just thrilled for him," said Howard Bragman, Sam’s publicist, on draft day. "This has been his dream. It was a very nerve-racking day, and it had a happy ending."

Four days after the draft, Oprah Winfrey and Sam announced plans for a reality show, but that was postponed indefinitely a couple days later.

But on Saturday, Oprah’s network aired a documentary on Sam, followed by a one-on-one interview. Sam said stands by his much-publicized kiss, but wishes he could have waited until after the draft to reveal his sexuality.

Sam spent the summer trying to make the Rams’ roster, but his bid proved unsuccessful. The Rams cut Sam at the end of training camp, even though he recorded three sacks during the preseason. The Dallas Cowboys gave Sam a spot on their practice squad, but the Cowboys cut Sam on Oct. 21 after
Week 7 of the regular season.

So far, Sam remains a free agent. In a Nov. 4 interview, Sam said he was preparing to go "on some business trips just in case football doesn't work out."

"I want to make sure I secure my future," he said.

Sam was a finalist for Sports Illustrated’s Sportsman of the Year and made the GQ cover as one of that magazine’s Men of the Year.

Q: What is meant by the term "lake-effect snowfall?"

By DEANNA LANKFORD of the ReSTEM Institute
Wednesday, December 31, 2014 at 2:00 pm

This question was submitted by fifth-grade students at Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary School.

A: “The first step in the formation of precipitation occurs when water evaporates into the atmosphere. So, if we think about water evaporating from a puddle, the puddle gradually decreases in size as water molecules move from the surface of the puddle into the surrounding atmosphere,” notes Eric Aldrich, University of Missouri adjunct professor of atmospheric sciences and KOMU meteorologist.

A unique weather phenomenon called lake-effect snow occurs in the areas along the eastern and southern shorelines of the Great Lakes and is most likely to occur from November through February.
Lake-effect snow forms when cold air masses move over warmer lake waters. The warmer water causes air just above lake waters to become warmer. As the air temperature rises, water from the lake evaporates into the air, and because warmer air is lighter than colder air, the moist warm air begins to rise in the atmosphere. As the warm air rises, it begins to cool. Cold air cannot hold as much moisture as warmer air, and the moisture begins to condense into tiny droplets and forms clouds. Eventually, the air becomes so concentrated with water that snow begins to fall.

“An example of lake-effect snow occurred recently in Buffalo, N.Y. A total of nearly 84 inches of snow fell,” Aldrich explains. Lake-effect snows typically occur in narrow bands where the heaviest snowfall might occur within a 20- to 30-mile band. A very large body of water can generate lake-effect snowfall downwind if the water is not covered with ice. However, lakes in Missouri are not large enough to cause lake-effect snow.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

The delivery of a diagnosis leaves lasting impact on patients
Friday, January 2, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CST
BY SETH KLAMANN

COLUMBIA — Aaron Franco's journey on a road that eventually led to a bed at Women's and Children's Hospital began when he was on vacation last winter in Washington, D.C.

He'd had pain in his groin for a few weeks and had noticed a lump.

His mind leapt to cancer, and he did some Googling to search for more information. The pain got worse while he was traveling, to the point where Franco felt compelled to see
a doctor. He eventually was able to see a urologist in D.C.

The doctor said it was probably just an infection, but he cautioned Franco that it might be something more.

"He also said, 'As soon as you get back (home), get scheduled for an ultrasound,' " Franco said, looking off into space as he remembered. The doctor also gave him antibiotics and told him that it was not cancer.

The drugs dulled the pain in Franco's "boys," as he affectionately calls them, but they didn't stop it.

"Looking for good news and then being relieved to not hear cancer at all, I kind of let my guard down," Franco said. "I could have just forgotten about the ultrasound, just blown it off ... So I wish he'd been a little more open with that part of it."

As it turned out, Franco, 35, did have testicular cancer.

His frustration with the way the doctor talked to him about the lump and what it could mean is common among patients with serious illnesses. Although physicians often receive training to prepare them for delivering bad news to people, some doctors still leave those in their care frustrated and worried.

"Even in the simulations, students find it very hard," said James Campbell who teaches a course at the MU School of Medicine that uses volunteers to play the role of patients to give future doctors experience in delivering bad news.
The 'C' word

After he returned to Columbia a week or so later, Franco saw his general practitioner. He was the first to suggest the "C' word, cautioning that the pain and swelling might be cancer.

Franco was within the 25-to-35 age window when men are most likely to get testicular cancer. The doctor ordered an ultrasound and told Franco, with guarded optimism, that his previous doctor was probably right, that it was likely an infection.

Then Franco got the call telling him he needed to come in and talk to his doctor about the results.

"I didn't think too much about it, because the other doctor had said it was an infection," Franco said. "So I figured he was going to write me a prescription or something."

But Franco soon learned that it wasn't an infection. The ultrasound revealed abnormalities with the blood flow to his groin, a strong indicator of cancer. His doctor recommended a urologist. It was a Friday, though, so Franco would have to wait at least through the weekend.

The diagnosis left him stunned, and he had 48 hours to worry about it. His father had died of cancer, so the news hit home hard.

"Nobody ever thinks they're going to get cancer," Franco said. He had believed the narrative about a probable infection.

On Monday, the urologist recommended removing the testicle altogether. Franco readily agreed. He wanted it gone. After all, he said wryly, he had an extra one.
"I think I called (my testicle) a traitor, like my body was rebelling against me or something," he said, laughing.

Franco spent much of the conversation smiling and laughing, despite the sensitive situation he was discussing. "It's treatable, but potentially life-altering," he said.

He had the surgery less than 24 hours later. Subsequent tests revealed that the testicle was cancerous.

Since February, Franco has been on surveillance — a regimen of appointments with an oncologist and tests every few months to ensure the cancer hasn't returned.

While he has been largely positive about the care his University Hospital doctors gave him, the oncologist he has seen since the surgery has been so positive that it makes him uneasy.

He told Franco that they hadn't just stopped the cancer, they had cured it altogether. Franco was skeptical.

"He was like, 'Oh, you're gonna be fine, you're gonna be fine. I don't even know the results of these tests yet, but you're gonna be fine,'" the MU graduate student said, forcing a smile and waving his hands in imitation of the doctor's dismissal.

"I wish he had been a little more serious about it ... I was like, 'I don't believe what you're telling me.'"

Campbell said it's not unusual for doctors to be overly positive. His students often sugar-coat diagnoses.

"It's human nature," he said.
That's one of the ways the simulations are useful. "That's where you work them through that ... (The instructor) can help intervene and say, 'Look, it may not be a good idea to offer these positive things when there aren't any.'"

**Imparting life-changing news**

Campbell creates curriculum at the medical school, and in 1993 he helped establish a program that trained first-year students about ways to tell patients their lives will be forever changed.

"One of the things that we do is develop their skills, and one of those skills is delivering bad news," Campbell said. "That's one of the main skills that we talk about" in the class.

The training is extensive. After practicing on each other, students are sent into a room where they must deliver diagnoses to volunteers playing "simulated patients," as Campbell calls them. Each session is recorded, and Campbell and other instructors review the tapes and critique the students' performances.

The volunteers are given flexible scripts, which allow the actors playing patients to respond in different ways, depending on what route the student takes in delivering the diagnosis.

"It can feel very live in there ... it's just you and that patient," Campbell said.

Students are graded on several things, including:

- Whether they warn the patient a diagnosis is coming.

- Whether they maintain eye contact.
Whether the student is honest.

Whether the student gives the patient enough time to digest the news before pressing on with more information.

"You realize that once you say the 'C' word, cancer, they don't hear anything else," Campbell said. "It's not a teachable moment."

STORY CONTINUES WITH NO MU MENTIONS