MU Chancellor Loftin responds to report of racial slurs used on campus

COLUMBIA — MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin reacted angrily Monday to another reported incident of racial hatred on campus.

The MU Police Department is working to identify a man who reportedly used a racial slur in Traditions Plaza during a Legion of Black Collegians rehearsal for a Homecoming performance called "Mis-Educated."

Loftin tweeted about the incident that took place late Sunday night.

"Last night Traditions Plaza — built to celebrate our oneness — was a venue for racism and hate. LBC Homecoming Court was targeted," Loftin said in a tweet.

The chancellor tweeted again, stating that the Police Department had identified a suspect thanks to "prompt reporting and response."

An angry Loftin posted a video message on his website Monday afternoon.

"It's happened again. Just last night, on Traditions Plaza. Hate and racism were alive and well at Mizzou," Loftin said.

"It's enough. Let's stop this. Let's end hatred and racism at Mizzou. We're part of the same family. You don't hate your family."
MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer clarified earlier Monday that police are still trying to identify the person who made the comment. If the person is found to be an MU student, he would be subject to a disciplinary hearing. Weimer said it didn't appear any actual crime was committed.

In a letter shared on the Legion of Black Collegians' Twitter account on Monday afternoon, Naomi Collier, president of Mizzou's NAACP chapter and member of the legion's activities committee, offered a detailed account of the events Sunday night.

Collier noted that the legion is "the only black student government in the United States." Members were rehearsing for the performance when the man entered Traditions Plaza while talking on his cellphone.

When he disrupted the rehearsal, the "young man" was politely asked to leave but refused, Collier's letter said.

After being asked repeatedly to leave, the man stumbled off the stage, at which point he referenced the legion members using a racial slur as he continued talking on his phone.

"There was a silence that fell over us all, almost in disbelief that this racial slur in particular was used in our vicinity," Collier wrote.

Collier voiced concern with the lack of immediate action taken by a safety officer who was present at the rehearsal. She "chose to walk at a moderate speed" toward the perpetrator rather than run after him, Collier wrote.

The safety officer called MU Police to the scene, the letter said, adding that the MU officer took a detailed report.

"Just as our white peers, we have earned our place at the University of Missouri, paying tuition to further our education at the institution that we love," Collier said. "We feel that under no circumstances should we be made to feel as though we don't belong."
MU students, alumni and students from other universities showed their support on Twitter, retweeting the letter and using the hashtag #StandWithLBC.

The Missouri Students Association Executive Cabinet also issued a statement condemning the Sunday episode.

"The symbolism of this incident occurring on a space meant to be built on the 'traditions' of OUR University speaks volumes to where we stand today," the statement said. "It is essential for this institution to begin to facilitate spaces of healing for all students."

MU Alternative Breaks, the Jewish Student Organization, the University of Missouri Panhellenic Association, Mizzou's Asian American Association, Mizzou RAMS, MizzouThon and Mizzou Homecoming were among the organizations that reached out in support of the Legion of Black Collegians via Twitter.

The legion tweeted “We must support one another” late Monday morning, with a flier calling for students to go to Jesse Hall on Tuesday for a study hall in support of black lives at MU.

"Take a stand against administrators who seek to silence our voices and refuse to protect our identities," the flier said. #BLMSStudyHall will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday on the first floor of Jesse Hall.

MU Chancellor: "Racism exists at MU"

Watch story: [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=30841&zone=2.5&categories=2.5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=30841&zone=2.5&categories=2.5)
COLUMBIA - **MU students have reported another incident of racism on campus, this time during Homecoming week.**

MU Police Public Information Officer Major Brian Weimer confirmed Monday an intoxicated white male made a racial slur while passing a group of black students rehearsing a Homecoming performance on Traditions Plaza.

Jonathan L. Butler shared a post on Facebook that said, "On behalf of the Legion [of Black Collegians], we feel that this incident is completely heinous and unacceptable. Not only did this individual disrupt our rehearsal, but we were also made victims of blatant racism in a space that should be made to feel safe."

The post concluded saying LBC would not tolerate this type of behavior at MU and "we sincerely hope that the University feels the same."

The Missouri Student Association Executive Cabinet said in a statement Monday the group will stand with the LBC in response to Monday's event on campus.

MSA wrote, "Racism lives at the University of Missouri and we cannot allow it any further."

Although out of the country, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin also responded to the incident by recording a message on his mobile phone.

Preceding the message he wrote on the chancellor's website, "I want you to hear from me personally and know that I share your outrage."

In his recorded message he angrily said, "It's enough, let's stop this, let's end hatred and racism at Mizzou."

He said what the university has been doing on campus to address racism has not been enough.

He said he is asking all deans, chairs, and academic and non-academic directors to discuss with their colleagues and staff the continuing issue of racism at MU. He said he wants them to develop ideas and action plans for creating a more inclusive environment in their respective areas.

KOMU 8 News reached out to multiple LBC members and those who were directly affected by the incident, but they said they were not ready to speak about the incident.

Major Weimer said MUPD is actively looking for the person responsible.
Chancellor responds to racial slurs on campus

Racism is alive and well at the University of Missouri. That according to the school’s chancellor after a student yelled a racial slur at a group of African American students on campus. It happened last night as the legion of black collegians practiced for a homecoming event. R. Bowen Loftin, chancellor, University of Missouri "It’s enough, let's stop this, let's end hate and racism at Mizzou, we are part of the same family, you don't hate your family."

University police are now trying to identify the student.


MU police investigate report of racism on campus

By Megan Favignano

Monday, October 5, 2015 at 5:45 pm

Racism continues to spur discussion on the University of Missouri’s campus after a Sunday night incident involving racial slurs.
Student members of the Legion of Black Collegians, the official black student government at MU, were rehearsing for homecoming at Traditions Plaza shortly after midnight Sunday when a white man interrupted them and used racial slurs, said Maj. Brian Weimer with the MU Police Department.

Weimer said Monday afternoon that investigators were working to identify the man. Weimer said the man’s actions are not considered criminal but that, if the man is a student, he will be subject to the university's student disciplinary process.

Weimer would not provide details of what racial slurs were used because investigators were still speaking to witnesses about the incident. About 15 students were at Traditions Plaza at the time of the incident, he said.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was out of town, but he released a statement and video message Monday afternoon about the students’ experience with discrimination.

“Racism exists at MU. I want to make it clear that we do not tolerate racism and prejudice on our campus,” Loftin wrote. “We will identify this individual from last night, and this person will be disciplined according to our campus conduct policies.”

The man, according to Loftin’s statement, appeared to be intoxicated and interrupted the students’ rehearsal. When the students asked him to leave the area, Loftin wrote, the man's response included a racial slur.

Loftin said the campus needs to do more to address racism. He mentioned several initiatives in his statement: the addition of a vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity and equity, which MU is recruiting; diversity training for everyone at MU responsible for hiring; and MU will ask everyone to take a campus climate survey focused on race issues.

Sunday’s incident is not the first time racism has surfaced at MU this academic year. In late September, two black women reported to MU police that a man yelled “Klu Klux Klan” as he drove by in his truck while the two women were walking on Ninth Street near the journalism school.

One week before that incident, MU student Payton Head said he had a similar experience when walking through campus. Head, president of the Missouri Students Association, said someone shouted racial slurs from a truck as they drove past him.

Students have held multiple anti-racism demonstrations on campus during the past two weeks, the most recent on Friday at the MU Student Center.

MU has increased its focus on race issues and discrimination during the past year. MU administrators hosted a listening session in December related to the events in Ferguson last fall after the police shooting of Michael Brown. The conversation at MU that day steered away from Ferguson as students talked about discrimination on campus. That discussion continued in the spring at another campus forum.
Race-related harassment and other threatening behaviors are handled jointly by the Office of Student Conduct, the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, the Title IX Office, human resources and the provost’s office. Anyone at MU who experiences racial discrimination can file a report online at equity.missouri.edu/bias-reporting or conduct.missouri.edu/incident-report-form. MUPD takes reports of any criminal behavior and can be reached at 573-882-7202.

In Loftin's statement, he said past students found guilty of race discrimination have been suspended and expelled.

MUPD investigating alleged racial slur on campus


COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri is investigating an alleged racial slur that apparently happened while a group of students were doing a practice skit on campus Sunday night.

Major Brian Weimer with MUPD said a person went up to the stage at Traditions Plaza and made a racial slur at the group.

Weimer told ABC 17 News the person has not been identified yet.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin tweeted Monday morning that the "LBC Homecoming Court was targeted."

Loftin released a statement and a video saying, "

Dear Mizzou family:

I am sorry that I cannot be on campus today when our students are dealing with yet another incident of racism and are angry and scared. I am currently out of the country at a meeting with the University of Gent and the University of the Western Cape. I recorded this message on my mobile device because I want you to hear from me personally and know that I share your outrage."
The Legion of Black Collegians made a statement in reaction to the incident.

"In a place where inclusivity and diversity are said to be paramount, it is evident that this University is not practicing what it has preached. The problem however, not only lies with out incompetent and disconnected administration, but with our student body as well."

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**Students accuse MU administration of inaction following racial incident**


Columbia — MU's top student groups on Monday accused campus administration of inaction on race issues after another alleged racial incident.

Officials say a group of black students was rehearsing its Homecoming play on Traditions Plaza around 12:30 a.m. Monday when an intoxicated man approached them. When the group asked him to leave, the man allegedly shouted several race-based accusations and used the n-word.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, traveling overseas, released a video statement decrying the incident.

"We're part of the same family," he said. "You don't hate your family. You don't call your family those kinds of names."

Loftin's statement got a chilly reception from MU's major student government organizations. Legion of Black Collegians president Warren Davis released a statement accusing the administration of trying to divert attention away from root problems.

"To the administrators who have been so kind as to organize countless panels and committees to address the issue of diversity on this wasteland of a campus, please just stop," he wrote. "When you are serious about changing the climate and the Columbia community as a whole, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Cabinet and I."
The Residence Halls Association, which represents students living in the university’s residence halls, wrote, "RHA is deeply disappointed in the administration because of the largely passive stance they have taken in the past on this issue."

The Forum on Graduate Rights wrote, "The stain of racism will not go away without meaningful, decisive and sustained action from administrators."

Loftin acknowledged these concerns in a written statement accompanying his video, writing, "What we have been doing on campus to address racism has not been enough." Loftin said he plans to appoint a Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity and require everyone responsible for hiring faculty and staff to complete diversity training to expand minority representation among university employees.

LBC Homecoming Royalty harassed at Traditions Plaza

A person reportedly harassed the Legion of Black Collegians 2015 Homecoming Royalty Court on Sunday night at Traditions Plaza.

According to a letter posted by LBC on Twitter, at 1 a.m. a white man who was presumably drunk was walking on Conley Avenue toward Traditions Plaza. He then walked on to the stage and wouldn’t leave when asked. He then “stumbled off the stage,” and said “these niggers are getting aggressive with me.”

The incident prompted outcry from students, administration, other MU community members and students from other schools on Twitter.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who has been criticized for his reaction to previous incidents, tweeted: “Last night Traditions Plaza-built to celebrate our oneness-was a venue for racism and hate. LBC Homecoming Court was targeted.”

LBC President Warren Davis released a statement on LBC’s Twitter starting with “Dear Mizzou, Get it together,” in which he expressed his disappointment in campus culture.

This is one of multiple instances in the last month that a racist comment has been directed at a student on campus. In response to that incident, Missouri Students Association Payton Head posted a now-viral facebook status about discrimination on campus. It reignited the discussion
about race relations on campus. Two protests highlighting racism on campus have been held in the last two weeks.

LBC has hosted their own separate homecoming celebration since 1988. That year, the Mizzou Alumni Association’s Homecoming theme was “Show Me Ol’ Mizzou,” which brought to mind a history of racism on MU’s campus, former LBC President Jacquie Judie said in an Oct. 18, 1988, issue of The Maneater.

MU did not allow black students on its campus until 1950 -- 39 years after MU’s first homecoming. LBC’s homecoming celebrations are still around today, not to divide campus, but as a tradition, former Mizzou Black Men’s Initiative President Lindsay Murray said in an Oct. 23, 2013, issue of The Maneater.

“A lot of people, including myself, want to be involved in Homecoming on the larger scale,” Murray said. “But you have to look at someone like me: I’m not Greek. If I wasn’t involved with any organizations of any kind, I probably wouldn’t know anything about Homecoming.”

Column: Dear Chancellor Loftin, you’re not doing your job

This is the second time in a month that black students at your university have been disrespected in the cruelest of ways.

At 1 a.m. Monday, Oct. 5, 2015, LBC Homecoming Court practices for one of their events this Homecoming week at Traditions Plaza when a white student calls them all "niggers."

Chancellor, this is the second time in a month that black students at your university have been disrespected in the cruelest of ways. Our black community is wondering what you’ll do this time, Chancellor. Will you actually take the time out of your schedule to ensure your students feel welcome on this campus?

See, it occurs to me that you hide behind your Diversity Initiative. You, Chancellor, recruit thousands of black students to come to this university, giving them enough money so they may afford college, and that’s a blessing in itself, but when they show up on campus, after you’ve achieved your numbers, you abandon them. You abandon them to the harassment of your white counterparts and allow them to be harassed, insulted and belittled. Here on this campus, you choose to favor white students, not implementing any type of repercussions for those who exhibit such foul behavior.
When, Chancellor, will you address your multicultural and diverse students with true feelings, instead of hiding behind a Transparency Report? **If MU were truly transparent, you would tell these black individuals who you're recruiting that "Racism Lives Here" at MU.** If MU were truly transparent, you'd tell us what you really feel about these "acts of bias and discrimination."

I am truly disappointed, Chancellor.

I've seen racism and ignorance, but I've never known white people to be so comfortable using the word "nigger," especially in an educational institution. It should make you uncomfortable, it should make you sick, but instead, no one bats an eye at the white students who are part of your institution here. It is almost a normalcy. Is that OK with you? Acts of racism and the use of the word "nigger" are normal in your institution.

And may I call attention to the irony of the location of this incident taking place at Traditions Plaza? We are all aware of the history of our university and the state it resides in. Isn't it a shame that even the most abhorrent "traditions" of both communities never die? Will this "tradition" continue, Chancellor, or will you speak up for the other students who attend this university, other than your white counterparts? Aren't you a representation of all of us? Isn't it your job to lead us? Isn't it your job to make sure that every student feels safe and welcome on your campus? Isn't it your job to run the University of Missouri-Columbia?

You're not doing your job, Chancellor. You're letting people run this show for you, and they're steering it the wrong way. When will you take the reins, Chancellor? When will you step up to your true position and show the country that MU cares about **all of its students**? They're watching us, Chancellor. The country has been watching you and MU since Payton Head's experience began to trend nationally. What will you show them?

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**CARL KENNEY: Politics could kill public education in Missouri**

CARL KENNEY, 1 hr ago

Are we witnessing the death of public education? Is politics undermining the future of MU?

**If I were Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, I would follow the recommendation of Gladys Knight and get on a midnight train to Georgia.** The convoluted disarray at MU will take
more repairs than a mortal could make. MU needs a deity to chart a path to normalcy. It would be miraculous to formulate a strategy that helps us believe again.

It’s too much to ask for the hallelujah. I’m fine with a verse of "Amazing Grace."

It’s a big mess.

It’s so bad that it’s challenging to determine where to begin. Should we start with the racism on campus, sexual assaults, the mishandling of graduate students medical benefits, the resignation of the dean at the Medical School — there is a long list. It is so long that it all gets packed on top of the stuff hidden in that room in your house reserved for things to be taken care of later. Sadly, it later gets kicked aside for the new mess that just showed up to add to the misery.

No one wants to contend with the clutter. It’s easier to simply yell in hope that it will go away if people scream loud enough. I’m beginning to wonder if anyone has a broom big enough to start sweeping. Even worse, where do you begin to sweep when the room is overly packed with old garbage?

Maybe this has become the problem with public universities. Is it possible that MU is destined to endure a slow demise due to the politics that limit sweeping the garbage packed in the room?

What do you do with all this garbage? It would help to get it out of the room, but where do you put all of the junk when there is no space left? Most people yell.

Maybe that’s the role Chancellor Loftin plays in the complicated game we play. It’s easy to blame one person for the mess we all created. It’s Loftin’s fault that we have race issues on campus and in the city. It’s Loftin’s fault that sexual assaults are increasing and graduate students are denied benefits while working to promote the goals of the university.

Some of that may be true, but I bet there are others worthy of blame for the things packed in that small room.
After taking a series of breaths, the truth emerges on the other side — loud screams bouncing off the wall. As much as people want change, getting there is hindered by the politics that keep us stuck in that room filled with garbage. The ultimate question is how to dig out from under the mess.

Could it be the solution isn’t in the room? Rather than focusing on the garbage, it would help to get at the source. Where did the mess come from?

Who’s throwing the mess in the room?

There are multiple answers to that question. A bunch of it was thrown in the room long before any of us were born. That’s the stinking debris that few are willing to approach. It’s buried under layers of litter that hides the smell that forces many out of the room. It’s too painful to endure for long periods, but, like the layers on top, it has to go.

There’s a bunch of stuff that we have thrown in the room. Each of us is responsible for figuring out the role we play in fueling this vicious cycle of stench.

Some of that is manageable. None of it is easy. But, you can begin hauling the mess out once you find others with a shovel and a will. We could clean the mess if not for the big dump truck pulling up with a huge load from Jefferson City.

I said it. State legislators are responsible for a large share of the garbage dumped at MU. They do so by limiting spending in the face of increased enrollment. They do so by forcing an agenda that supports their narrow views. They do so by refusing to trust those employed to lead in educating students to manage our state, nation and world beyond the limits of this moment in history.

Kurt Schaefer, chairman of the Missouri Senate’s Appropriations Committee, poured trash that may have led to the resignation of Patrice Delafontaine, dean of the Medical School. Schaefer used his power to change MU’s relationship with Planned Parenthood. Schaefer uses his authority to discharge more mess in a room already consumed with the stench of volatility.
Is this the future of public universities? Can we expect the implementation of public policies that cosign a particular political agenda? If so, we may be witnessing the death of institutions like MU. This could be the end of liberal arts education that endorses the rights of faculty and students to think beyond the mandates of a political platform.

I worry about what may be thrown on top of the smelly mess. It gets harder to get at the bottom when the integrity of the process is jeopardized by a Senate committee determined to push its own version of what matters most.

It’s a huge, smelly mess. Get out of the way. Here comes another load of trash in a truck driven by Schaefer.

I’ve got my shovel. He’s got a freaking dump truck.

We need more shovels.

Richardson clears suspension as more legal troubles unfold

By JIM SUHR

OCTOBER 5, 2015

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A day after New York Jets defensive lineman Sheldon Richardson’s four-game drug suspension ended, a judge on Monday postponed the Pro Bowler’s hearing on charges stemming from his arrest in Missouri this summer following a police chase.

The St. Charles County judge delayed the hearing until Nov. 9 at the request of Richardson's attorney. Richardson completed a four-game suspension Sunday for violating the NFL’s substance abuse policy, namely
for using marijuana. That suspension came 12 days before his Missouri arrest, which carries a possibility of more discipline because it violates the league's personal conduct policy.

"We are monitoring developments in the case," NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said Friday.

Richardson, who did not appear in court, has pleaded not guilty to the five misdemeanor charges, including resisting arrest. The 24-year-old former University of Missouri star was arrested July 14 after a chase that began on Interstate 64, where police say he was driving his 2014 Bentley Silver Spur at speeds up to 143 mph with a 12-year-old relative and two other men inside the car. Police said Richardson, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of O'Fallon in the offseason, appeared to be racing with another car.

Police say they found a loaded handgun under a floor mat, and a probable cause statement said officers detected a "very strong odor of burned marijuana." No gun charges were filed because Richardson legally owned the weapon, and prosecutors declined to pursue drug possession or child endangerment counts, citing insufficient evidence.

A conviction for resisting arrest is punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to $1,000, though Richardson expressed confidence in August that he won't face jail time — "I really don't think it'll go that far, but we'll see."

Jets coach Todd Bowles said Monday that he hadn't received word from the league about the prospect of additional discipline. Richardson's addition to the lineup would only add to the Jets' strong defensive line, which harassed Miami quarterback Ryan Tannehill during much of Sunday's 27-14 win over the Dolphins in London. He was sacked three times as the Jets used aggressive blitz packages.

The Jets (3-1), whose defense has forced a league-high 13 turnovers this season, have a bye this week and next play Washington on Oct. 18, which would mark Richardson's first game this season barring another NFL suspension.

Richardson's return "gives us an extra weapon, some extra depth down there (on the defensive line). I mean, he's a Pro Bowl player and he's a heck of a player," Bowles said. "We've got to get him back in football shape and get him back in the rotation and keep moving forward."

Bowles insisted that incorporating Richardson into what has been one of the league's best defenses this season won't be an issue: "You don't have a challenge finding places for good players to play. You just play them."

The Jets would have to clear roster space to make room for Richardson.

Richardson was the 13th overall pick in 2013 and was named Defensive Rookie of the Year that season. He played in the Pro Bowl last season.

He apologized to the organization and his teammates after the news of his arrest came out, something he withheld from even his parents until reports surfaced on July 30, early in training camp.
University of Missouri students organize ISIS flag burning demonstration

COLLEGE FIX STAFF • OCTOBER 6, 2015

A student liberty group at the University of Missouri-Columbia plans to burn the ISIS flag in the center of their campus this Thursday in what they are calling a symbolic ceremony in response to continual human rights violations by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

“ISIS has violated the liberties and freedoms of millions of people through genocide, deadly religious persecutions, modern-day enslavement, sexual violence, use of a chemical weapon, beheadings and mass executions,” MU-Young Americans for Liberty stated in announcing the event.

The afternoon demonstration will include “a moment of silence for the estimated 250,000 plus murdered by ISIS, followed by brief speeches and will conclude with the burning of the ISIS flag,” the statement added.

Ian Paris, 21, president of the Mizzou chapter of YAL and a senior studying political science, told The College Fix in a telephone interview Monday that his group reached out to other campus clubs – religious ones, political organizations, social justice advocacy groups and more – and many peers have expressed an interest in taking part.

“There’s a coalition of students that are coming together,” Paris said, noting that group is calling itself the “Missouri University Coalition for those Killed by ISIS.” It is not an officially recognized campus organization, he added.

“I am hoping we use this to unify our voice and maintain our message,” Paris (pictured) said of the ceremony. “I want this event to open the dialogue ... about U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East rather than it just be a one-off thing.”
In announcing the event, YAL also called on the U.S. government to withdraw financial and military support for foreign countries with ties to ISIS, adding the group “does not condone ongoing U.S. and allied military action against ISIS in Syria and Iraq.”

Paris said he’s not worrying too much about ISIS hearing of the demonstration and trying to retaliate.

“If I succumb to the fear of ISIS objecting to my actions, I have succumbed to the terrorists,” he said.

As to how students feel about the event, he acknowledged it’s not all positive.

“Some people have voiced concern that a flag burning protest won’t effect change, but you would be surprised how many students I have spoken with that have asked me questions like, ‘Who is ISIS?’ ‘What do they do?’ So the first step to effecting change is initiating a dialogue. Only then can we take a positive step forward in stopping radical Islam in the Middle East.”

Paris said he and his peers have reached out to Muslim students on campus to take part in their event as well.

“I consider it a very wholesome religion,” he said of Islam. “It’s not mine in particular, but I am filled with regret and sadness when people around me associate Islam with ISIS. ISIS has perverted and distorted the true values of Islam, which I consider one of the greatest atrocities they have committed.”

As for setting fire to an ISIS flag in the center of campus, Paris said his group requested an “open flame permit” for their event, which also sought permission to host a “general rally” that includes a barbecue. He said the request was approved by campus officials.
It’s unclear if administrators knew exactly what the students’ plans were when they signed off, although the permit did state “flag” in conjunction with the open-flame request, Paris said.

“That administration will try and shut us down has been a rising concern, especially with increasing unrest with increased racial tension on campus, and an increased trigger warning atmosphere,” he said.

“Obviously burning a flag is protected speech under the First Amendment,” he added.

Meanwhile, getting an ISIS flag was no easy feat.

A private business the group approached to make them one refused. They also did not want to buy one from an outlet that supports ISIS. Ultimately they turned to art students to make one from scratch, Paris said.

A good pumpkin may be hard to find by mid October

By Michele Munz

October 6, 2015

Tara Lentner may be among the lucky ones who already got their pumpkin picking and shopping done last weekend, as area growers are predicting the selection could be slim this month.

There was nothing slim about the 114-pound pumpkin Lentner picked during her first visit to the Relleke Pumpkin Patch near Granite City on Sunday. “To me, if you’re going to a patch, you should get a big pumpkin,” said Lentner, 34, of Arnold.

Owner John Relleke said production on his 40 acres of pumpkin crop is down only slightly, which he attributes to being on higher ground than many areas. Heavy rain during June, when pumpkins are planted, caused many area growers to lose much or all of their crops.
“We feel very fortunate we got a good crop,” said Relleke, 64, who has grown pumpkins for nearly four decades.

The region was plagued this year by heavy, frequent rain in the early part of the planting season, causing some farms to lose large portions of their crops. But many growers were able to replant their fields in July, potentially preventing what could have been a pumpkin catastrophe.

As a result, the year should produce a somewhat average yield, said Mohammad Babadoost, a professor of plant pathology and extension specialist at the University of Illinois.

“Overall, I believe we’ll have a pumpkin for everybody,” said Babadoost, noting that Illinois is the nation’s top pumpkin-producing state.

But while he expects there to be plenty of pumpkins for Halloween, he does offer a few words of caution for pumpkin pie lovers as Thanksgiving approaches. Canned pumpkin, he said, could become a bit scarce by the time Nov. 26 rolls around.

“I would not wait until Nov. 20. I’d buy it whenever it comes to the store,” he said.

Certainly there are those who are worried about this year’s harvest and what it could mean for prices.

Darrell Theis, co-owner of Theis Farms in Maryland Heights and near Normandy, said he had to order pumpkins from Canada, southern Missouri and Colorado because pumpkins he planted in July to avoid the rain are not ripe yet.

That means about a 10 percent price increase for customers.

“Overall, it’s a complete crop failure in this area,” Theis said. “It’s probably the worst year I’ve seen in 10 years.”

Theis hopes the pumpkins will be ripe enough next weekend to finally open his five acres of pick-your-own fields. Pumpkins from the rest of his 20 acres mostly go to wholesalers, such as grocery stores, but this year he hopes just to have enough to sell to customers at his two locations.

Rain could cause the still-growing pumpkins to rot in the fields.

“Pumpkins are either going to get scarcer as we go into October, or they will get more plentiful,” Theis said. “It’s up to Mother Nature.”

Right now wholesalers are scrambling to get pumpkins on their shelves, he said. “The wholesale supply is about gone.”

Tom Goeke, owner of Herman’s Farm and Orchard, just north of St. Charles, said this season has been the most challenging he’s had in 30 years.

Production on his two acres is down 50 percent, he said. “I planted some on a ridge, and that’s the only reason I have a crop.”

Goeke predicts a pumpkin shortage come mid-October. “Within the next 10 days, I would want to get a pumpkin, because later on they might not be as good, and they might be pretty scarce.”

But with attractions such as a wagon ride, corn maze and petting zoo at the farms, customers were not grumbling too much about the slightly higher price or not being able to pick their own in the field, Theis said. “They are busy playing in Pumpkinland.”
Customers shopping at larger grocery stores, however, may see more modest price hikes, said Tim Reinbott, superintendent of the University of Missouri’s Bradford Research Center. “I think your locally grown pumpkins are going to be a little scarce,” Reinbott said. “But a lot of your large retailers, they buy wholesale from a long way away.”

Tim Barker of the Post-Dispatch contributed to this report.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Inside Marching Mizzou with Assistant Director Fuller Lyon

KYLE BROWN, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — Fuller Lyon, now in his third year as assistant director of Marching Mizzou, has been with the Southeastern Conference in some fashion for 20 years.

He began his undergraduate work in 1995 as a music performance major at the University of Tennessee.

He then switched majors and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in sports management. He continued to be involved as a tuba player in the top concert band and was a drum major during Tennessee's national championship run in 1998.

In 2010, he earned a master's degree in conducting at Louisiana State University and then completed the coursework for his doctorate there. While writing his dissertation, MU hired him in 2013. Here's a look at Homecoming from his perspective.

Q. What does it mean to you to be a marching band director in the SEC?

A. I love it. Half my life is centered around sports, as well, because of my background. It's a way to be connected to athletics and still support it in a way that I'm not an athletic director or coach.
I understand the game management side; both (director) Brad Snow and I are huge sports fans. We can talk to you all day about this stuff. He and I really understand the games and how to flip momentum around and utilize the crowd in a positive way.

**Q. As far as the Homecoming game itself, does the band have a different attitude going into that?**

**A.** It's amazing to me how much the community — not just the Mizzou community, but Columbia and the state of Missouri — kind of rally around that one particular week and how important it is to this particular university.

It's also amazing for me to see a parade route and there are, I don't know, 50,000 people on the parade route, and maybe it's 7:30 in the morning. That's just crazy. That's awesome. Coming from New Orleans, it reminds me of Mardi Gras. That's kind of an incredible gesture from the citizens to what we are, what we represent here at Mizzou.

During the game, we're usually limited to two minutes of halftime. So we only do one song on the field, and then we form the 'MU,' and then they do the wreaths with the homecoming court.

The alumni band comes back, which is always great. We have, you know, alumni who are from 22, 23 years old to probably well into their 70s, and it's pretty amazing to see the generation gap and the different styles of playing.

Especially marching — if you watch the alumni band, you can see how the band has evolved through the decades from how they marched 50 years ago to how they currently march.

That's one of those things that a lot of people probably don't notice — watching the marching technique of a lot of different alumni members.

**Q. You play the fight song. What do you think that means to all the alums coming back?**

**A.** One thing we all learn as we get older is that things change. And then we kind of hold onto things that remain the same throughout time. That's one of the things that regardless of how old you are — the different generations out there — that song symbolizes Mizzou.
Two songs, really — "Every True Son" and "Fight Tiger." We have that added chant in between. It's kind of our identity. It's a great time to hear when the announcer says, "Every True Son" and "Fight Tiger" because that's his trademark — Brandt Crocker, our PA announcer.

Everyone stands up and cheers and does the chant with us. It's really kind of a special moment for the entire stadium and the entire Mizzou community to come together.

Just about everyone here in Columbia knows those two songs.