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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

As SEC move looms, Missouri merchants look to boost game day experience in Columbia

By Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Ole Miss has The Grove. Florida and Georgia host the world's largest outdoor cocktail party each fall in neutral-site Jacksonville.

Missouri? Let's just say the Midwest school preparing to bolt the Big 12 Conference for the Southeastern Conference later this year has some catching up to do when it comes to football tailgating traditions.

As rabid fans from Alabama, Georgia and other soon-to-be rival schools continue to flood local hotels with fall Saturday reservations, some local business and civic leaders want to enliven the Mizzou game-day experience by creating a "Tiger Town" fan zone in downtown Columbia.

The details are still being worked out, but preliminary plans call for public street closures in an area directly north of the Missouri campus and south of Broadway, a main city thoroughfare.

Picture beer gardens, outdoor concerts, autograph stations featuring past Missouri athletes, live radio broadcasts, a family-friendly play area and a "Tiger Trail" pathway lined with fans as the team walks toward Faurot Field.

The goal is to start small and build local support, said Bob Gerding, a downtown Columbia accountant and one of the plan's boosters.

"Traditions aren't born in one night or one year," he said Tuesday. "This is going to take a little work."

Gerding and his partners, including businessman Greg Steinhoff, a former state economic development director, envision a weekend experience that would begin Friday night and extend beyond the final whistle. Creating a hospitable environment for visiting Southeastern Conference

fans — and their wallets — is as important as serving Missouri's home crowd and its students, said Rick Means, chief operating officer for Shelter Insurance Co.

Early estimates suggest that Missouri can expect an average of 7,500 visiting fans at home conference games, or between three and four times the size of the typical number of visitors that accompanied Big 12 Conference rivals, Means said. The football Tigers are scheduled to host Georgia, Vanderbilt, Alabama and Kentucky this fall.

“We need to find a place for these folks,” he said. “We want to make a good first impression.”

That hasn't always been the case for opposing fans, Gerding said, singling out the vitriol often reserved for supporters of the rival Kansas Jayhawks.

“We need to really welcome these people ... and get away from the hatred,” he said.

Those plans were met largely with enthusiasm Tuesday afternoon by members of the city's Downtown Community Improvement District, which agreed to offer several members to serve on the various committees tasked with making the vision become a reality over the next eight months.

Their work will likely include proposed changes to a city ordinance that prohibits public alcohol consumption. Similar exceptions are already made for a summer outdoor music series on Ninth Street and a fall weekend blues concert that closes downtown streets and parts of the University of Missouri campus.

Columbia police Chief Ken Burton, who attended the business owners' briefing, said he generally supports the idea. His department plans to reach out to its counterparts in Auburn, Ala., Baton Rouge, La., Tuscaloosa, Ala., and other SEC towns for further guidance.

“Anytime we add people (downtown), there are concerns from my perspective,” he said. “But nothing is impossible.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

New downtown gathering place in the works for football season

By Benjamin Nadler

January 10, 2012 | 8:01 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Restaurants, bars and retailers in downtown Columbia are aiming to capitalize on MU's switch to the Southeastern Conference.

A meeting of the Downtown Community Improvement District was held Tuesday in which a plan was unveiled to create a 'fan zone' downtown to attract fans during football weekends.

"The SEC is a conference that travels," Carrie Gartner, executive director of the Downtown Community Improvement District, said Tuesday morning. "And we want to try and tap into that."

The planned area, called "Tiger Town," seeks to further link the downtown business community with MU's sports culture and add revenue in the process.

Gartner estimates that seven thousand or eight thousand fans will come into town on SEC weekends in support of the opposing team. And downtown businesses are looking to draw in the visitors.

Columbia businessmen Rick Means, Bob Gerding and Greg Steinhoff prepared to give the initial presentation of the "Tiger Town" plan in a crowded meeting space at the Downtown Community Improvement District offices on South Tenth Street.

Members of the audience introduced themselves while a slide reading "New Traditions" was projected against the wall. The audience consisted of bar and restaurant owners, retail shop owners, local contractors, representatives of the Columbia Police Department, property owners and concerned citizens. There were no representatives from MU or its athletic department at the meeting.

The three men delivered a slideshow presentation outlining their proposal to create an area that fans could congregate downtown and then be ushered to the game.

Buses. Shuttles. Tractor-pulled trams. Gold-coated ambassadors greeting people and pointing the way. Bannered walkways. Painted streets forming a trail, perhaps yellow and black. All of these ideas were discussed during the meeting.

Details on issues such as street closures, open container laws and even the boundaries of the area that would be deemed "Tiger Town" remain undetermined. What's clear is that Means, Gerding and Steinhoff want to reshape football weekends to focus more on the downtown business district.

"Our goal is to deliver the message that there is something new going on," Steinhoff said.

"Refreshing, if you will, the traditions that we have," Gerding said later.

The model for "Tiger Town" has its roots in the traditions of other college towns. Means, Gerding and Steinhoff pointed to towns like Norman, Okla., Austin, Texas, and Oxford, Miss., where downtown businesses have been able to profit from visiting football fans.

A super-committee has been planned to bring city officials, local business proponents and university representatives together to discuss the feasibility of such plans.



List ranks online college programs

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

Stephens College's online program is one of the best in the country when it comes to student engagement, according to new rankings from U.S. News & World Report.

The magazine today published its first review of top online bachelor's programs. Rankings were split into three categories.

In the student engagement and assessment category, Stephens ranked 13th, the only Missouri school in the top 30. **Columbia College tied with two other schools at the 42nd spot, and the University of Missouri ranked 116th. The category took into account the timeliness of instructor responses and instructor office hours.**

In the faculty credentials and training category, Columbia College ranked 40th, receiving a higher score for having 79 percent of its faculty with at least two years of online teaching experience. Stephens ranked 43rd, and MU ranked 47th in the category, both having 50 percent of faculty with at least two years of experience.

The magazine also ranked schools for student services and use of technology. In that category, Columbia College ranked 85th, MU placed 110th and Stephens ranked 118th.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Stephens College near top in category of U.S. News & World Report online education rankings

By Parker Miles Blohm

January 10, 2012 | 5:41 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Stephens College was ranked No. 13 in the student engagement and assessment category in the U.S. News & World Report's Top Online Education Programs, which was announced on Monday.

Stephens was the only mid-Missouri college to rank in the top 15 in one of the three categories in the report. In student engagement and assessment, **MU placed No. 116 and Columbia College placed No. 42.**

The report uses university data since July 14, 2011, to rank online bachelor's degree programs and online graduate programs that U.S. universities offer. Programs need to have at least 80 percent of their course content available online, the industry standard according to The Sloan Consortium, to qualify as an online course.

Programs were ranked in three categories, using 20 weighted indicators: teaching practices and student engagement, faculty credentials and training, and student services and technology.

Stephens College began offering coeducational online programs in 1998, beginning with its MBA program. Since then, Stephens has offered a variety of other programs and degrees online.



MU custodian stole pills, gifts, police say

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

A custodian at the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute is in the Boone County Jail today after University of Missouri police discovered he had stolen drugs and gift cards.

Ryan Skaggs, 23, faces charges of felony stealing and drug possession. He also had a warrant from Phelps County after failing to appear on a driving under the influence charge. His bond totals \$103,500.

Capt. Brian Weimer of the MU Police Department said Skaggs took some vials of Fentanyl from a lockbox at the orthopedic institute. Fentanyl is similar to but more potent than morphine and is used to treat patients with severe pain.

Skaggs also allegedly stole a couple of gift cards, including a \$500 gift card to Walmart that were on a desk at the institute, Weimer said. Skaggs was arrested yesterday after an MUPD investigation.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Celebrations planned for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

MU Mention on Pg. 2

By Dalrae Jin

January 10, 2012 | 6:20 p.m. CST

Several events are scheduled to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Columbia.

Columbia Values Diversity Celebration — "One Community, Many Stories"

- The 19th annual event will be held from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Thursday at the Holiday Inn Select Expo Center, 2200 Interstate 70 Drive S.W.
- The recipient of the 15th annual Columbia Values Diversity Awards will be announced, and a multimedia program — including video of interviews, dialogue and musical performance directed by Dan Schultz of Stephens College — will be presented.
- Tickets, which were sold through Jan. 6, are required.
- The celebration will be rebroadcast on a few local channels (Mediacom Channel 80, Charter Communications Channel 2 and CenturyLink 601) on Jan. 15 through Jan. 16 and Jan. 20 through Jan. 22 at 6 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.; and Jan. 17 through Jan. 19 at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Poor People's Breakfast

- The annual breakfast will be held from 7:30 a.m. to noon Monday at St. Luke United Methodist Church, 204 E. Ash St.
- The event is free, but donations are welcome.
- For more information or to make contributions, contact Almeta Crayton at 825-5263.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial — "Reaffirming a Legacy of Hope"

- The Columbia NAACP will host the annual event at 11 a.m. Monday at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, 800 W. Stadium Blvd.

- After a brief ceremony, a motorcade from the memorial to Second Baptist Church will be held. The motorcade will depart at 11:15 a.m.; participating vehicles are asked to be on site by 11 a.m.
- A celebration will follow at Second Baptist Church, 407 E. Broadway, where parking and seating will be available for participants.
- A free lunch will be served after the celebration.
- Community service awards will be announced.
- For more information, contact Mary Ratliff at 445-3231 or by email at marrat300@aol.com.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Candlelight Walk and Celebration

- Participants will gather by 6 p.m. at the Douglass High School gym, 310 N. Providence Road. The walk, which begins at 6:30 p.m., will conclude at St. Paul AME Church, 501 Park Ave. A service will be held there at 7 p.m.
- The event will include community diversity awards.
- For more information, contact Bill Thompson at 874-6379.

MU Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture

- **The MU Chancellor's Diversity Initiative will host a reception and presentation at 6 p.m. Jan. 25 at Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts, 203 S. Ninth St.**
- Larry Wilmore, comedian, writer and producer, will present "Share the Dream, Live the Reality" at 7 p.m.
- This event is free and open to the public.
- For more information, contact the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative at 882-5838 or diversity@missouri.edu. More information is also available online.



Noted expert to speak at MU Education topic of conference.

By Janese Silvey

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

An internationally recognized speaker on education reform is scheduled to deliver a keynote address at the University of Missouri this spring.

Sir Ken Robinson will speak at 1 p.m. May 15 in Bush Auditorium as part of the two-day Celebration of Teaching event. Admission is limited to faculty, instructors and other campus employees; however, organizers might extend invitations to other groups in the community with an interest in the topic.

Robinson — knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2003 for his service to the arts — works with governments and international agencies to promote creativity. In 2006, he made headlines when, during a TED Conference talk, he suggested that public schools kill creativity.

“I believe this passionately that we don’t grow into creativity, we grow out of it — or rather, we get educated out of it,” he said in the TED video that has been viewed more than 8 million times.

In a more recent talk about changing educational paradigms, Robinson compared public schools to factory lines that promote conformity.

At MU, Robinson is expected to speak about higher education instruction, said Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies who hosts the teaching event.

“Part of the Celebration of Teaching is to think about how we teach,” Spain said. “I think many of the things that Sir Ken Robinson talks about as it relates to education and creativity is as relevant for higher education as it is for the K-12 educational system. ... We’re all trying to improve, and you have to be critical of what you do to find things you need to do differently and improve upon.”

Robinson spent 12 years as a professor of education at the University of Warwick and has written two books on creativity. He has received numerous awards and accolades, including being honored with a Peabody Medal for contributions to the arts.

“We are very excited to bring” Robinson “to campus, not only for the benefit of him being here, but also to demonstrate our commitment to making investments to work to improve teaching and learning at” MU, Spain said.

This is the third year Spain’s office has coordinated the Celebration of Teaching, which also includes workshops and breakout sessions. The inaugural event attracted about 200 attendees, and last year roughly 300 attended.

“Hopefully, we’ll continue to see an expansion in the number of folks who participate,” Spain said. “Certainly, having a speaker like” Robinson “will bring more people.”



Teachers continue legal fight for MoVIP pay

By Catherine Martin

Monday, January 9, 2012

More than a year after filing a lawsuit over an alleged breach of contract, teachers who lost their jobs with the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program are still awaiting a resolution.

Forty-five teachers lost their jobs in 2009 when the state cut funding to the program, which offers online courses for K-12 students. The teachers started with MoVIP in August 2009 and were unemployed by November, despite a contract they said guaranteed their positions for a year.

Initially, 12 of those teachers came together to file the suit, and nine more ultimately added their names to the list.

The suit is filed against the state of Missouri, the eMINTS National Center, the state Board of Education and the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

However, the case has mostly focused on the portion dealing with the university, said David Brown, an attorney representing the teachers.

The university has acknowledged the teachers had contracts, Brown said, but claims the teachers had voluntarily changed their job status. Brown said he now has tax documents the university sent to the IRS that indicate the teachers were involuntarily terminated.

"I believe that issue should settle the case because they have already admitted the teachers had employee contracts," Brown said.

The university is not willing to settle, however, Brown said. He most recently filed for a summary judgment, which is pending in Boone County Circuit Court. After the university responds to that, he said, he hopes the judge will make a decision in the next month or so.

Phil Hoskins, acting general counsel for the UM Board of Curators, said he would not comment on the pending legislation.

The teachers in the suit seek to be paid the remainder of their salary for the rest of the contracted months, Brown said, which would total between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

“The employment contract was for a full school year, and they were terminated in the middle of the school year. They’re entitled to be paid the balance of that contract,” Brown said.

It’s difficult to exactly determine the amount sought, Brown said, because different teachers made different salaries based on experience. Some also were hired back on a part-time basis, Brown said.

MoVIP still offers virtual classes but has transitioned into a tuition program for public, private and home-school students, according to its website.

Many of the teachers left full-time jobs to work at MoVIP, Brown said. Losing their jobs in November made it difficult for them to quickly find other employment as teaching jobs generally only open once a year.

Most of the teachers have now found other jobs, Brown said, but some have not.

“It remains a tough time for teachers to find employment,” he said.



The★Star
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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mo. gov. candidate omits full college degree name

January 10, 2012

ST. LOUIS—Missouri gubernatorial candidate Dave Spence touts on his website that he "earned a degree in Economics" from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

What his website doesn't say is that the degree was in home economics.

Spence told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (<http://bit.ly/wc4L3d>) for a story published online Tuesday that his grades weren't good enough for the business school, so he chose a different academic path that allowed him to graduate on time. He acknowledged that the description of his degree on the campaign's website may be misleading.

Spence is seeking the Republican nomination to challenge Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon in this year's election. His campaign has emphasized his business expertise. Spence owned a plastic container company called Alpha Packaging before selling it in 2010 and recently stepping aside as its leader.



Attorney alleges cover-up in Hobson case

By Brennan David

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

A defendant in the Aaron Hobson murder case is arguing that Columbia police failed to disclose evidence related to the discovery of a buried gun and the destruction of police recordings from the night Hobson was killed.

Circuit Judge Gary Oxenhandler has requested that Officer Wendy Stokes participate in a hearing tomorrow to respond to a motion filed by defendant Tony Lewis, 28, of Boonville and his attorney, Jennifer Bukowsky. They contend Columbia police failed to disclose evidence, which could deprive Lewis of a fair trial.

"This is a cover-up by Columbia police," Bukowsky said.

Lewis is awaiting a Jan. 30 jury trial on charges of second-degree murder and second-degree robbery. Seven co-defendants have pleaded guilty or been convicted in the robbery and murder of Hobson. Bukowsky said a ruling in her favor could drastically affect those convictions.

Hobson was visiting Columbia in October 2010 to watch his cousin, Trey Hobson, play in the University of Missouri's Homecoming football game. He was meeting friends in the parking lot of Break Time, 110 E. Nifong Blvd., when he was robbed and fatally shot.

Before the shooting, officers responded to a disturbance outside the Peachtree Catering Center nearby, Bukowsky told the court. When officers found Hobson wounded in his vehicle minutes later, they recognized his vehicle from the Peachtree area and began asking witnesses about potential connections between the incidents.

Although most, if not all, of the officers who responded to Peachtree also responded to Break Time, none referenced the Peachtree incident in their Break Time homicide reports, Bukowsky said. That means dashboard video and other audio recordings from officers who responded to Peachtree were not flagged for retention and were therefore destroyed, per department policy.

"I believe I can show the state's theory is nonsense with those videos," she said, referring to the case prosecutors are building against Lewis.

Bukowsky also claims that while investigating the homicide, officers would collectively turn off their on-body audio when discussing the Peachtree disturbance.

Oxenhandler did not address the allegation but likely will do so during a hearing tomorrow, at which Stokes has been asked to explain an April report concerning the discovery of a buried gun. Bukowsky said Stokes' report did not note a conversation with a nurse who discovered the weapon and suggested to the officer the weapon might be related to the Hobson murder, which occurred 300 feet away.

The nurse also could be called to testify about that conversation. The gun was discovered wrapped in a rag and buried in mulch under a Providence Urgent Care sign, according to the police report.

"I'm going to be fascinated to learn why Officer Stokes did not include this" in her report, Oxenhandler said. Stokes also was one of the officers who responded to the Hobson murder scene.

Although a murder weapon has been discovered, according to previous arguments by Prosecuting Attorney Dan Knight, Bukowsky said the discovery of the new weapon is pertinent because some witnesses claim to have heard gunshots from different caliber weapons.

Bukowsky said she recently learned of the gun's discovery while speaking to a friend associated with Providence Urgent Care.

Knight said he was not pleased with Bukowsky's actions, as she has made several accusations against his office throughout the case. He said he did not know about the gun until Bukowsky asked about it.

"She says specifically that I know about this gun," he told Oxenhandler. "It's a complete fabrication that I knew about this gun."

Columbia police have the gun in their possession. It has not been processed by the Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Lab because it was never linked to a specific case.



Teen admits killing 9-year-old two years ago

Published: Wednesday, January 11, 2012 1:27 AM MST

MU mention page 2

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Alyssa Bustamante looked down, her long brown hair covering her teenage eyes, as a judge read the charges against her: murder and armed criminal action, for knowingly strangling, cutting and stabbing her 9-year-old neighbor.

For more than two years after she was arrested as a high school sophomore, Bustamante had been publicly silent about the gruesome crime, which a patrol officer testified she confessed to committing because “she wanted to know what it felt like.” On Tuesday, it was her time to talk.

Describe what you did, a judge instructed Bustamante, as she pleaded guilty to second-degree murder for killing Elizabeth Olten.

“I strangled her and stabbed her in the chest,” Bustamante, 17, said in a clear voice, looking straight at the judge.

“Did you cut her throat too?” the judge asked.

“Yes,” Bustamante responded.

She used her hands for strangling and a knife for the rest of the attack, Bustamante told judge.

Sitting a few feet away in the front row of a cramped courtroom, her helpless victim’s mother took a deep breath and dabbed her tears. She was angry, frustrated, sorrowful.

Bustamante had been charged with first-degree murder, and by pleading guilty to a lesser murder charge she avoided a trial and the possibility of spending her life in an adult prison with no chance of release. Cole County Circuit Judge Patricia Joyce will decide after a Feb. 6 sentencing hearing how long Bustamante should remain locked up. Her sentence could be as short as 10 years, or as long as life with the possibility of parole after about 25 years.

Elizabeth's mother, Patty Preiss, wore a purple shirt with a photo of her daughter and the entreaty: "Justice for Elizabeth." She left the courthouse with several similarly dressed relatives and friends, and none of them talked to reporters.

"They're disappointed that parole is now a possibility," family attorney Matt Diehr later told The Associated Press. "It's kind of devastating to relive the event and hear some of what was said in the courtroom today."

Bustamante killed Elizabeth on Oct. 21, 2009, and after two days of searching for Elizabeth by hundreds of people, Bustamante led police to her victim's well-concealed body in the woods behind their neighborhood in St. Martins, a rural community just west of Jefferson City.

Prosecutor Mark Richardson declined to comment after Tuesday's hearing about why he agreed to a reduced charge, adding that he wouldn't talk about the case until after Bustamante's sentencing.

Several factors could have influenced the reduced charges. Last summer, the judge ruled that part of Bustamante's 2009 confession to authorities could not be used at trial because a juvenile officer wrongly participated in the state Highway Patrol interview and "used deceptive tactics."

The legality of sentencing teenage murderers to life without parole is also in question, and the U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments in March on whether it amounts to cruel and unusual punishment. Although the arguments in that case focus on a pair of 14-year-olds convicted in Arkansas and Alabama, the outcome could have also been applied to Bustamante's situation.

"That may have made them more willing to give a plea deal that took that sentence off the table," said Ben Trachtenberg, an associate law professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia who teaches courses on criminal court procedures and evidence.

Bustamante's attorney, Charlie Moreland, said in an interview that Bustamante decided to plead guilty because "she wanted to take responsibility for it." Had the case gone to trial, the arguments likely would have focused on whether the crime amounted to first- or second-degree murder, which does not require the same degree of deliberation, he said.

"This is the result we would have asked the jury to agree to," Moreland said. But her punishment will now be decided by a judge instead of jurors. "It's a very difficult decision for whoever has to make the decision. What is the appropriate punishment for a 15-year-old girl with her history and her background and the situation as it was?"

Moreland added: "She had a lot of issues at that time."

Bustamante's grandmother, who had been her legal guardian, left the courthouse without commenting to reporters.

Juvenile justice officials testified at a November 2009 hearing that Bustamante had attempted suicide at age 13 after receiving mental health treatment for depression and cutting herself. She had sometimes spent the night in the woods without permission and had once sneaked away to St. Louis. But Bustamante also ranked in the top third of her class at Jefferson City High School and had not been in any previous trouble with the law, other witnesses said.

At that 2009 hearing, prosecutors said Bustamante carefully planned to kill Elizabeth. They said she dug two holes to be used as graves, then attended school for about a week while waiting for the right time to kill. Missouri State Highway Patrol Sgt. David Rice testified that the teenager told him “she wanted to know what it felt like” to kill someone.