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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU launches new Mizzou Bike Share program

By Catherine Rolwes

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COLUMBIA — Xavier Billingsley hopped on a bike outside the MU Student Center and rode off to a meeting across campus.

Billingsley, the Missouri Students Association president, **was the first person to check out a bike under the new, free Mizzou Bike Share program. The program kicked off on Monday outside the MU Student Center, where the bikes are housed. Led by the Missouri Students Association and the Residence Halls Association, Mizzou Bike Share provides 20 bikes for students to borrow for up to 24 hours.**

To borrow a bike, students must sign a waiver and swipe their I.D. at the information desk in the MU Student Center in order to receive a key to one of the bikes. If the bike is not returned on time, there is a \$10 fee charged each day until the cost of the bike is met or the bike is returned.

The bikes were purchased from Workman Cycles and include a step-through frame, a big seat, a rack for books or other carry-ons and two ways to brake —pedaling backwards or using the hand brake.

The program does not provide helmets. All riders are required to wear a helmet, however, and safety tips are included in the waiver.

"It's just too much to handle at this time since we don't have room for them. We would have to clean them out and would have to provide different sizes," said James Jordan, Sustainability Coordinator for Residence Halls Association. "We might in the future though."

Jordan and Tyler Ricketts, MSA Board of Elections chairmen, started the program 10 months ago after noticing bike-share programs at other schools. In April, a survey through MU Info asked students if they would want a bike-share program on campus. More than 300 students responded and 90 percent said yes, Rickett said.

The program is sponsored by the Missouri Students Association, Residence Halls Association, Missouri Student Unions, Student Fee Capital Improvement Committee, the Environmental Leadership Office, the Division of Information Technology and the Office of Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

Ricketts said he thinks the measure of success for the program would be to always see the bike rack empty.

"When demand is greater than supply, I'll think we're doing something right," Ricketts said.

Supervising Editor is Karen Miller.



Parents and Readers: Beware of Stereotypes in Young Adult Literature, Researcher Says

ScienceDaily (Aug. 27, 2012) — A newly defined genre of literature, "teen sick-lit," features tear-jerking stories of ill adolescents developing romantic relationships. Although "teen sick-lit" tends to adhere to negative stereotypes of the ill and traditional gender roles, it also explores the taboo realm of sexuality, sickness and youth, says the University of Missouri researcher who named the genre in a recent study. Readers and their parents should be aware of how the presentation of disease and disability in these stories can instill prejudices and enforce societal norms in young adults, notes the researcher.

"Teen sick-lit depicts its chronically ill protagonists, who are usually white middle-class females, merely as vehicles for well people's emotional development rather than as self-actualized women with their own experiences, perspectives, and emotional needs," said Julie Passanante Elman, assistant professor in women's and gender studies in the College of Arts and Science. "As the popularity of fiction aimed at young adults, such as the Twilight, Harry Potter and Hunger Games series, continues to grow, it is important for readers and parents to note the ethical subtexts of the books. Similarly, the proliferation of sick or disabled characters on such television shows as "Glee," "Friday Night Lights" and "Breaking Bad" doesn't always equate to positive portrayals of those characters."

Elman found little to empower the ill in the nearly 100 "teen sick-lit" books she reviewed. Instead, the authors' framing of their ill characters tended to set them apart as abnormal. The will to live for the sick protagonist was often equated to the desire to have a traditional heterosexual relationship, often with healthy counterparts. Characters that did not adhere to traditional gender roles tended to be ostracized or encouraged to conform. For example, one girl who lost an eye to cancer and didn't want to wear make up because it caused an infection in her eye socket was encouraged by her peers to apply make up in a way that didn't bother her eye. Elman believes the emphasis placed on the effects of illness on the girls' bodies related to the importance placed on women's sexual attractiveness by society.

"'Teen sick-lit,' which mostly arose in the '80s', stands in contrast to the progressive young adult literature of the 70s, which often dealt with issues of racism, homophobia and other injustices," Elman said. "'Teen sick-lit' reinforces the idea that an individual must adjust themselves to society in order to succeed, regardless of preexisting cultural barriers, as opposed to taking action to create a more just society."

Elman's evaluation of teen sick-lit wasn't entirely negative. She did find that the books acknowledged and accepted the sexuality of sick people, a subject that is usually avoided by medical dramas. Adolescent sexuality, another taboo, also was a central topic in the genre. Also, some books featured positive portrayals of the sick as fully developed characters. Some of the books portrayed sick people forming romances with other sick people, as opposed to pining for a healthy lover.

The study "'Nothing Feels as Real' Teen Sick-Lit, Sadness, and the Condition of Adolescence" was published in the *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*.



FastCAT rolls into third week with GPS problem

By Andrew Denney

NO MU Mention

The city's new FastCAT Express route will keep rolling into a third week of service, but the GPS service Columbia Transit said riders would be able to use to track buses still is not operational.

The FastCAT buses have been outfitted with GPS technology, and Columbia routes are listed on RouteShout, the application that will provide the tracking service. But Steve Sapp, a spokesman for the city's Public Works Department, said city staff and RouteShout staffers have had difficulties getting data from the buses to users.

Sapp said the city has changed wireless service providers in hopes that it can get the GPS service in operation. He said that no firm timetable has been established for when GPS service can be provided, but he said the service is being tested and city staffers from multiple departments are working on the issue.

"It certainly isn't for lack of trying," Sapp said. He said the city plans to try out GPS tracking on the FastCAT buses first and said that once the kinks are worked out, it hopes to have GPS tracking for its 40-bus fleet. A two-week period of free rides on FastCAT has ended, and standard bus fares now apply.

FastCAT serves the downtown area and features extended service hours and two buses running on 15-minute headways. The route is intended to concentrate service to college students living in the central city, and the idea was proposed months after representatives took trips to other Midwestern university towns to observe student-centric bus systems that received funding from activity fees levied on college students.

FastCAT is paid for through a reallocation of funds that would have been used for the downtown orbiter route that FastCAT replaced and from the purchase of semester bus passes for Brookside on College tenants. Brookside developers Jon and Nathan Odle agreed to purchase the passes a part of a development agreement with the city. The Odles agreed to pay \$10,000 for marketing the service, and the city has put that money toward hiring a marketing specialist to sell semester bus passes, which sell for \$100 each if sold to individuals and \$62.50 for groups of 20 or more.

Ridership numbers for the first two weeks of FastCAT were not available this morning. Ian Thomas, executive director of the PedNet Coalition, which has lobbied for enhanced bus service in the city, said that from riding FastCAT himself and observing the buses as they pass, he has noticed empty seats. But he said the city put together FastCAT in a "heck of a rush," and he still sees the route as an improvement for Columbia Transit.

"I wish that there had been more riders than I seem to be seeing," Thomas said. "But the city seems to have put this together in a very short period."

Sapp said the winners of a trivia challenge held on FastCAT throughout the last week will be announced Wednesday.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Secret protection from teen depression

Helping kids succeed in first grade may have a lasting mental-health benefit: Lower risk for depression in seventh grade and beyond. That's the conclusion University of Missouri researchers arrived at after tracking 474 boys and girls from grammar school to middle school.

It makes sense - and it's just one more reason to help your learners do their best. "We found that students in the first grade who struggled academically with core subjects, including reading and math, later displayed negative self-perceptions and symptoms of depression in sixth and seventh grade, respectively," said researcher Keith Herman, associate professor of education, school and counseling psychology in the MU College of Education. "Often, children with poor academic skills believe they have less influence on important outcomes in their life. Poor academic skills can influence how children view themselves as students and as social beings."

The scientists quickly point out that not every child is an academic whiz kid - and it's important for parents to recognize and let kids know they value all types of intelligence. "Children's individual differences will always exist in basic academic skills, so it is necessary to explore and emphasize other assets in students, especially those with lower academic skill relative to their peers," Herman said. "Along with reading and math, teachers and parents should honor skills in other areas, such as interpersonal skills, non-core academic areas, athletics and music."

But this study, published in 2009, adds a little extra urgency to the job of helping kids get off to a great start in math and reading. And a handful of recent studies point parents toward ways to help with numbers:

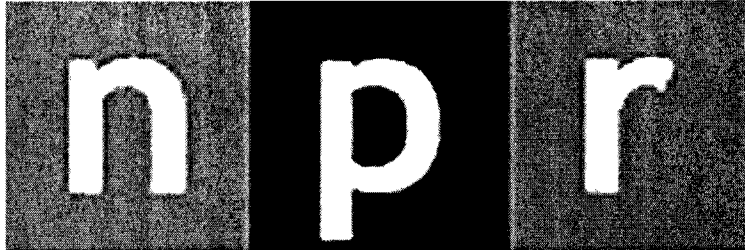
Work the number line with them. In another University of Missouri study, first-graders who knew where numbers belonged on a number line (for example, being able to show where the number 5 belongs on a number line from 1 to 10) were stronger math students throughout elementary school.

Relate numbers and objects. Another important skill that math-savvy first-graders had, in the same study, was the ability to translate an abstract number into a real-world example - like being able to count out the right number of marbles if you ask for five of them.

Make big problems smaller. A third skill: Breaking more complicated math problems into smaller, easier ones. This can be as simple as making sure your child understands how many "2" and "3" are before adding these together in the problem $2 + 3$.

Get past your own math anxiety. Scared of numbers? Get over it. University of Chicago researchers have found that when female elementary-school teachers felt math anxiety, girls in

their classes felt it too - and ultimately scored six points lower in math achievement tests. (The researchers looked at women teachers because 90 percent of elementary school teachers are female.) It was a small study of just 17 teachers and 117 kids, but it's one of many studies finding that math anxiety in adults - including parents - rubs off on kids. Your best move: Don't let on that math makes you nervous - it'll rub off. Stay calm and positive if you're working on math with your child, call in a number-savvy friend or tutor to help - or even work ahead in your child's math book.



Police commissioner defends force in NYC showdown

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NEW YORK — The police shooting near the Empire State Building last week is a testament to how quickly officers can fire off 16 rounds to take down an armed suspect. But the nine wounded bystanders attest to another truth: Officers often miss.

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly reiterated Monday that officials believe that two patrolmen followed proper police protocol once Jeffrey Johnson pulled a pistol on them moments after he ambushed a former co-worker — an assessment supported by experts on police policy and training.

"When you're told that someone just killed someone around the corner, and five seconds later that person identified as the shooter points the gun at you ... it was the appropriate action to take," Kelly said at an unrelated press event in midtown Manhattan.

Dramatic security video of the Friday morning confrontation shows Johnson pointing the weapon at the officers, other pedestrians scattering and the two officers firing — one from very close range, the other while retreating.

The police volley instantly killed Johnson, who never returned fire. Stray bullets, ricochets and fragments caused nonlife-threatening gunshot and graze wounds to nine civilians. Two remained hospitalized Monday in stable condition.

Kelly called it "unfortunate" that innocent people were hurt. But, he added, "Thank God, everybody is going to be all right."

Still, the bloodshed was another reminder of the public safety challenges that first emerged in the mid-1990s, when the police department abandoned bulky .38-caliber revolvers and armed officers with rapid-fire, 15-shot semiautomatics. At the time, the department claimed it needed the more modern weapons because criminals outgunned officers.

Experts said the number of bullets fired by the two officers wasn't surprising, nor was the fact that some of them missed their intended target.

"Those 16 rounds could have been fired in literally two seconds," said David Klinger, a University of Missouri criminology professor.

Eugene O'Donnell, a former New York City police officer who is now a lecturer at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said: "I think people want to hear a magic number" of gunshots needed to take down a suspect.

"There is no magic number," he said.

Analysis shows NYPD officers "routinely, unfortunately, fire shots that miss," O'Donnell said. "It's uncommon for the cops to shoot, but when they do shoot, their hit rate is not very high."

According to the NYPD's annual firearms discharge report for 2010 — the latest available — officers fired their guns in 92 encounters — the lowest number in the 40 years the department has tracked such data. But the same data showed the total number of bullets fired by police increased 24 percent, to 368 from 297.

NYPD officials say recruits are repeatedly cautioned to be aware of their surroundings and to try to take cover and assess a situation before opening fire. But once shooting starts, officers are trained to "shoot to stop" by firing at a target's "center mass," or torso.

"The rule as to how many shots should be fired is how many shots are necessary to terminate the threat," said Ed Mullins, president of the Sergeants Benevolent Association.

Throughout the semiautomatic era, the NYPD officer have been criticized for unleashing large fusillades. Most notable were the slayings of two unarmed men in vastly different settings: Amadou Diallo by 41 rounds while emerging from his Bronx home in 1999 and groom-to-be Sean Bell by 50 shots while sitting at the wheel of his car on a quiet Queens block in 2006.

In both of those cases, the officers who fired their guns were charged criminally but acquitted at nonjury trials.

The Johnson shooting also is under a routine review by a grand jury, but the experts predicted charges were unlikely.

The shooting appeared to be "a reasonable and acceptable use of force," said John Shane, a former Newark, N.J., police captain who also teaches at John Jay. "I have no doubt (the two officers) would not be indicted by a grand jury."

Added Shane: "It's actually a good thing that the video exists in the way that it does. ... This is the rare occasion where you get to see what happened before, during and after police fired."

Wounded bystanders have successfully sued police in the past.

William H. Cooper, who represented a bystander shot in the head by police during a gunfight with a robbery suspect on a Bronx street in 2000, said such cases typically boil down to officers trying to show that "the danger to the public was so excessive that they had every right to discharge their weapon" and plaintiffs arguing that deadly force "created such a danger to others that the risk didn't equal that decision."

In that case, city officials settled with the partially paralyzed man, Wilson Ramos, for \$6 million.

In another civil case, the family of a woman taken hostage in 1993 by a bank robbery suspect and then killed by police exchanging fire with the gunman was awarded nearly \$4 million. The appeals court found "police violated clearly established protocols and procedures," partly because police guidelines tell officers not to fire when shooting will unnecessarily endanger innocent people.

But in another case, the state's highest court threw out a negligence lawsuit from a woman who was hit by a police bullet during a 2005 shootout between officers and a suspect on a Harlem street. The Court of Appeals found the officers were justified in firing because they had a clear view of the suspect and hadn't seen the bystanders.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Cattlemen selling off herds in drought

Maintaining stock is hard when there is 'no grass, no hay, no water.

7 hours ago • BY JESSE BOGAN jbogan@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8255

MU MENTION P. 2

IBERIA, MO. • Cattle rancher Greg Lee and his family usually have an incredible view of central Missouri hills and pastures from their home. But this year is unusual.

Beyond the back deck there's a bone-dry pond that looks like the surface of another planet. There's no grass in the fields to feed 400 head of cattle. Even well beyond the view, Missouri's pastures are in worse condition than any other state in the continental U.S., according to a study of national statistics.

"It's like the whole world is tan," said Lee, 44. "This is something guys my age haven't ever seen before."

Missouri is second only to Texas in the number of farms — 106,500 — because of small cow-calf operations in rugged parts of the state. Now, as the historic drought continues, scant hay, bald pastures and heavy heat are pressuring many farmers in the state's \$3.6 billion cattle industry to thin their herds because they can't feed all of the animals and make a profit.

Hit-and-miss drizzle over the weekend didn't help, and it's unclear whether remnants of Tropical Storm Isaac will have much of an effect. Meteorologists say it would take anywhere from 9 to 15 inches of rain over an extended period of time to mitigate Missouri's drought conditions.

The drought, which hit in May, has grown in intensity, with virtually the entire state considered to have "extreme" drought conditions.

Only the leaves look alive, which Lee said has led some ranchers old enough to remember previous droughts to cut down undesirable trees to feed cows. Lee hasn't tried that, but he and many other farmers are dipping into dwindling stacks of hay.

One evening last week, Lee loaded a big round bale on the back of a pickup and unrolled the hay in the dry pasture. An aggressive parade of cows, calves and a few bulls vied for the fresh food.

He keeps a careful inventory, as hay is usually fed when there are snow flurries, not 90-degree heat. For now, Lee expects to sell off half the herd so the other half can have food for the winter.

"It makes you want to break down and cry," he said, "but it wouldn't do no good."

Though there is stress, continued high beef prices will keep most players in the game, said Ron Plain, an agriculture economist at the University of Missouri-Columbia who has studied national statistics on pasture conditions.

But he added: "A lot of cattlemen are going to have to change what they do."

Farmers can either find a way to feed animals through the winter with hopes of green pastures in spring — or sell their livestock now.

Feeding is not an easy option. After good hay crops in recent years, there is precious little to buy today. Drought conditions ravaged the latest cut in June. Last year, desperate farmers in Texas, dealing with a drought there, bought hay in Missouri and other states. Meanwhile, feed corn is expensive, with corn and soybeans trading at record highs.

There's not much for the cattle to graze on in fields, with the double punch of high heat and little rain. According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report released Monday, 1 percent of Missouri pastures were rated "fair"; the remaining 99 percent were considered "poor" or "very poor."

Water has also been hard to find as many creeks, ponds and wells have gone dry.

"If we get some rain in the next two or three weeks, it would make a lot of difference," said Ken Chitwood, 65, a farmer near Rolla. "We are hoping this hurricane, if it comes far enough west, feeds moisture into the air in this area."

Scott Truett, a National Weather Service meteorologist, said it was too soon to tell how much rain Isaac will bring to Missouri and to which parts of the state.

If it brings significant rainfall to the region, he said, "that could recharge rivers and ponds to a certain extent. But the deficit is so large that it's going to take several rainfalls over several weeks and months to get us back to more normal conditions."

CATTLE SELL-OFF

Last week, 30,571 cattle were sold in Missouri, compared to 22,387 for the same week in 2011, according to sales tracked by the state Department of Agriculture.

Despite sell-offs, cattle prices have been stable because inventory is relatively small. The 97.8 million national cattle population nationally is the lowest in decades, according USDA figures.

Plain said consumers should expect to pay less for ground beef in the second half of 2012, as slaughterhouses buy up older, less productive cows that farmers don't want to pay to feed. But a smaller herd of cows means fewer calves being born to replace them, leading to expected higher prices for beef in 2013 and 2014.

Q-and-A: MU allergist ties drought to brutal pollen season

By Taylor Weatherby

August 27, 2012 | 4:06 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The combination of a warm winter and dry summer has created misery for allergy sufferers. **The Missourian caught up with Al Barrier, an allergist with MU Health Care, to explain what is making noses so wet when the air is so dry.**

Q: Why have allergies been so intense this year?

A: We didn't have much of a freeze last year, and, therefore, the mold did not get frozen out, being retained at eight times normal concentration. Because of this, it's eight times worse than it usually would be. Now, because we had the drought, the mold spores dried out, keeping them in the air at this concentration through the summer, causing a very bad summer season.

Q: What else is causing the problem?

A: We have large loads of the pollens, including grass and ragweed that continue floating and are more intense when there's not water in the air.

Q: What effects do droughts and/or dry weather have on allergies?

A: Allergens don't sink to the ground; they stick in the air and stay afloat, worsening allergies and reactions from those who are allergic.

Q: Do certain types of weather affect different types of allergies?

A: In terms of reducing the pollen load, water is important. The fall tends to be somewhat dry, so ragweed is somewhat intense. If the drought continues, ragweed pollen will be drier in the air, and the load will be worse.

Q: In a typical Missouri-weather summer, when is a peak time for bad allergies?

A: In the summer, we mainly have the summer weeds and the grasses because they pollinate. Some of the minor weeds and grasses release their pollens into the air in the later part of the summer, but the summer pollination is usually over in mid-August.

Q: Are certain ages affected by allergies more so than others when certain weather occurs? If so, how?

A: Allergy is an immune issue from a minor loss of down-regulation in the cells. It has to do with a very minor genetic defect with allergen presentation in the immune system that's very complex as far as the sequencing. People at various ages will have varying amounts of allergic disease. However, weather conditions affect all allergic people equally, regardless of age.

Q: What would you suggest to those suffering from these bad allergies to manage their allergic reactions?

A: People that are truly allergic might want to get a mask when they are going to be around the outdoor air. Covering yourself up allows less of the allergens in so they can move further down in the body, reducing the load in the body. Also, nasal saline helps the allergens be knocked out of the nose. Air purifiers are useful in the house and bedroom.