

IS J-SCHOOL WORTH IT?
EVALUATING CONVERGENCE STUDENTS' PREPARATION
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Six months after graduating from the University of Houston, I knew I needed to go back to school. My year spent working for the student newspaper persuaded me to become a journalist. I told my favorite journalism professor, expecting him to be proud and encouraging. Instead, he tried to dissuade me, saying I didn't need more school and that I just needed to start working in journalism. I disagreed, and I applied and was accepted to the University of Missouri's Graduate School of Journalism.

Once at MU, I reported for the *Columbia Missourian*, polished my editing skills as a Dow Jones News Fund intern at *The Grand Forks Herald*, learned how to manage online content for *VOX Magazine* and even produced radio features for KBIA. The skills I gained and experiences I had could never have been done elsewhere. But still, my undergraduate mentor's words bothered me. Could I have learned everything just by working in a newsroom? Although MU touts its classes as "real-world experience," at the end of the day, it's not the real world where failing to complete an assignment means losing a job and not just a point or two on your final grade. I'm still in school, still paying to learn what most of my professors learned on the job 10, 20 and 30 years ago.

VOX, KBIA and the *Missourian* newsrooms are lucky: as teaching laboratories, they're on the forefront of technology and are able to observe and adapt to trends as

they happen. The professors, veteran journalists themselves, teach the inverted pyramid and other building blocks of the trade, as well as the latest industry trends and multimedia software. We students are lucky, spoiled even, to have this experience from the beginning. As Amanda Hicks said in her 2008 master's project on the newly converged *Missourian* newsroom, "an innovative mindset, which seemed to bombard me at the *Missourian*, is not the norm for large-scale news media."¹

I experienced the opposite of the innovative mindset at the *Herald* when the online editor held a meeting to discuss search engine-optimized headlines. The Web editor was self-taught and had started as a reporter and migrated into online content management. Much of what he talked about that day was old news to me but was still not being implemented on the copy desk. Later that night, when I tried to use SEO headlines, others on the copydesk stopped me. The Web editor's presentation seemed pointless. Change would have to be forced upon this newsroom not suggested.

One reason for this is that the *Herald*, unlike larger newspapers, didn't have a truly integrated newsroom. Posting and updating online content was done primarily by two Web assistants, who also complained about issues with innovation and how older journalists didn't respect or understand their roles in the newsroom. The Web assistants also happened to be two of the youngest employees at the *Herald*, and one

¹ Hicks, A. (2008). Online news convergence, credibility and user preference: the re-launch of the Columbia Missourian. University of Missouri-Columbia. M.A.

was a journalism student at the University of North Dakota. This lack of innovation could be interpreted as the failings of a small-town newspaper, but I suspected it was something more common within the industry. Converged newsroom or not, the tension and misunderstanding between convergence natives and veteran journalists are, I think, a common theme played out in newsrooms around the country.

My experiences at the *Herald* are a stark contrast to the forward-thinking atmosphere at the *Missourian*. It makes me wonder what I will face in my future career and has inspired me to pursue a master's project examining how journalism school education is perceived today within the mostly now-converged industry. The research will provide me with further networking opportunities, and the professional skills component will allow me to produce the quality clips I desire to land my first "real-world" job. But this project will also allow me to reflect on my own experiences at MU and, hopefully, allow me to finally respond to my mentor's comment.

Professional skills component

The professional skills component of my project was conducted at *The Wichita Eagle*, the largest newspaper in Kansas, where I worked as a general assignment reporter on the metro desk. The internship ran for 12 weeks, beginning on May 29 and ending the week of August 21. I worked approximately 40 hours a week.

Although I worked on the metro desk, I also had the opportunity to work in specific topic areas, mostly police and courts, city and county government and education. I wrote for both the daily and weekend papers, as well as contributed daily to Kansas.com. I expected to produce a minimum of four clips a week, either text or multimedia, but at times this number was much higher. In the first week alone, I produced 12 clips, though clips slowed down as the summer progressed. By the end of the summer, I had 74 clips, substantially beating my low minimum goal of 48 clips. I also produced one multimedia piece in conjunction with a feature story. Copies of my print clips are included in this report and are also listed on a blog I maintained to document my work. This documentation meets the “abundant physical evidence” requirement for my project. The direct supervisor during my internship at the *Eagle* was Tom Shine, deputy print editor. We talked several times a week to discuss my work and progress. My blog stood in for correspondence with my committee chair, Professor Clyde Bentley.

Based on skills learned at MU and previous journalism experiences, I know I will excel at the *Eagle*. I have experience reporting and producing multimedia from my time at *VOX*, *KBIA*, the *Missourian* and freelancing. I have experience as a copyeditor and page designer thanks to my summer at the *Herald*, and I also have Web management experience from *VOX* and the *Herald*. Interning at the *Eagle* will allow me to polish my skills while producing professional clips that will help me get a job after graduation.

The results of my project will be summarized in an analytical article suitable for publication in the *American Journalism Review* or *Columbia Journalism Review*, both of which I intend to contact at the completion of this project. Organizational change is a hot topic in the industry today, as “news executives need to figure out how to get large organizations to abandon old habits, build new products and create new cultures in the newsroom and on the business side.”² Understanding the role of journalism schools in preparing future journalists for these changes is an important variation of this topic.

Research component

Novice journalists, raised in an innovative mindset, face many obstacles when they work for real-world media, most of which seems to come from their peers. On the other hand, old-school journalists, while respected for their experience, are often seen as outdated by their younger and less-experienced coworkers. In Carl Stepp’s interviews at the *Charlotte Observer*, he found that younger journalists valued their work at newspapers but were often “bewildered” by what their older colleagues didn’t know.³ The younger journalists at the *Observer* also noticed a lot of “oldthink.”⁴ But, as time goes on, these young journalists will

² LaFrance, A. (2012). "Arthur Sulzberger's hiking buddy has leadership advice that news executives should hear." <<http://www.niemanlab.org/2012/04/arthur-sulzbergers-hiking-buddy-has-leadership-advice-that-news-executives-should-hear>>.

³ Stepp, C. S. (2007). "Caught in the Contradiction." *American Journalism Review* 29(2): 36.

⁴ Stepp, 37

eventually become the masters and deal with the next generation of journalists who will then be “bewildered” by their perceived lack of knowledge.

Understanding how these convergence natives transition into successful journalists provides the first research question: After graduating from journalism school, what specific journalism skills did these journalists have, and, according to their own perceptions, how well did this prepare them for their first jobs? A sub-research question would be how has their perceived skill sets changed from the beginning of their careers to now?

Answering this research question will provide perspective on the second research question: Is journalism education necessary to be a successful journalist, or could they have learned all they needed on the job? This research question will also provide some insight into how journalism education is viewed within the industry today and if the education one receives matches skills required by the industry.

This research will provide a snapshot of today’s converged newsroom. Through interviews with recent University of Missouri School of Journalism graduates, I can find out how these convergence natives were received, if they felt prepared to enter the workforce and what their first impressions of working in the “real-world” were. It will provide me, personally, with insight into how to be a successful journalist. By comparing their self-perceived journalism-school skill sets to those skills the newsroom demands of them, I can also determine if the Missouri

School of Journalism adequately prepares students, or if it's just as easy to be successful in the industry without a degree.

The professional skills component of the project allows me to work in a converged newsroom, interacting with and observing veteran journalists. Conducting standard journalism coverage (reporting education, breaking news, etc.) while also producing multimedia and practicing social media (Tweeting, audio slideshows, etc.) is a perfect blend of these two topics: the converged native with the veteran journalist's experiences and expectations.

CHAPTER 2: FIELD NOTES

A blog was kept and updated weekly with daily summaries and reflections on my work at *The Wichita Eagle*. Links to published work were included at the end of each blog post. They are excluded in the blog posts below.

*Only minor grammatical changes have been made to the blog posts reproduced below.

Week 1

05/29: Today was busy. I did the usual first day things (meeting the newsroom staff, touring the *Eagle*, learning the computer system), and I attended the 10 a.m. cops briefing. I ended up writing three stories, all local crime briefs. Rick Plumlee, crime/courts/politics reporter, showed me what to do at the briefing, explained who was who, where to park, etc. Wichita police are extremely media friendly.

My editor/direct supervisor Tom Shine has been incredibly helpful. The newsroom atmosphere is friendly and focused. After working on the briefs, I spent the rest of the day cleaning my area. The former reporter, Ron Sylvester (now at a Las Vegas paper), left a few things behind.

I'm supposed to attend the 10 again tomorrow, but I have an interview scheduled with Miss Kansas. She's competing for Miss USA in Vegas.

05/30: Simina Mistreneau, the other Mizzou intern, will start work here next week.

It will be nice to have a familiar, young face in the newsroom.

I briefly toured the traveling WWI exhibit I wrote about yesterday for an event preview. I also interviewed Miss Kansas. Both didn't take very much time at all. It seems, as a GA reporter, I may be spending a lot of my time behind the desk.

Hopefully, I'll be able to get out and explore/develop my own stories soon. Tom doesn't seem to mind giving me stories now, but I like having more control over what I get to write about.

I completed my paperwork today, but it's going to take longer to get a badge. Gayle Lopez in HR keeps saying something about the "system" not being ready. Not sure what she means, but they use Peoplesoft here, and it's notoriously difficult to do simple things.

05/31: I went to the cops briefing again today, this time with Roy Wenzl. He seems to report mostly on crime and is a serious narrative journalist at the *Eagle*. I took the lead this time and wrote a few crime briefs afterward. It seems very simple, and I'll only attend the 10 when another cops reporter can't make it. The hail storm we had last night damaged a golf course, so I wrote a short piece about that, too.

One thing that's surprised me is how active the readership is here. I got a phone call from a woman today who wanted to "make me aware" that she didn't see my preview article about the WWI exhibit and to see if I could do something about it.

There's nothing I can do, and she didn't give me any contact information, but it's nice to know my work is being read and commented on online.

06/01: I attended the police briefing on my own today. Most of the crimes seemed more bizarre than anything else. I wrote up everything the police discussed when I got back to the newsroom. It's good practice. I also wrote two more pieces, more like updates to area news. They were relatively short but took most of the day to put together.

One breaking news piece I got to work on was the story about the missing 12-year-old girl from El Dorado, Kan. I wrote a brief about it, then an update when she was found in Michigan. It felt different, writing about news as it was happening. It was very different from the preview/review stories I tend to write. Although we have the TVs on all day, we didn't realize the girl was found until I checked the comments on my article. I'm glad the readers are so involved.

Speaking of readers, there were some interesting/funny comments on my stories today and a few emails as well. Ron Avey, who I interviewed for the WWI article, called to say thanks, and a couple that I interviewed for the WWI article also sent me an email saying thank you. I took the opportunity to thank them and ask them to send any news my way. Being so new, I don't have any contacts yet, and I'm doing what I can. It was nice to hear my story was appreciated, even if it was for something so simple as a traveling museum exhibit.

Unfortunately, there was also a correction this week. I used ancestors instead of descendants. Duh. I totally didn't realize there was a different meaning until a reader pointed it out in an email (and in a few of the comments). I G-chatted with Josh Wood on the copy desk and he fixed it right away — he was surprised they didn't catch it either.

The Miss Kansas for USA story is scheduled for this Sunday and, if it runs in the paper, I'm mailing a copy to Gentry's grandmother.

Week 2

06/04: I had a half day of work today (flew back from Houston early in the morning). I got a big assignment today! I told Tom last week that I had a lot of downtime and would appreciate more work. So Marcia Werts, assistant metro editor, assigned me to write about tuition increases at Kansas universities. She printed out a 100ish page packet, which I spent most of the day dissecting (and organizing). Marcia said she wanted it by the end of the day, but sources didn't call back so my deadline was pushed back.

The assignment made me wish I had taken the investigative or computer-assisted reporting classes. I know what to look for, but maybe those classes would have given me some tips on handling such large pieces of information? Or how to read between the lines more thoroughly? Still, I don't think anything can replace

developing contacts to find stories. And I can probably learn whatever I didn't at Mizzou on the job. We'll let the research component of my project answer this question.

I got my badge today, too. Of course it was after an early flight and half day of traveling, so now I have a horrible photo to show I work for the *Eagle*. Badges seem to be like drivers licenses.

06/05: I kept working on the tuition article. I was still waiting for sources to call me back, so the deadline got pushed again. I had some minor assignments to work on while I waited, but I spent most of my time trying to understand the financial jargon, charts and figuring out what exactly they mean.

06/06: Like most other papers, the *Eagle* isn't immune to the poor economy. Right before I went to the cops briefing, a woman from HR held a newsroom meeting. Profits aren't as high as they wanted, so they're requiring everyone to schedule a mandatory furlough. In HR-speak, this is one week of unpaid leave, though I suppose the length can vary from business to business.

Work-wise, I kept at the tuition article. I got most of my callbacks today, so it's coming along. I also talked to Tom halfway to make sure I was going the right direction. I had to adjust my angle a little — turns out they wanted a bit more student feedback, less administrative.

I wrote up a few short briefs from the 10. I got an insane amount of comments on a 3-inch story. 118 comments! I understand why. The police didn't say the race of the men who stole the bikes, and I didn't include it. It's a poor description to try and catch the group with. But then again, if I had used their race (if the police had supplied it), it wouldn't have gone down well either. Still, not worth 118 comments.

I also added to a story Stan Finger, the crime reporter, did about a man getting shot. They briefly touched on it at the 10, and I didn't have much to add besides the shooter's location. It was interesting to write into someone's story adding new information and trying to blend the styles together. Very editor-ish.

06/07: The tuition article is done! It's running tomorrow. I also finished up the medication disposal program. We saved it because the editors wanted commentary from the sole-participating pharmacy in Wichita, who then didn't want to talk because they didn't want the public stopping by. It was strange but nothing I could do about it.

I also wrote a brief about a car flipping on the turnpike. It didn't run, but Mike Hutmacher in photo asked me to write something because they had pictures, and it was vaguely interesting. Photo is always more relaxed than the newsroom. We can't wear jeans, but here he is wearing a Hawaiian shirt and cargo shorts. He also has a beard and Harry Potter-ish glasses.

I'm thinking a lot about how to use Twitter today. I post from my phone when I'm at work, but it's mostly personal observations. I want to start tweeting my stories, looking for news, etc. but I'm not sure how to develop that yet, especially since my followers (all 40 of them?) are Houston-based. Do I just follow everyone and hope they follow me? Do I make another account? I don't have a lot of connections here yet, so I'm not sure who to follow. I'm thankful the editors are still handing me stories.

06/08: I made the front page my second week! Roy stopped by my desk to tell me I carried the paper today. Not bad for an intern, I think. I did get one reader who was confused about the charts. I included two charts in my story, but the copy desk only had room for one. They ran the inclusive chart (tuition and fees) instead of the tuition-only chart (which is what the article dealt with). I understand their decision but wonder how many other readers were confused/didn't notice the difference.

I spent most of the day at two tag offices in town (similar to DMV), trying to figure out if wait times were affected by the new state-wide computer system. We were localizing a *Kansas City Star* article. I also worked on a brief about an organization looking for host families for study-abroad students. I'm not sure when that will run. I'm also thinking of doing a story about leash laws. I need to do some research and discuss with the editors. My landlady is involved in a leash law violation issue (her cat was killed by some neighbor's dogs before I moved in), so hopefully I can write it, and there won't be any conflict of interest issues. We'll see.

This weekend I'm volunteering for the annual fishing clinic. I made the mistake of signing up for the afternoon shift — when it will be hot and sunny, and I'll probably sunburn. At least I'm not like poor Simina — they're making her write about it!

Week 3

06/11: Today, Tom asked me to cover for Amy Leiker, a long-time intern, for the night cops. Hurst Lavinia is off Mondays, mostly because it's a slow night for the police beat. Not tonight. There were two officer-involved shootings at opposite ends of town. I was only able to go to one crime scene because they happened within 45 minutes of each other. The cops held a media briefing on scene. It was a good way to learn how to do the cops beat (and a huge step up from chasing after car wrecks and grease fires in Columbia). I typed up a short brief so we could get something online/in print.

Earlier, I helped Marcia phone potential candidates to get their occupation. The courts took over the redistricting, passing it on Wednesday, and candidates had until noon Friday to file.

06/12: I started work late today, after my night shift on Monday. Stan wrote the full story — the guy who was shot on the east end of town (crime scene I went to) was an escaped prisoner from somewhere in Kansas. The guy on the west side of town

was a mental patient who was threatening police (and family members) with a machete. It was a very interesting night for cops, to say the least.

I worked on a story about Camp Woodchuck, a summer day camp for mentally disabled kids. I also worked on a preview article for Wichita's Juneteenth parade. The story got me thinking about coverage of the black community — there doesn't seem to be much in the *Eagle*. I think it partly reflects community demographics and newsroom demographics. Wichita is mostly white, and the newsroom is 99% white, from what I've seen. Maybe I can cover events and issues important to the black community? I'm still looking for my own stories, and this could be a good, not well-reported niche to cover...

06/13: Today, I finished the Juneteenth parade article. It was a slow news day, and Tom didn't really have anything for me (besides a pertussis outbreak article), so I spent the day doing IRB training online and looking up how to do research on non-profits (tax forms, etc.). I pitched a story to Tom about the possible return of the Black Arts Festival (the 40-year-old festival didn't happen last year after Kansas cut funding to the arts). I kept thinking about black community coverage and tried looking for the local black paper, *The Community Voice*. I found an outdated Facebook page, and that's about it.

Later that evening, strangely enough, three kids came to my door. They were with the Electrifying Wichita Dynamic Steppers, trying to raise money for their team to compete in Omaha, Ne. Their dad, Robert Wagner, happened to be with them and

gave me information about the team AND a copy of *The Community Voice* (which turns out, their offices are around the corner from my apartment). It was like a story was handed to me. I can't wait to pitch it tomorrow!

06/14: Before I pitched my story to Tom, I did some research on the step team. I couldn't find a great website, so I did an archive search. The team has been around since 1988, and I only found two articles about them — one in 1996, another in 2002. Besides the occasional mention in yearly Juneteenth articles, that was it. So, I pitched it to Tom as a sort of event preview/informational article about the group, with strong potential for multimedia. He seemed interested in the multimedia aspect, but I don't think he liked the lack of "hard news." I'm starting to think that my GA position is reserved for hard news, less narrative/"soft" journalism. This is fine, but I'd like to do a little of both.

Not long after this pitch, I was given two new assignments: background checks on candidates and a story on the decline of civic organizations. With the background checks, I was finally told how to access the newsroom intranet. I had heard about it, but no one showed me how to get to it. Turns out, it has all the links to archives, databases the newsroom uses, tip sheets, etc. Hurst showed me how to do everything, and I spent the rest of the day looking for any crimes while waiting for call backs on the civic story. Also, I checked for comments on the Juneteenth article. I wasn't surprised to see them, but some were very racist.

We also had newsroom visitors: Some elementary school kids. Tom decided to embarrass me and had them all say hi to Sarah the intern. It was adorable.

06/15: I spent all of today working on the civic organization story. There are many parts to it: Clubs in trouble, clubs who have already disbanded, clubs that are doing great, as well as what the decline means for the community. The idea for the story came from a member from the Haysville Lions Club who said they were thinking of disbanding for lack of members. It reminded me of something a source said at the WWI exhibit, about how his organization (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) was also losing members. Luckily, I had his card, so I could call and get more information. Then I had to call around to other organizations. One woman with the Hypatia Club (disbanded in May) was hard of hearing, and I was practically yelling over the phone. Another woman with the Downtown Lions Club gave great information then, when I asked her name, said she didn't want to be quoted. It was a little frustrating, to say the least. The day before, I had to track down a professor at Wichita State that could speak about civic organizations. Joe Kleinsasser, the incredibly helpful media information guy, wasn't too sure who I should speak to, so I called around to several departments before finding a professor at the school's public affairs institute who could speak to it.

Still, I managed to get most of my interviews and wrote about half the piece. I'm very happy with it so far and am just waiting for the IOOF state officers to call me back with numbers and information about their organization. Next week, I'm going to talk

to Jeanne about possible art. I think the members meeting in their outfits would be great or performing some of their civic work would work great with the story. Once I finish this piece, I can work on the Black Arts Festival and step piece and, if there's anything to report, leash laws.

Week 4

06/18: I worked night cops today, so I came in around 2 p.m. It was much quieter than before, and I spent much of the night reading and doing background checks on more candidates.

I also finished the civic story with the IOOF/Rebekahs interviews. I thought it was done until Tom asked me to include Rotary (because they'll complain otherwise).

06/19: I went to work late today after the night shift. It was an extremely slow news day. I attempted to reach the Black Arts Festival organizers again — still no response. I also emailed the step club organizer — again, nothing. It's disappointing.

I reworked the civic story again, too, and added in Rotary. I also called around looking for events we could go shoot. We didn't have many file photos, and many clubs take it easy in the summer, but I think we set something up with the Downtown Lions Club.

Because it was so slow, I asked Tom for more work. I think it's been awhile since I've done that. He had me write up the preliminary report NTSB released about the plane crash that killed the Bramlage family. It gave me chills to write about, but I know a lot of people will be wondering until they release the final report.

I also tried to complete the IRB form so I could get started on the rest of my project. I'm a bit behind, but I think I should be able to catch up pretty quick, once I get approval. The form is tricky — the language is simple, but I just feel like I'm not getting it. When I get a spare moment, I'm calling the office so they can talk me through it. I have 90 percent of it filled out, just a few things I want to go over.

06/20: I had another fix for the civic story. Tom wanted me to add the Downtown Rotary Club this time. I think it's starting to get a little long. On one hand, I understand why to include them — they're the largest group, and they do very well in terms of recruiting/retaining members. But I can't include every civic organization in Wichita in this story. And I don't think they should be included because we'd get complaints otherwise. But, Tom's the boss, so Downtown Rotary was included. Also, the photo request I put in yesterday didn't get to Bo Rader, one of our photo editors, but we caught it in time, luckily. A picture of old guys meeting is better than no art at all.

Stan is sick, so I went to the 10 today. I wrote an update to the cat lady, which is just bizarre. I also wrote an update to the Kaufman case. It's an older case, so I spent awhile reading old stories in the archives, understanding what happened, etc.

Also, the NTSB preliminary story I wrote made it to the wires! Tom sent me an email congratulating me about it.

06/21: I got a new story assignment today — early fruits and veggies. I made some calls and finished it pretty quick. When I stopped by Tom's desk on my way out, I double-checked the length: 20 inches. I had finished it at 10 inches. I spent the rest of the day trying to figure out how to make it longer when all the farmers said the same thing. I even drove out to Haysville to try and find customers (and got lost on the way back). It's going on the front page, but I think writing to fit a news hole is a bad idea. To me, it makes the news weaker. Instead of writing all you need, you write more (or, less, if the space is smaller). I was happy with my lede though. It referenced a Black Lillies song I like.

I also wrote a quick piece about a sheriff's deputy-in-training getting hit in the leg during target practice. I ended up sharing the byline with Amy, another intern.

There was more reader feedback, too. A lady left a voicemail to tell me she was disappointed in the *Eagle's* coverage of animal rights but not child molesters, etc. She conveniently did not leave a call back number. Another woman called to tell about a time when the city locked up and killed several animals. I'm not sure how true this is but will follow up.

I also finally got a call back from Dana McPherson with the Black Arts Festival! I set up a time to talk with him tomorrow.

06/22: I had planned to call Dana today, but I got sent to some detention deputy's graduation ceremony instead. This story was incredibly difficult to write. I think it's because I read the 1986 New Yorker piece about Edna Buchanan. It made me realize there was a better way I could write about crimes/cops/courts. Of course, after reading good pieces like that, nothing you seem to write even comes close. But it gave me ideas about how to handle future stories.

After finishing this story, I started on a short piece about National HIV Testing Day and some events in town. I thought it was initially some "give the intern work" story, but it's not, sort of. Positive Directions, an AIDS/HIV testing/counseling organization was complaining about the lack of coverage in the *Eagle* on Facebook. Deb Gruver, the city council reporter, saw this, told Tom, and I got the story. While talking to Deb about my story, she gave me information for Positive Directions. The director also gave me a tip for another story. I need to do some more research, but it sounds promising.

Deb also sent Simina and me a list of potential human interest stories. She's so busy with her beat; she said she can't pursue them all. And we're so new, we haven't developed the contacts yet to know about these stories. We're looking forward to at least looking into them and seeing where they'll go.

I also had a correction today. The president of the Civitan group emailed me, disappointed because his organization wasn't listed. At the end of his email, he told me I got the president of the Downtown Lions Club's name wrong. I was mortified. I

called him, and sure enough, I was wrong. Ken Holmes is hard of hearing and didn't realize I was calling him Tim in our conversations. I told the editors and got it fixed. When I checked the story later, I saw the copy editors had repeated the error in the correction! I hated calling attention to what was originally my mistake, but I couldn't believe it had been made twice. I kept thinking of Poynter's Regret the Error. I hope it doesn't show up there.

Week 5

06/25: I had another correction in the civic organization story when I got into work today at 2 p.m. Tom had me write a correction and told me to be careful. He said I'd probably make a few more mistakes and showed me how to insert the CQ symbol in CCi. I also localized the Arizona immigration Supreme Court ruling and did some background research on a potential HIV/AIDS funding story.

I moved to Hurst's desk for night cops around 6 p.m. It was a slow night, so I read the BTK book. It was co-written by Roy, Hurst, Tim Potter and L. Kelly. All still work here but L. Kelly. It was well-written and a pretty quick read. I could see Roy's style and jokes in some of it. Right before I left, I saw a post on KAKE about a power outage affecting parts of the city. So, I got a hold of a Westar Energy representative and typed something up quick.

06/26: I came in late after night cops today. I had two assignments waiting for me: A preview for a Catholic rally in Topeka and a mentor expo. I also wrote up a quick brief about a Sedgwick County deputy accused of raping some inmates — it was his first appearance in court today. Between waiting for calls, I also contacted candidates asking for their late voters' guide responses. When I came back from the mentor expo (no one who wasn't involved with an organization showed up!), I wrote up a brief about an armed robbery.

I again moved to Hurst's desk to listen to the scanner. I was afraid of missing something, and then Kevin McGrath, the night editor, heard a fatality over the radio. We caught it 45 minutes after it happened, which was actually a good thing because the police didn't do the media briefing until 15 minutes after I arrived. A six-year-old died at the scene...

After I got back to the newsroom, Kevin was upset with me for texting a copy editor and not calling him. He later apologized, saying he was old-school and understood texting is just more natural for younger reporters. He also wanted more details about the wreck and said I'd learn to think on my feet during crime scenes, instead of just accepting what the police say at the scene. It also felt like a debriefing of sorts. Amy has worked here for a year and a half and didn't see her first fatality until this weekend.

06/27: I added some more to the Catholic rally story, and an ozone assignment was given away to a reporter in Topeka. I tried working on the Black Arts Festival again

but still wasn't able to reach anyone (my source and I have opposite work hours when I do night cops). To replace the ozone story, I was given a piece on new census information. It was dull, but I tried to make the best of it.

I also added some quotes to Stan's piece about the deputy's first appearance. I called Georgia Cole, spokesperson for the DA's office, who was extremely helpful but very short with me, too. I felt schooled on the legal system but managed to figure out whom to call and get some quotes.

It was a slow night for cops, thankfully.

06/28: I answered some emailed reader questions about the berry story. The highlight of the day was shooting at Gander Mountain. Some of the other reporters try and give Simina a "real Kansas" experience with different things. I tagged along with them and Michael Pearce, the outdoor writer, to shoot handguns. It was so much fun. The *Eagle* actually has quite a few interns. It's too bad they don't have a formal program or someone who is willing to take charge and show us (and the others) around. I haven't met anyone else besides Amy and Katie, a high school student that comes in once a week, I think.

There was also a retirement party for Bonnie Bing, the fashion/society reporter. Sherry Chisenhall, our editor, and others read some of Bonnie's funny quotes, as well as interesting parts from her personnel file. I never really met Bonnie, but everyone seems to love her here. It also made me a little sad, thinking how most of

the reporters in the room probably won't make it to their retirement parties because of layoffs, etc.

I was able to speak with some Black Arts Festival members and will be working on that soon.

06/29: Today, I toured the new YMCA facility with city council members and the mayor. It was extremely hot, in the middle of the day, and I was sunburned. When I got back to the office, Tom had another assignment for me: Curtis McClinton Sr., Kansas' first black senator, had died, and he wanted me to write an obituary. I wanted to do something good with this (and it strongly reminded me of my Beulah Ralph life story for the *Missourian*), but I couldn't get in touch with family. I even stayed an hour later to talk to one of Mr. McClinton's opponents/friends and offered to work on it over the weekend.

In between calls, Deb showed Simina, Amy and I how to do thorough background checks on candidates.

Week 6

07/02: I had the night cops shift, so I planned on going in around 2 p.m. Tom called and woke me up around 10 a.m., and I was worried for a second I didn't actually have night cops and was late. Turns out he wanted me to write a story about a guy

who puts up 70 flags in his front yard, and a photographer had arranged an interview at 1 p.m.

After I met with David Martin, the flag guy, I had writer's block for awhile. Night cops was slow, so I spent some time interviewing a neighbor, and asked Tom if there were any openings at the *Eagle*. There are none so far, but there might be before I leave. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. The *Eagle* would be a great place to work more permanently. I did get permission to make copies and do whatever else I needed for my resume, clips, etc.

07/03: I revisited David today and finished the flag story. I also updated a train derailment story, adding info to Stan's piece. I was also assigned two candidates running for District 100 in the Kansas House of Representatives. I'm going to attend an editorial board meeting on Thursday (where they choose who to endorse). Then, I get to background them and write a piece explaining each of their views.

Nothing happened on night cops today.

07/04: Happy Fourth of July!

I asked to work, but Tom said I wouldn't get paid, so he wouldn't even let me volunteer.

07/05: I went to the 10 today and wrote some briefs. I also wrote a follow-up/obituary for Janel Balmer, the 16-year-old Andover girl who died in a car wreck.

It made me feel better, being able to tell someone's story and what happened to them (unlike in my previous traffic fatality story). But it was difficult because the girl sounded like such a nice person. I spent the entire day trying to find family and friends to talk to and reaching out to them via church, Twitter and Facebook.

07/06: I went to morning cops again this week. Lt. Doug Nolte gave us four items, but I only wrote up three briefs (John Boogart and Tom weren't interested in the car chase story). I also received a phone call from an older woman who felt I blamed the old people for what happened to the girl just by including them in the article. I didn't bother to call her back. No one else that read the article seemed to think so. The woman must have known the elderly couple (she also knew specific injuries, which reporters can't get access to from the hospital). Via Christi is very good about not giving out the specifics of patients' conditions.

While I was headed to the 10, Tom tried to assign me a soup story, and I declined because it seemed dumb (and, well, something for the high school intern to write). I'm busy enough with "real" stories. He said he'd save it for next week if I wrote something today, so I finally had time to write the Black Arts Festival preview.

Also, at the end of the day, I got an email from a woman at Janel Balmer's church, thanking me for my story. It made me feel much better, compared to how I felt when I heard the other woman's voice mail.

Week 7

07/09: Tom gave me an assignment as I was walking out the door on Friday. I had to go to the driver license office at 7:45 a.m. — it was the first time since the 80s that they were open on a Monday. Then I went to cops. WPD had a busy weekend: There was another traffic fatality, they found the drowning victim in Lake Afton, and there was a homicide.

I finished the DMV story by 5:30 and had to reschedule the interviews for the candidate profile piece I was working on. It was a 10-hour day today.

07/10: I went to the 10 today. Police made an arrest in the homicide. I also wrote up a short piece on a robbery involving a taser. I prepared some questions for my candidates and attempted to find the “soup guy.” He wasn’t there, so I may be off the hook for the story. I also contacted Roz Hutchinson at Via Christi for contact information about one of their nurses for a human interest piece. I profiled my candidates and left early. On the way out, I was assigned the county commissioners’ meeting. Deb usually covers it, but she’s busy with a Boys’ Ranch story. She called me later to give me parking directions and what to look out for, etc.

07/11: Deb was right. Parking was awful! And then there were wifi issues to boot. This was the first time I wrote a story and filed remotely, well via email at least. That was neat. I was there from 9 a.m. to noon-ish. Then, I came back and wrote a few pieces about the commish meeting and the candidate profile piece. Jean Hays, one of

my editors, worked on my AirTran story but never sent it back to me. I happened to see it before I left. There were a few issues with the numbers, but I fixed that with Marcia.

07/12: I'm short a committee member for my project now. Rhonda Prast has accepted a job in Kansas City and won't be at Mizzou anymore. It's a great opportunity for her, but it's not so great for me. I contacted my chair and Martha, both who have excellent ideas for replacements, as well as what paperwork I'd need to fill out. Her email reminded me I have another part to my project, and I completed my IRB form. Now, all I need is approval so I can send out the email and start interviewing other journalists.

I went out to the Oaklawn neighborhood with one of our photographers today. I'm working on a story about the 16 homes that were marked "unsafe to occupy" by the city and are now being rebuilt. We talked about multimedia on the way back. Mike gave me some tips for practicing video and photos (so I don't screw up my first piece), as well as a really neat idea. The *Eagle* used to emphasize video and required at least three videos a week. But the viewer numbers weren't high enough (as well as completion it seems). So, they still do video, but not as much as before.

The duathlon guy (Brad Saens) called me back today, and I interviewed him. I'll be working on his story slowly, as the editors are more interested in hard news. I'm on the lookout for softer stories though. I would like to have one long feature piece before I leave here, if I leave here.

07/13: IRB requested some extra documents, and I submitted those today.

I spent the entire day attempting to reach Oaklawn homeowners, landlords and others about the 16 homes being rebuilt. Tom wanted 18 to 20 inches of story. By the end of the day, I had managed to stretch it to 14. He told me to hold on until Monday, but I still don't know how to get it much longer than that.

Mike also emailed me some great research for the multimedia/gun story. Hopefully I'll be able to spend some significant time on this piece this upcoming week.

Week 8

07/16: I worked on the gun story today. I'm looking for concrete numbers, anything that can back up what I'm hearing. So far, nada. I contacted a few organizations and gun ranges. I also finished up the Oaklawn story after contacting a few more people.

I got IRB approval for the rest of my project. Tom Warhover also agreed to join my committee and replace Rhonda. I also applied for graduation. This summer is moving quickly!

07/17: The gun story is coming along. Still looking for numbers and getting mostly anecdotes. There are a lot of little pieces. Tom is on vacation this week, and John Boogert, deputy editor, has been pretty relaxed with assignments/letting me work on my own assignments. When nothing is happening with the gun story, I switch to

my duathlon story. Today I brainstormed questions for friends and family.

Strangely, Marcia assigned Simina a story about record concealed carry applications.

I'm working on a different angle, obviously, but it's so similar I wonder why I didn't write it.

I'm a bit worried I haven't done any multimedia yet. I was so busy writing/adjusting during the first half of my internship. Now, I have a bit more time, but I'm not sure what to do for it.

07/18: I've decided to "divide and conquer" for the gun piece. All the sources and little parts were frustrating me.

Later today, some newsroom folks drove out to Pretty Prairie for the nighttime rodeo. I decided to skip that — not my first rodeo.

07/19: I put together most of the gun story today. I'm still missing parts and need to clarify some information sources gave me, but it was good to get words out on paper or the screen at least.

We had another newsroom field trip today — to the Frank Lloyd Wright-Allen Lambe house. It was really cool.

07/20: I worked some more on the gun story. I can't seem to get a hold of one source anymore. I don't want to keep calling her, but I need to go over some information she gave me. I planned to go to the gun show this weekend and maybe

get some women shooters for sources. I also worked on the duathlon story some more.

Simina and I also left work early today for another intern program: sailing on El Dorado Lake with Michael. I really think if Siminia weren't here, none of these activities would occur. Some people in the newsroom are dedicated to showing her parts of Kansas because she's an international student. No interns have had it this good for awhile, I bet.

Week 9

07/23: I spent today trying to reach the duathlon athlete and making calls about the gun story. I spent this past weekend job searching and attended the gun show. I showed up right as it was closing (got times mixed up with the Saturday end times) but security let me in for free, and I actually got a source! I also contacted MizzouMafia people who had replied to my recruitment email on Friday and set up an interview for later this week.

07/24: I attended the Sedgwick County Commissioners board meeting today. It lasted barely 15 minutes. I spent the rest of the day working on the duathlon and gun stories. I also fixed the photo requests for both stories and continued the job search. After work, I bought a telephone pickup, so I could record my phone interviews.

07/25: I wrote most of the duathlon story today. Mike (photographer) and I drove to Bullet Stop looking for women shooters. There weren't any shooting around noon, but Mike went back up later and got me invited to a women only introductory handgun class tomorrow. He also got a few shots on the range and some contacts for me. This class presented the perfect opportunity to make a multimedia piece, and I spent the majority of the morning hunting down a high quality recorder and some batteries. The photo department had a H4, which will work perfectly.

I also emailed Tom and Rhonda, to let them know I might have four committee members. It turns out Rhonda is still eligible to be on my committee. I would be happy to have them both; I just need to make sure I have three come defense-time in the fall. I have my first interview tonight, so I'm a little nervous about that, but it's nice to finally get that part of my project going.

I also asked Tom if I could have a review before my internship ended. They do that anyway. I should have asked for a progress report, too, but he said if there were any problems, they would have addressed them beforehand.

07/26: My interview last night went so well! GR was the PERFECT first source and was willing to be completely candid. She also recommended other potential participants.

I finished the duathlon story today — it came in at a whopping 33 inches! I think I got a bit quote happy, but I asked Tom to take a look at it in its rough draft form

anyway. I also had to change some photography times with the duathlon guy because they wanted to run the story this weekend. As for the gun story, I got some great statistics from the source I've been pestering all week. She thought she sent them last week, but they never came through.

I went to the gun range tonight and got some great sound (and sources!).

07/27: I edited the duathlon story some today and got it down to 28 inches. It's better, and then Tom cut it down a bit more and helped with the intro a bit. I spent the rest of the day listening to audio from the gun range and piecing together the gun story (working new numbers and quotes in, etc.). That story has also gotten a bit long — over 30 inches, I think.

I also left work early for another intern program. Mike took us to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills. It was gorgeous, if a little dry from the drought, and we got to drive through the buffalo herd.

I also got an interesting reader response to the stolen lawn care equipment story I wrote yesterday. Someone sent in a letter and asked me to send some money to Philip Crabtree, the Army National Guard soldier who had his equipment stolen last week. People in Wichita are just too kind.

Week 10

07/30: The duathlon story ran this weekend, and I got a nice note from the sports copy editor about it. Today, I listened to the rest of the gun audio and fixed the intro and conclusion to the text (it's now at 35 inches). I planned out my multimedia a bit more and found out the run date was now pushed to Wednesday. I also attended the 10 for Stan and wrote two crime briefs.

07/31: I kept working on the audio today. The run date got pushed back again, which is good because I doubt I could have put together a good multimedia piece for tomorrow. Fernando Salazar took some great photos, and Brian Corn, photo editor, asked me to help with captions later. I selected and edited most of my audio. It's about 1:27 long right now. The next step is piecing it all together in FinalCut — and finding an available computer to do that with.

Program-wise, I'm using Audacity for the audio. I'd rather use Adobe Audition because it's just more user-friendly, but this program is free and fairly simple to understand.

08/01: Tom sent me to a small press conference at the airport — they're expanding security to four X-ray machines. I wrote a short piece for online, and then expanded it for print later. I also wrote captions for all the pictures, in case they feel like making a gallery.

I can't believe I have little more than two weeks left here. Time has flown by. I don't feel like an intern because of all the work I've done, but I don't feel quite like part of the newsroom either. Probably because I know I'll be leaving soon.

08/02: I'm still working on the gun story. The text is ready to go, after it gets edited of course. It's also been pushed to Sunday. I'm ready to get this story done, and I realize I've had a generous timeline with this project, more than I'll probably have with later assignments here or at other publications. Reporter Dion Lefler offered to loan me his *Eagle* Mac tomorrow (which has FinalCut) so I can make the audio slideshow. I also sat down with photographer Jaime Green to go over the program a bit, since it's been a few years since I've used it. It's not the newest version (10, I think), so it was very easy to understand.

I also got a short assignment to report on an election issue in the Andover School District: Increasing the Local Option Budget (a Kansas thing) by 1 percent.

I also attended a Beast Feast at Mike's house. It was a five-course meal of animals he's shot himself. The *Eagle's* editor Sherry Chisenhall was there, as well as reporter Beccy Tanner, Simina and I. It was a great part of the "intern program," and a great chance to chat with Sherry, too.

08/03: Today was the busiest day of my entire internship. I finished the audio slideshow on Dion's Mac, then had Bo Rader, a photographer and like second-in-command to Brian, offer some slight changes and upload it to Vmix. I also had last

minute changes to the gun story text. Tom also gave me an assignment: Attend a pro-fluoride rally when the group dropped off their petition signatures. I also had scheduled two master's project interviews earlier in the week, thinking I would have some time. I bumped one to Saturday and used my lunch to interview another. I did have enough time at the end of the day to apply for a job that went out on the MizzouMafia listserv. Other than this last 30 minutes, there was practically no downtime today.

Week 11

08/06: I'm nearing my last week here. It's hard to believe the summer, and my internship, is almost over.

Today was relatively slow. I got several reader comments on the fluoride story and many positive comments (both emailed and online) about the gun piece. I also got a request to reprint the piece in a NRA-affiliate's newsletter. I worked on a dredging story about Bartlett Arboretum and set up photos for it, too. Robin Macy was a great interview and, I think, helped make the story more interesting.

08/07: Today was the election primaries. I was responsible for a few things: Voters' quotes from two different locations on the south side of town and election results for the Andover LOB and the Butler County Sheriff's race.

Before heading into work at 3 p.m., I stopped by the polling places and got some quotes and photos. It reminded me of the first day of school assignment pictures/quotes I did for the *Missourian* a few years ago. Afterward, I went to work and wrote the background for my election pieces. Then, I got to wait.

Butler County got their results in faster than Sedgwick County, for some reason. So, I wrapped everything up and went home around 10:30 p.m. Other reporters were there until midnight, and I heard the editors stayed past 1 a.m.! Glad there was pizza and brownies at least.

08/08: Today I was sent to the Salvation Army school supply distribution. I also had scheduled an interview with the Rose Hill softball coach who needs a kidney transplant. I got some really good stuff from her, but I think I'll have to call back to ask the tougher, more emotional questions. While I was talking to her, they told me about two fourth graders in the community with cancer, one who has a cancer so rare, he's the only one in the state with it. It sounded like a great story, but I don't have any time left here to pursue something like that. I'm going to pass it on to my editors. Maybe someone else can get the ball rolling on it.

08/09: I began working on the kidney coach story, piecing it together and just getting the notes off paper and onto the screen. I wish I could do some multimedia with it, but I'm out of time, and I'm not sure what it would be of. I set up photos with her and her potential donor for next week, and I plan to have it done by then. I also

interviewed her doctor for background information on the disease and the transplant process. He was very helpful.

I also got a call from the superintendent of Andover USD, Mark Evans. Turns out the Andover LOB may still pass. The school district sits in two counties, and they have to add together Sedgwick and Butler counties' votes, as well as the paper votes. As of today, the no's led by only seven votes. I'm keeping my eye on the numbers and will write an update on Friday. If I can't for whatever reason (other assignments, maybe), Suzanne Tobias, the education beat reporter, will probably take care of it.

08/10: I spent all day working on the kidney coach story. I also began saving some of my clips in PDF form. I'm glad the *Eagle* has an easily accessible archive system. I remember it being a bit more difficult at the *Missourian* and the *Herald*.

Jean also gave me an assignment about job placement rates of grads. I'm not sure if there's a story there, but I'm poking around to see. It may run next Sunday if there is one. I also wrote up a brief about Kansas' and Nebraska's ongoing fight over Republican River Basin water. It took all day for a lawyer to call me back, and then I got nothing useful from him. I wrote the entire brief off AP and *Eagle* archive sources — one which was by Jean, back in 1988.

Week 12

08/13: Tom read over the first draft of my kidney story, and I was finally ready to call my sources and get some questions answered, as well as get into the really meaty stuff, when I hit a huge wall. My source got a kidney! It's awesome for her of course, but I was stunned. So, I decided to turn it into a piece about organ donation.

I wrote an update about the Andover LOB vote being tied and continued the job search.

Today starts my last week. It's crazy to think about how fast this summer has gone and what I've written.

08/14: I tried pushing the kidney story the organ donation route, but I'm not getting anywhere. There's not enough of a news peg to really hang it on, make it relevant.

Editors at the *Las Vegas Sun* emailed me today wanting to do a Skype interview. I spent most of the day working with IT to get Skype working on the laptops. I find it strange they don't already have it set up.

The interview went really well, and they want me to start immediately. I'm still on the fence, however. The pay is just so low.

Later in the evening, I took an editing test for an editing job in New York City and conducted another interview for the scholarly component of my master's project.

It's going slowly but surely on that side of things, and I got a lot of responses to my second email requesting help.

08/15: I gave up on the kidney story today. Tom said sometimes it's better to let stories go sometimes.

I spent most of the day thinking about the *Sun* and if I could swing an internship up there. Tom's son got his job via the internship there, so it's doable. He also has incredibly positive things to say about it. I'm leaning towards it for sure.

08/16: I wrote an update to the Andover LOB. It passed — by two. I like being able to follow a story to the end. Other reporters weren't too excited about the multiple follow-ups, but I thought it was fun and interesting. And the superintendent of Andover School District knows me pretty well now.

I also wrote a piece about the marshmallow roast world record Marion County Lake and Park set in March. That won't run until the weekend, however.

Tom, John and I had lunch together. Interns at the *Eagle* get free meals on their first and last days. They both continued to tell me how the *Sun/Vegas* would be a great opportunity for me and to not think about the money. I believe them, but the money part is hard to ignore.

08/17: Today is my last day.

John sent me to cops. Nolte had nothing for Interwatch for the first time ever, he said. I wrote up a brief about some burglaries in Derby and waited for callbacks on the West Nile story Tom assigned me yesterday. That ended up not working out, so I emailed my contacts and information to Tom and John for another reporter to pursue on Monday.

I cleaned out my desk, picked through my notes/emails and sent myself copies of my clips in PDF format. Then I went to lunch with the reporters I worked with most in the newsroom. It was a good way to end the internship. I hoped for a bit more excitement, but an average day in the newsroom will do just fine.

I've really enjoyed my time here. I think I've improved as a reporter, and it's time for me to see what else is out there and, hopefully, do more online/multimedia work. There wasn't much of that here. I'll miss the *Eagle*.

Chapter 3: SELF-EVALUATION

Overall, I am pleased with the time I spent at the *Eagle*. I felt like a regular staff member and not an intern from the start, and I was able to produce a variety of clips, from short crime briefs to longer features. On one hand, it was refreshing to not be on a beat and confined to a particular topic, but it was sometimes frustrating to not have a specific focus when looking for stories. I think the editors, especially Tom Shine, quickly realized I was capable of more than event previews and briefs, and I received more difficult and interesting topics as the summer progressed.

The stories I liked working on the most were the feature-length pieces. I enjoyed weaving together multiple interviews with statistics and comments from professional sources. Working on these longer pieces required me to use all or most of the storytelling and reporting skills I had learned at Mizzou. While I still don't know what beat, if any, I would like to focus on in my career, I do know that feature and long-form journalism is something I would like to continue doing.

Working as a reporter in a town completely alien to me also forced me out of my comfort zone. At previous reporting jobs, I had been shy and sometimes reluctant to talk to sources. At the *Eagle*, I knew I couldn't hesitate to contact a stranger if I wanted a story, and my confidence as a reporter grew. There were still some stories I wasn't excited to cover, but I knew it was based on personal

preference about the assignment and not a deeper fear about not knowing how to write a story or approach a source.

Although I was only able to create one multimedia piece (fulfilling the minimum requirement I set for the project), I think given more time, I would have done more multimedia pieces and eventually progressed from audio slideshows to videos. One thing that hindered me focusing on multimedia was the lack of a strong Web/multimedia presence in the newsroom. The newsroom was online-oriented and almost all content was posted immediately, but a print-focused mindset still seemed to be the norm, and I found myself adopting this mindset as well.

Twitter and hyperlinks are two examples of how the newsroom still did not have a true Web-first, multi-platform attitude. For example, tweeting links to stories was not required or even strongly encouraged, though some reporters were independently active when it came to promoting their work and connecting with the audience. At one point, a reporter requested her Twitter handle be added to her business card in lieu of the fax number. Her request was initially denied because of a formatting/template issue with the business cards but was quickly resolved once the publisher got involved. It seemed odd to me, and to several in the newsroom, that this would even be an issue. Also, hyperlinking in stories was practically unheard of, and I did not learn how to even make a hyperlink in my own stories until near my last week and only after mentioning it to the copy desk chief.

The absence of a multimedia “guru” or mentor also made focusing on and creating multimedia slightly difficult. There was no one outside of the photo department or IT to turn to for instruction or assistance regarding software, video or even hardware. The business reporters used to do a recording for a local radio station, but no one remembered what recorder or program they used. The photographers and photo editors were extremely helpful in helping me track down a quality recorder and offering suggestions for my work, but few seemed to consider themselves experts in FinalCut or Audacity, the two programs I ended up using for my audio slideshow. If I had not been exposed to these two programs at Mizzou, I would have been extremely lost, and the quality of my work would have suffered. I may not have created any multimedia at all without prior experience from Mizzou. I’m not sure if this is how most newsrooms tend to be regarding multimedia, but I know now that I need to be aggressive and self-motivated if I want to focus on multimedia.

I started off slow with the professional analysis portion of my project and wrapped up the interviews long after my internship ended. This slow pace was partially due to adapting to my workflow at the *Eagle* and finding alumni that fit my project. Many offered to help but far fewer fit my qualifications. As I interviewed my sources, I learned a lot about what happens to graduates once they leave the J-School and realized that self-doubt before graduating and some job difficulties right after graduation is fairly typical. Not surprisingly, I found that continual education is necessary to stay hireable and relevant within convergence journalism, though many

had already made the transition out of “pure” journalism and into public relations-type fields.

Interviewing recent graduates was also extremely motivating. If I ever had a bad day with a source or story or was feeling skeptical of my future as a journalist, I just remembered my interviews. Talking with them gave me hope, and they often encouraged my work and inspired me as to what my own career could be like. I also found the networking aspect of my project to be valuable, and I appreciate the connections I made with these sources.

As my project has taken longer than intended or expected to be completed, I’ve also been able to experience first-hand the continual learning and evolution that is required of today’s journalists. Since leaving the *Eagle* and Mizzou, I have held several reporting/editing jobs and have currently (and temporarily, I hope) transitioned out of journalism into a more PR- and Web-focused position at a university. I used my writing, editing and basic multimedia skills to get my current job, where I am improving my social media and multimedia skills, as well as learning how to code. The absence of a true mentor makes my self-education slightly more difficult but not impossible. I hope to one day take these new skills and transition back into journalism, but I find it interesting and amusing that my experience is mirroring most of the convergence journalists I interviewed nearly two years ago.

Chapter 4: PROFESSIONAL WORK

May 29, 2012

[Clerk bound with power cords during store robbery](#)

A robbery was reported on Monday at Friendly Oil Field Products, located at 5421 E. Kellogg Dr., police said on Tuesday.

A man approached the clerk shortly after 9 p.m. when her back was turned, telling her not to turn around. He then took her to a back room, bound her with power cords and proceeded to take miscellaneous property from the store. The 52-year-old woman freed herself and called police.

Police are still investigating the robbery.

[Traveling WWI exhibit to visit Wichita](#)

A traveling World War I exhibit rolls into Wichita on Wednesday.

Housed in a 57-foot trailer, the Honoring Our History Tour showcases artifacts from the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Mo. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., visitors can stop by the Entrance Plaza of Exploration Place to view weapons, equipment and uniforms of WWI, as well as learn the history of the Great War. The walk-through exhibit can accommodate up to 45 visitors at a time.

Waddell & Reed, a mutual fund and financial planning company founded in 1937 by two WWI veterans, is sponsoring the traveling exhibit ahead of the war's centennial in 2014. The goal of the tour is to raise funds and awareness for the national museum while celebrating Waddell & Reed's 75th anniversary.

While the event is free, donations are accepted and will be split between Exploration Place and the national museum. To date, the exhibit has hosted more than 55,000 visitors and raised almost \$100,000 for the National World War I Museum.

Wichita is the 48th stop on the two-year, 75-city tour. After Wichita, the exhibit will travel to the 45th Infantry Division Museum in Oklahoma City on Friday and the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in Topeka on Tuesday.

May 30, 2012

[Six bicyclists trek from Mexico to Wichita](#)

Bicyclists from Tlalnepantla, Mexico, arrived in Wichita on Tuesday afternoon. Six bicyclists rode more than 1,600 miles in 13 days from Tlalnepantla, one of Wichita's sister cities.

This is the seventh bicycle trip from Tlalnepantla to Wichita, but the trip is the first for some riders.

After resting, the group will spend the remainder of the week touring Wichita, participating in the Wichita River Festival Sundown Parade on Friday and promoting Sister Cities International, a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network.

The bicyclists will fly home on Sunday.

May 31, 2012

[Hundreds visit traveling WWI exhibit](#)

History buffs and descendants of World War I veterans toured the traveling WWI exhibit on Wednesday at Exploration Place.

Housed in a retrofitted 18-wheeler, the exhibit showcased French, German and American uniforms; medical tools; weaponry, and other WWI artifacts selected from the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Mo. Panels also provided a detailed history of what caused and ended the Great War, as well as what life was like for soldiers, civilians, women and African Americans during the war.

Once inside the trailer, visitors were quiet and took their time reading the panels and learning about WWI. By early Wednesday afternoon, more than 800 people had toured the exhibit.

Allen and Christine Leddon, self-proclaimed “history geeks,” waited in line so they could learn more about WWI.

“I know less about WWI than any other wars,” Allen Leddon said.

Coincidentally, the Leddons said they spent part of Memorial Day weekend decorating a WWI memorial for Ray McKay in Maple Grove Cemetery in east Wichita.

Kevin Dohrer said he has visited the national museum previously but still found the tour educational and new. His favorite part of the exhibit, he said, was the comfort kits handed out to soldiers in the field. The kits contained items such as a wristwatch, cigarette lighter and shaving kit to help keep soldiers comfortable in the trenches.

Several visitors were impressed with the thoroughness and quality of the walk-through exhibit. Jane DeGiacomo brought her son and his friend so they could learn about WWI.

“It’s important for all kids to have history so, as they get older, they can appreciate how history repeats itself if we’re not careful,” DeGiacomo said.

Waddell & Reed, a mutual fund and financial planning company founded in 1937 by two WWI veterans, is sponsoring the traveling exhibit ahead of the war’s centennial in 2014. The goal of the tour is to raise funds and awareness for the national museum while celebrating Waddell & Reed’s 75th anniversary.

Wichita was the 48th stop on the 75-city tour. The exhibit will travel to Oklahoma City on Friday and Topeka on Tuesday.

[Sim Park golf course closed due to hail damage*](#)

**this article was later incorporated into Rick Plumlee’s story [“After storms, insurers rush while farmers relax”](#)*

Sim Park golf course is closed today due to Wednesday night’s hail storm.

The storm damaged all 18 greens and caused significant leaf litter on the course as well. The hail also shredded trees from South Riverside Park to Evergreen Park, near 25th and Arkansas.

Doug Kupper, Wichita parks and recreation director, said that his staff will repair divots “with spoons and probably dining forks” and use mowers to mulch the leaf litter.

“Mother Nature put too many divots into the greens over there to make it playable,” Kupper said.

Botanica, located next to the golf course, was also affected by the hail storm but remained open today.

“Some of our bigger flowers got shredded pretty heavily by the hail stones,” Kupper said.

There was no building damage at either Botanica or Sim Park. The golf course is set to reopen Friday.

June 1, 2012

[Worship service this weekend in Pretty Prairie](#)

The seventh annual Praise on the Prairie at the SK Ranch in Pretty Prairie will be held this weekend.

Originally called Prairiefire, the event has been renamed the Roundup, and this year will feature Juilliard-trained violinist Maurice Sklar and several worship leaders, including Claren and Nancy McQueen, Lisa McFarland with War Dove Ministries, and Terry Law with World Compassion.

The event begins at 7 p.m. today at Pretty Prairie Elementary School, and events are held at the SK Ranch the following days. On Saturday, attendees can participate in barnyard Olympics, learn how to calf rope, and play river volleyball in between worship services and speakers. A cowboy church service will be held Sunday.

Guests are welcome to camp on the ranch or stay at area hotels. Lunch is provided on Sunday, but guests should bring their own food for the rest of the weekend.

Visit www.theroundup.4ciwichita.com for more information.

[Laptop, cash stolen in robbery; cops hunt suspect called “Shorty”](#)

A residential robbery was reported at 4:30 a.m. Friday at 625 N. Topeka, Wichita police said Friday.

One of the victims, a 46-year-old woman, reported that a man she knew as “Shorty” forced his way into her apartment and demanded money.

According to police, the other victim, a 32-year-old man, said he and the woman didn’t have any money. The thief apparently didn’t believe the victims because he had seen them using an ATM at a nearby QuikTrip. The male victim then handed over the cash and a laptop.

Police are still looking for the suspect.

Collecting on a card-playing debt leads to stabbing

A woman was stabbed after playing cards at 9:30 p.m. Thursday in the 500 block of North Ridgewood, Wichita police said Friday.

The 31-year-old victim was playing card games for money with another woman, and an argument ensued after the suspect lost, police said. When the victim tried to collect the money owed, the suspect approached from behind and stabbed her in her lower right leg, police said.

Police have identified the suspect and are continuing their investigation.

Woman stabbed in face with pen

An aggravated battery was reported at 1:55 a.m. Friday in the 2000 block of North Old Manor, between Oliver and Woodlawn.

The victim, a 24-year-old woman, had an ongoing argument with a coworker, Wichita police said. According to the police report, the suspect said “if you have a problem with her, then you have a problem with me” and stabbed the victim in the face with a pen. The victim suffered minor injuries to her nose and lower left eye, police said.

Police have identified the suspect but do not know what the argument was about.

[Police seek robber in Fidelity Bank heist](#)

The Fidelity Bank at 7711 E. Harry St. was robbed at 9:20 a.m. Thursday, Wichita police said today.

The suspect entered the bank and handed the teller a note saying it was a robbery, the police said. The robber did not pull a weapon but indicated he had a handgun tucked in his waistband, police said. The teller complied with the request, and the man left the scene on foot. No one was injured during the robbery.

Police describe the robber as a white man in his late 20s or early 30s, 5-foot-10 to 6 feet tall, with glasses and no facial hair. He was wearing black athletic shorts, a black windbreaker with gray or white stripes on the sleeves and a black baseball cap.

The FBI and Wichita police are investigating.

[Missing El Dorado girl found in Michigan](#)

[Police hold 12-year-old, Canadian man she met on the Internet](#)

Police found a 12-year-old El Dorado girl in Michigan on Friday afternoon, a day after she had left home with a man she met on the Internet.

The girl, who had been missing since Thursday morning, was found after police stopped Kenneth McGill in a rural area in Eaton County, west of Lansing. McGill, 20, of Ontario, Canada, was arrested and was being held by Michigan state police on Friday evening.

The girl also was being held by police and appeared physically unharmed, said Michigan State Police Lt. T.J. Riegle. The Amber Alert issued in Michigan has been canceled.

Riegle said he doesn't think they were headed for the Canadian border, but he doesn't know where they were going.

Police think the girl left home on her own to meet McGill, who had checked into an El Dorado motel early Thursday morning.

The car the two traveled in was spotted heading north on the Kansas Turnpike shortly before 8 a.m. Thursday and in south-central Michigan as of 3 p.m. Friday.

McGill was driving a white 2006 Chevrolet Impala with Canadian license plates that was previously reported stolen from his parents.

El Dorado Police Chief Tom Boren said earlier that the girl's parents told investigators they had last seen her about 2 a.m. Thursday. They reported her missing about 12 hours later.

Contributing: Associated Press

June 3, 2012

Wichita native Gentry Miller competes for Miss USA

Growing up, Gentry Linn Miller used to watch the Miss USA pageants on TV and daydream about competing. Tonight, Miller, a Wichita native, will represent Kansas in the Miss USA pageant in Las Vegas.

Crowned Miss Kansas USA this past fall, Miller, 24, was not a regular pageant competitor as a child. Cheryl Miller, Gentry's grandmother, enrolled her in dance classes in Dodge City when Gentry was 3 years old. Gentry was incredibly shy, so Cheryl put her in pageants as well. "She is who she is today because we did that," Cheryl said.

Gentry competed in pageants until she was 6 years old and didn't compete again until her senior year at Wichita's Northwest High School. That year, she entered a pageant because she wanted "one last experience" to give her some public speaking experience before college. She won Miss Kansas Teen USA and graduated valedictorian with a 4.0 GPA.

Gentry took another break from pageants while at the University of Kansas. She put herself through school with scholarships and grants and, in 2010, graduated with a 4.0 GPA. She was also selected to give the commencement speech for KU's School of Business, "one of the biggest honors she's ever had," Cheryl said.

A dedicated student, Gentry attributes much of her drive and studious nature to her grandmother. "I always talked about the importance of education so she could always provide for herself," Cheryl said. "And she took it to heart."

Cheryl, who adopted Gentry after her mother became ill and could no longer care for her, is proud of Gentry's work ethic and how far she's come. "I don't care if she wins Miss USA; that's not the point. It's the experience," Cheryl said. The two are very close and even share a duplex in Overland Park. "All my friends are like, 'Really, you live with your grandma?'" Gentry said.

Tonight, more than 20 friends and family members, including Gentry's grandmother, will be cheering her on in Las Vegas at the Miss USA competition. Gentry hopes to win but, if not, will continue working as a pharmaceutical sales territory manager selling glaucoma products for Allergan's eye care division.

Gentry, who lived in the Reflection Ridge area, considers Wichita a "great town to grow up in" and remembers going to River Festival concerts and movies at the Warren Theatres. She has no plans to move back to Wichita anytime soon but doesn't rule it out. "I would come back to Wichita if my career path leads me there," she said.

Miss USA 2012 will be crowned during a live broadcast starting at 8 tonight on NBC and KSNW, Channel 3.

June 6, 2012

[Loving Day celebration set for Saturday](#)

A celebration to mark the Supreme Court's decision to overturn laws banning interracial marriages will be held Saturday in Wichita.

The Wichita Loving Day event will be held from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. at Hyde Park, 201 S. Greenwood.

The event will feature students from the Paul Mitchell School who will braid and fix hair, and kid-friendly activities such as ladder ball, sidewalk chalk and more. Attendees may also register to vote and sign their child up for Ident-A-Kid, a child-identification program. A \$1 raffle will also be held for a wide variety of items, including tickets to the Wichita Symphony, artwork and gift cards to local stores.

Free food and drinks will also be available.

Loving Day recognizes Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter, who married in Virginia in 1958. Because Jeter was black and Loving was white, their marriage wasn't recognized, and their union was considered illegal. In 1967, the Lovings sued the state of Virginia. The case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled for the Lovings.

Visit the national website to learn more about Loving Day at lovingday.org or contact the Wichita group at lovingdaywichita@gmail.com.

Teens beaten, robbed while leaving Riverfest

A robbery was reported at 10 p.m. Tuesday in the 300 block of S. Market Street, police said.

Three teenagers leaving the Wichita River Festival said they were approached by about 20 people. Five members of the group attacked the teens and stole all three of their bikes, police said. The victims were hit, kicked and punched by the group, resulting in visible but not serious injuries, police said.

One of the victim's bikes was recovered in the downtown area later that night.

Police are still looking for the five individuals, who police say were dressed primarily in blue and red clothing.

Man shot near Pawnee, I-135 in south Wichita*

**Story by Stan Finger, with me contributing*

A Wichita man remained in critical condition after he was shot in his south Wichita home early Wednesday morning, authorities said.

The 26-year-old victim was shot shortly before 5:30 a.m. in the 1900 block of East Marion Road, near Pawnee and Hydraulic, a Sedgwick County dispatcher said.

A woman who lived in the house said she heard a gunshot, said Wichita police Lt. Doug Nolte. When she went to talk to her husband in the living room, she found him bleeding on the floor, police said.

Investigators say someone shot the victim through a sliding glass patio door. Initial reports indicate the man, who was sitting on a couch, was shot through the back. The victim was taken to Via Christi Hospital on St. Francis, where he remained in critical condition Wednesday evening.

Officers said there were no witnesses so far, and no one else reported hearing the gunshot. A dark-colored car was seen leaving the area, but police don't know whether it's related to the incident.

The neighborhood just west of I-135 was quiet Wednesday morning a few hours after the shooting, with neighbors watering their lawn and going about their daily routines.

Eddie Edwards, who lives down the street, said the shooting victim had lived in the house for about two months. He would go for runs outside with his pit bull, Edwards said.

"I thought he was chasing the dog," he said, when he first saw them outside.

Megan Crawshaw, who has lived on the street since 1999, said it was an older, peaceful neighborhood, but also an area where people come and go.

Police are asking anyone with information to call 911 or Crime Stoppers at 316-267-2111.

Contributing: Sarah Tucker of The Eagle

June 8, 2012

[Kansas Board of Regents to decide on proposals later this month](#) **[Regents preparing to vote on schools' requests](#)**

Students at Kansas universities may soon be paying more tuition — again.

Later this month, the Kansas Board of Regents is expected to vote on proposed tuition increases at all six state universities, just as it did a year ago.

Ed McKechnie, the regents' chairman, said the board has done "quite a bit of work" to understand and anticipate this year's proposals.

"We took significant cuts three years ago," he said. "The last couple of years, we've been held flat, but basics go up.

"There's nothing too outlandish here when you consider the state hasn't increased funding."

At the regents' meeting in May, all six public universities submitted tuition increase proposals. Each proposal included a breakdown of the tuition increase by credit hour, resident status and undergraduate or graduate classifications.

Also included in the proposals were suggested fee increases, how each school plans to use the increased revenue and justifications for the increases. Should the proposals be approved when the regents meet June 20-21 in Topeka, the tuition and fee increases would go into effect this fall.

University of Kansas

Jeffrey Vitter, provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas, said KU walks a “fine line” to make education accessible to students, even as state support for public education lags.

Compared to other Big 12 schools, KU is “much lower in terms of tuition income per student and what the state provides,” Vitter said. “We have to work much harder to do more with less.”

KU plans to raise tuition 5.1 percent for graduate and undergraduate students from Kansas and nonresident graduate students. Nonresident undergraduates could see their tuition increase by 6.9 percent. All students at the KU Medical Center campus could see a 6 percent tuition increase.

In addition to raising tuition, KU has also proposed increases to school-specific course fees and some campus privilege fees. Undergraduates previously participating in KU’s Four-Year Tuition Compact will not be affected, but new students entering the compact for the first time this fall would have the 5.1 percent tuition increase.

According to the proposal, the increased tuition will generate \$14.42 million for the Lawrence campus. KU plans to use the money to expand its Honors Program, experiential learning opportunities and study abroad programs, as well as provide additional support to doctoral students, retention efforts and boost recruitment of out-of-state students.

KU has also earmarked \$1.1 million for the KU Tuition Grant program, bringing the amount of money for eligible students to \$10.1 million. The remaining portion of the \$14.42 million would be used to cover other needs, such as rising health insurance costs, faculty and staff retention, and technology improvements.

WSU

At Wichita State University, the tuition for in-state graduate and undergraduate students could rise 4 percent, pending approval by the Regents. Nonresident graduate and undergraduate students may have a lower increase of 1.5 percent, but it is a dollar amount equivalent to their in-state peers, said Mary Herrin, vice president for Administration and Finance at WSU.

To determine the tuition increase, Herrin said WSU made a list of all required expenditures. The list included an increase in group health insurance, longevity pay and

projected utility costs. The basic expenses totaled \$2.1 million, which is what WSU requested for its tuition increase.

“These are required things,” said Herrin, who was involved in the tuition increase process. “It’s not like we’re adding new programs.”

Olivia Sullivan, a junior at WSU and the Student Government Association vice president, said student government members meet one-on-one with department officials to determine need and scrutinize line-by-line the school’s \$10.8 million budget every year. In addition to tuition, WSU has proposed a minor fee increase.

“This year, we were lucky because we only increased fees to match inflation,” Sullivan said. The proposed fee increase is 1.73 percent, or 60 cents per credit hour.

“I think it’s important that people know that tuition increases are mostly due to the economy,” she said.

K-State

Courtney Taylor, a 23-year-old junior majoring in interior design at Kansas State University, said she is concerned about even the slightest tuition increase.

Before enrolling at K-State, Taylor said she attended other schools, including KU and Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Because she took out student loans at the other colleges, Taylor said she isn’t eligible for as much aid as other students at K-State.

“I don’t have any family support,” Taylor said. “Anything I receive from financial aid, I live off the rest of it. So, it’s just that much less to live off of.”

At K-State, the proposed tuition increase is 5.5 percent for all students at the Manhattan and Salina campuses, and 3 percent for nonresident graduate students attending K-State’s College of Veterinary Medicine. According to the proposal, revenue generated from K-State’s tuition increase would go to required expenditures similar to WSU, as well as toward retaining faculty, increasing retention programs and distance education courses.

Bruce Shubert, vice president for Administration and Finance at K-State, said the school’s process involved identifying the most “basic needs” and then figuring out how to maintain quality with the increased costs.

“We certainly are aware of the pressures on our students and their families, but we have to balance that with the need to maintain the quality of a K-State degree,” Shubert said.

Other changes

All Kansas schools submitted requests for tuition and fee increases, but some schools are asking for a few more changes.

At Emporia State University, proposed changes to the tuition structure make the tuition increase seem extremely high.

“It looks like a really big increase, but (tuition structure change) ends up saving 90 percent of our on-campus graduates money,” said Gwen Larson, assistant director of marketing and media relations for the school.

Pending the regents’ approval, the school will charge flat-rate tuition for all on-campus, full-time undergraduates, as well as charge all graduate students on a per-credit hour basis. If campus privilege fees are included with the 6.1 percent tuition increase, in-state graduate students could see a 15.2 percent increase in their tuition and fees. That includes a previous student-approved \$25 increase for renovations to Memorial Union.

Although its requested percentage increase is higher than most of the other Kansas schools, Emporia State’s dollar increase is the fifth-lowest, with Fort Hays State University being the lowest, Larson said.

“We’re very conscious (of increases) because a lot of our students are first-generation college students, so we try and keep it as affordable as we can,” she said.

A full breakdown of each school’s proposed tuition and fee increases can be found at www.kansasregents.org.

Tuition and fees, per semester

Resident undergrad, full-time enrollment

	KU Lawrence	KU Lawrence compact*	KSU	KSU- Salina	WSU	ESU	PSU	FHSU
FY 2012 approved tuition and fees	\$4,234.45	\$4,610.95	\$3,828.60	\$3,617.16	\$3,095.00	\$2,476.00	\$2,581.00	\$2,041.05
FY 2013 proposed tuition and fees	\$4,443.75	\$4,839.00	\$4,023.30	\$3,798.66	\$3,203.75	\$2,636.00	\$2,747.00	\$2,116.50
Proposed \$ increase	\$209.30	\$228.05	\$194.70	\$181.50	\$108.75	\$160.00	\$166.00	\$75.45
Proposed percent increase	4.9%	4.9%	5.1%	5%	3.5%	6.5%	6.4%	3.7%

* fixed for four years

June 10, 2012

[Sedgwick Co. treasurer: Wait times at tag offices back to normal](#)

Sedgwick County Treasurer Linda Kizzire said wait times at county tag offices are normal for this time of year and that the state's new computer system "is very stable."

"I'm very pleased with the results," Kizzire said last week.

According to Kizzire, the new system is processing at approximately the same speed as the old system. In the past month, the new system has processed 28,443 records in Sedgwick County, just shy of the approximate 30,000 records processed with the old system last year, she said.

Drivers in Sedgwick County who were taking care of tag work on Friday seem to agree with Kizzire and said they didn't notice anything outside the usual delays.

The tag office at 200 W. Murdock was crowded Friday, with some attributing their longer wait times to the small staff. No one noticed computer problems.

Melody Yancey and Maurice Ornelas arrived at the Murdock office around 11 a.m. to get a title and tags for Ornelas' new car. Seventeenth in line, they left the office and returned at 1 p.m. They left the office with their new title and tags around 2:30 p.m.

"I thought it was a staff issue," Yancey said. "I also think that the title part takes a long time. It was fast as soon as we got to the counter."

Ruben Aguilera, number 19 in line, said he waited a little over two and a half hours to renew his tags after arriving around 11:30 a.m.

"There are only three, four people at the desk, so that's probably why it took a long time," Aguilera said.

Drivers at the Brittany Center tag office at 2120 N. Woodlawn didn't have to wait as long as those at Murdock on Friday, but some still felt the delay.

One driver, after opening the door and seeing the line, immediately left, saying, "I ain't got no patience for that."

Others didn't notice the delay. Lynette Murphy and her daughter, Mattie, were getting tags for their new car and expected a wait.

"It didn't seem that long to me," Lynette Murphy said.

Two weeks ago, when the wait time was close to three or four hours, Kizzire said she was not as confident in the system as she is now.

"When the system went down for extended periods of time during the day, we couldn't do anything," Kizzire said. "It would go down for 2 to 4 hours at a time."

Kizzire said the May backlog has been cleared.

"We're not anywhere near (the wait) we had in May," she said.

[Kansas medication disposal program has 44 participating sites; only one's in Wichita](#)

Kansans now have 44 locations where they can dispose of old and unused medications.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment said last week that 32 pharmacies and 12 household hazardous waste facilities are now participating in its Kansas Medication Disposal Program. Wichita, the largest city in Kansas, has one participating pharmacy — Comcare Family Prescription Shop on West 21st Street. The next closest disposal locations are in Augusta and El Dorado.

Miranda Steele of KDHE said the program is free and “strictly voluntary.” Pharmacies interested in participating fill out a form online, and then KDHE “works with the pharmacies so standards and requirements are met,” Steele said.

Participating pharmacies collect medications in a secure container behind the counter. When the container is full, they take the container to a hazardous waste facility, which then properly disposes of the items. KDHE won’t know how much medication the program collects until the end of the year.

Before the program’s launch in April, Kansans had limited places to properly dispose of medications.

“Kansans would either have to wait for that one year take-back day (by law enforcement) or dispose of it themselves,” Steele said.

Properly disposing of medication at home is a process in itself, as the medication needs to be crushed and mixed with cat litter or coffee grounds to make it unusable. Medication tossed in the trash can be ingested, and medication put down the drain can be bad for the environment and public water supplies because it isn’t always filtered out at water-treatment plants.

To prepare medications for disposal, KDHE advises people to remove labels or black out their personal information before dropping them off. Pharmacies and household hazardous waste facilities can’t take certain items, so it is best to contact the nearest participating location or visit the KDHE website to find out what you can and can’t dispose of.

Participating pharmacies

To find your nearest participating pharmacy, go to <http://bit.ly/NrIrFm>.

To find out more about KDHE's Kansas Medication Disposal Program, go to <http://1.usa.gov/LLjGP4>.

June 11, 2012**[Two men injured in separate officer-involved shootings](#)**

Two men were shot by police Monday night in separate incidents.

The first incident occurred after 8 p.m. near the intersection of Central and Woodlawn.

Shortly before 8 p.m., emergency dispatch received calls about a man who was jumping into traffic, Wichita police Capt. Hassan Ramzah said.

Police officers arrived on the scene and attempted to communicate with the man. When he pulled an unidentified object from his pocket and assumed a shooting stance, one of the officers began shooting, police said.

According to initial reports, the 42-year-old man was wounded in his upper right leg and was transported to Wesley Medical Center in critical condition.

Officers had yet to identify the object the man pulled from his pocket.

Meanwhile, around 8:45 p.m., officers were called to the 1800 block of Denise Marie with reports of a man armed with a machete, emergency dispatch said.

The man was shot in the chest by police and was transported to Via Christi Hospital on St. Francis in critical condition.

So far this year, 13 people have been shot in officer-involved shootings in the Wichita area. The last officer-involved shooting was on April 13.

June 12, 2012

[Rainbows United hosts summer camp for children with disabilities](#)

At Camp Woodchuck, kids watch movies, play games and host a talent show.

The campers participate in typical camp activities, even though Camp Woodchuck is a day camp for children with developmental disabilities.

Hosted by Rainbows United every summer, the camp is a “recreational opportunity for children and youth with disabilities to come and do the same things that other kids at camp can do,” said Debbie Mai, vice president of programs and services.

It also provides relief for parents who know their children are getting “age-appropriate, specialized care,” said Kelsey Parker, volunteer coordinator at the center.

“When school’s out, (the campers) have to have something to do during the day while their parents are working,” Parker said Tuesday.

This summer, 97 children are registered for Camp Woodchuck, where the theme is “Lifting Our Voices Higher.” The theme refers to the camp’s choir, which often performs around the community. About 90 percent of the campers participate in the choir, Mai said.

Besides singing in the choir, the kids at camp also take field trips to the zoo, nearby parks and Goodwill Industries.

“They buy their costumes for the fashion and talent shows at Goodwill,” Parker said.

The talent show is scheduled for 2 to 4 p.m. on June 21, at the Sedgwick County Extension Center, 7001 W. 21st St. The fashion show will be from 2 to 4 p.m. on July 12 at Rainbows United’s Kids’ Cove, 2258 N. Lakeway Circle.

Rainbows United, which celebrated its 40th anniversary on Friday, provides child care services and targeted case management for special-needs children. The organization serves more than 3,500 children and youth in the Wichita area.

More information about upcoming Camp Woodchuck events, the Rainbows United organization and volunteer opportunities can be found at www.rainbowsunited.org.

More information**Rainbow choir**

To request a performance of Camp Woodchuck's "Voices of the Rainbow" choir, call Kelsey Parker at 316-558-3422.

June 13, 2012

[Whooping cough outbreak in Kansas spurs calls for vaccinations](#)

A recent pertussis outbreak in Johnson County has Kansas physicians encouraging people to get vaccinated.

As of Monday, 175 cases of pertussis have been reported in Johnson County; 34 cases have been confirmed. So far this year, 56 cases of pertussis have been confirmed in the state, already surpassing last year's total of 52.

Jennifer Schwartz, deputy state epidemiologist, says pertussis happens every year.

"It's not uncommon to see them here and there," she said. "We're just seeing more this year, and most of them tend to be in Johnson County this year."

So far, Sedgwick County has seen only one confirmed case of pertussis. Still, the county is offering free vaccinations to county residents without insurance who are at least 19 years old, and to parents and caregivers of children under the age of 6, with or without insurance.

The vaccination isn't 100 percent effective, but it can make symptoms less severe should you contract pertussis, Schwartz said.

"Immunity tends to wane after a few years," she said.

Pertussis vaccinations are required for all children before they can attend public schools, but exemptions for religious reasons are allowed. The vaccine is not required for adults, but a booster is recommended to restrict the transmission of pertussis to younger children without the vaccine, said Barbara Hersh, public information officer for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, gets its name from the sound a patient makes taking a breath after violently coughing. The disease is spread person-to-person

by coughing and sneezing. Symptoms resemble the common cold but include a violent cough that lasts for weeks.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pertussis is cyclical, peaking every three to five years. In 2010, the last year data was available on the CDC website, 27,550 cases were reported in the U.S. Of those cases, 182 were in Kansas.

Pertussis cases in Kansas

County	Confirmed cases
Ford	2
Franklin	3
Johnson	34
Leavenworth	4
Linn	2
Nemaha	7
Riley	3
Sedgwick	1
Total	56

The Tdap vaccination for pertussis, tetanus and diphtheria is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, noon to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, and 8 to 11:30 a.m. Friday at the Sedgwick County Health Department clinic, 2716 W. Central, until supplies run out.

June 14, 2012

[Wichita's Juneteenth celebration returns this weekend](#)

June 19, or Juneteenth, marks the day in 1865 that slaves in Galveston, Texas, were finally emancipated.

The day is celebrated around the nation with parades, barbecues and prayer services. Last year, there was no parade in Wichita.

Mary Dean, chairwoman for this year's Juneteenth parade, wants to restart the tradition.

"This is history that our children should always know about that's not told in the history books," Dean said. "We don't want this to fade; we don't want this to go away. We want this history to stay in the forefront of Wichita, Kansas."

With the goal of keeping Wichita's Juneteenth celebration alive, parade organizers contacted Jean Carter-Boniface, founder of H.O.P.E. Inc., about combining the Juneteenth parade with her annual health fair on Saturday.

Carter-Boniface was more than happy to oblige.

"Juneteenth celebrates African-American freedom and achievements," Carter-Boniface said. "And H.O.P.E. stands for Helping Our People Economically. Individuals and organizations came together because they did not want Juneteenth to die."

The Juneteenth parade begins at 8:30 a.m. Saturday on Opportunity Drive in front of the Boys & Girls Club near 21st and Grove and will end at the H.O.P.E. Inc. offices on North Battin. Then the health fair will begin.

The theme of this year's health fair is "Children Today Preparing for a Healthier Future." Attendees can expect free health screenings, food for purchase, coupons from sponsors, storytelling from the African American Museum and a health knowledge competition that determines the king and queen of the health fair.

Organizers want the partnership between H.O.P.E. Inc and Juneteenth celebrations to continue in the future. They also would like to move the celebration to McAdams Park to make room for more vendors and participants next year.

"We got to keep it going on, keep Juneteenth alive in Wichita with H.O.P.E.," Carter-Boniface said.

June 19, 2012

[NTSB releases preliminary report of plane crash that killed Bramlage family](#)

The plane that crashed carrying a prominent Junction City family rapidly began losing altitude after adjusting its flight path for bad weather in the area, according to a preliminary report released Tuesday by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The crash on June 7 killed six members of the Bramlage family. The family was returning to Kansas after a vacation in the Bahamas when the plane crashed at Tiger Creek Preserve near Lake Wales, Fla.

According to the report, three witnesses reported hearing or seeing the single-engine plane before it crashed. One witness, a pilot in a nearby plane, reported hearing a mayday call before the crash.

Another witness on the ground heard “three to four cycles of a whooshing high to low sound,” followed by the sound of something breaking, the report said. He then saw the plane below the clouds in a spin. The witness said the plane appeared to be missing parts, but he did not see anything fall from the plane.

The third witness, also on the ground, saw black smoke trailing the spinning plane. When the plane crashed, he and his brother ran to the wreckage and began trying to extinguish the flames and aid the victims.

Final results of the investigation may take up to a year and will involve reconstructing the aircraft, said Tim Monville, an investigator for NTSB.

Ronald Bramlage, who was piloting the plane, was the grandson of Fred Bramlage, the namesake of Kansas State University’s basketball arena. His wife, Becky Bramlage, was the president of the Junction City school board. Their four children also died.

The funeral for the Bramlage family was held Monday in Junction City.

June 20, 2012

[Aging members, lack of interest contribute to decline of civic groups in Wichita](#)

Editor's note: Previous versions of this story had Ken Holmes' first name incorrectly stated and Nancy McCarthy Snyder's name incorrect.

On May 31, the Hypatia Club of Wichita disbanded.

Founded by Mary Elizabeth Lease, the Hypatias have called Wichita home since 1886. The club dedicated a statue to Lease earlier this year and in its early years was a strong advocate for women's rights.

Now, after 126 years, the club no longer exists.

"As we got older and did less, people weren't interested in joining us," said Josephine Brown, the last president of the Hypatia Club. She said the club was down to 15 members, including two who live out of state and four who reside in care homes.

The fate of the Hypatia Club is a situation many civic organizations face today. Struggling with an aging membership and competing with younger generations' definitions of community, many groups wonder how long they can continue.

Changes in society

The Haysville Lions Club is one such organization debating its future.

Phil Journey, a member since 1983, says the club is discussing whether or not to disband. Journey estimates the average age of members is over 65 and says it is sometimes difficult to get members – all 12 of them – to attend events, never mind trying to recruit younger members.

"As the age difference becomes greater, it becomes harder for people to make the connection," said Journey, a Sedgwick County District Court judge. "It's hard to relate."

He also cites time constraints and economic woes as reasons younger members don't join.

Nancy McCarthy Snyder, director of the Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs at Wichita State University, agrees with Journey and also attributes changes in society to the decline in membership.

"What we're finding is people keep redefining community for themselves," Snyder said.

Younger generations can now find community online and through different, newer social outlets, she said.

"They've just grown up differently," she said. "There's more choices available to people."

Snyder thinks it will be difficult for older civic organizations to survive in their traditional forms, and that their futures will depend on leadership.

“(The organizations need) people who will give time and energy to them,” Snyder said. “They’ll have to reinvent themselves.”

Of course, reinventing an organization is easier said than done. And sometimes, not even the older members want to lead.

“Year after year, no one wanted to be an officer,” Brown said of the Hypatia Club. “It doesn’t sound good, but it’s the truth.”

Communities lose

When civic organizations disband, more is lost than the clubhouse and familiar atmosphere for members – contributions to the community also disappear.

Lions Clubs around the world donate time and money to many charitable projects, but they focus on service that assists the blind and visually impaired. The Haysville club, like many Lions Clubs, has donated eyeglasses, raised funds for guide dogs and donated money to libraries for large-print books and to the University of Kansas’ KS Lions Eye Clinic and Research Center. They have also provided scholarships to local students and built a shelter house in the Haysville Park.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Rebekahs – a branch of the Odd Fellows – also make donations to many charitable groups and provide thousands of dollars in scholarships and financial aid to students. They are also the largest non-corporate sponsor of the Arthritis Foundation, said JaNell Clark, secretary and past president of the Rebekah Assembly of Kansas.

The financial donations are important for many charities, but the donation of time is equally important.

“(Civic organizations) get people involved in group situations and give someone another outlet to volunteer,” Clark said.

For Journey, the Lions Club is a way for people to volunteer, and he hopes more people join to do just that.

“It’s more than just a bunch of old guys getting together,” Journey said. “It’s about doing something for your community.”

'Bucking the trend'

Not all civic organizations are facing such dire straits.

Rotary is one civic organization that is "bucking the trend," Rotary Club of West Wichita president Jody Besthorn said. With 65 members, she said the West Wichita Rotary has a stable and younger membership, compared to some civic groups in the area.

"We have a cross-section of all ages: retirees, mid-career professionals and young professionals looking for a way to get involved," Besthorn said.

Interact, the student version of Rotary, helps introduce Rotary to young people.

"It brings more awareness (of Rotary) to kids and their parents," Besthorn said. "It strengthens the intergenerational connection."

The Downtown Wichita Rotary club also sponsors Rotaract, a Rotary-affiliated club for young professionals, ages 18 to 30. Downtown Rotary president Sheryl Wohlford said that organization helps attract younger members and keep them involved.

"Service organizations have to find a way to keep their members engaged and wanting to do the service projects," Wohlford said. "People's time is valuable. They have to see a connection with the service project."

Derby's Rebekahs is another organization successfully recruiting younger members. The club will initiate five people in July, Clark said.

Clark attributes the success to the lodge's frequent involvement with other community organizations. Community visibility, combined with recruitment programs and advertisements, helps bring in new, younger members to the Derby lodge.

Still, Odd Fellows and Rebekahs lodges are not immune to the membership woes civic organizations face. Clark said Kansas lodges have seen an 8 to 12 percent decline in membership for the past 15 years, and the average age of members is between 65 and 70 years old.

"A lot of our loss is due to death," Clark said.

In Wichita, the Downtown Lions Club is also doing well, compared to the Haysville club. According to former president Ken Holmes, the Downtown Lions Club has 75 members,

with 35 to 45 members regularly attending meetings. Still, he estimates the club's average age is over 65.

While Holmes doesn't think the Downtown Lions Club will disband anytime soon, he acknowledges it could happen.

"Last year we lost four members to old age," Holmes said. "When you have maybe two-thirds of your membership over 70 years old, disbanding is possible one day."

Future for civic groups

The key to survival, club leaders say, is to provide programs members want to participate in.

"Organizations struggle to find the right niche for their demographics, what it is their members want," Besthorn said. "(What they do) has to be meaningful to members."

Wohlford calls attracting and retaining members the "biggest challenge" facing civic organizations.

"You got to keep it interesting," she said. "Because without members, you don't have a club."

The disbanding of some groups is part of the evolution of civic organizations.

"You reach a point where you have to say, 'We've done good, and it's time for something else to replace us,'" Besthorn said. "There will be things to fill that void, but they will be different."

In Haysville, Journey is waiting to hear the club's decision. Should the club decide to disband, Journey may try to join another nearby Lions Club.

"It's going to be a hole in my life," he said.

As for the Hypatia Club, Brown plans to have lunch with former members but doubts the club will be restarted by younger women.

"Never in a million years" did she imagine the club would one day close, Brown said. "Hypatias were so dedicated and so loyal to one another. At one time, it's my understanding, they had over 200 members.

"I can't tell you how many of the good ones have passed away."

Police open criminal investigation in case of house filled with dead cats

WICHITA — Wichita police said Wednesday they have opened a criminal investigation into the case of 31 dead cats and two live dogs found in a house at 235 N. Green over the weekend.

The 69-year-old woman who had been living there told police that she had been checking on the animals daily.

“Clearly, that was not the case,” Deputy Police Chief Tom Stolz said Wednesday.

Police arrived Saturday to check on the woman’s welfare after a call from a concerned neighbor, according to Stolz. Abandonment seemed evident due to flies on the window and the smell coming from the house.

Officers called the fire department so firefighters could enter the home in hazmat-level suits to search for the woman, Stolz said. They entered the home and, instead of finding the woman, found 31 dead cats and two flea-infested dogs who were feeding on the cats. Police then called the Wichita bomb team to process the potential crime scene.

Under the Kansas Cruelty to Animals Statutes, cruelty to animals is defined several ways, including “abandoning or leaving any animal in any place without making provisions for its proper care.”

Should the woman be charged under state statute, she could face a maximum of one year in jail, as well as a maximum \$2,500 fine.

A Wichita police detective with specialized training in animal cruelty has been assigned to the case, police said.

Police have not arrested or charged the woman, pending the results of their investigation. She was no longer living at the house on North Green; she was instead staying at a friend’s house after recently being hospitalized.

Former social worker who advocated ‘nude therapy’ keeps 30-year sentence; appeal denied

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has denied former Newton social worker Arlan Kaufman’s appeal to reduce his 30-year sentence.

Kaufman was convicted of involuntary servitude and health care fraud in 2005. He and his wife, Linda Kaufman, were found guilty of forcing mentally ill residents to work naked on their farm near Potwin and perform sex acts at their group home in Newton. The couple then billed the victims' families and the government for "nude therapy."

In its decision Tuesday, the three-judge panel based in Denver rejected Arlan Kaufman's claims that his attorney was ineffective and noted the overwhelming evidence against him.

The Kaufmans' abuse of residents first surfaced in 1999, when residents were seen doing chores outside in the nude. In 2001, a psychiatrist reviewing cases for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, the state's Medicare provider, noticed odd records in patient files and alerted Medicare officials.

Medicare fraud investigators searching the group home run by the Kaufmans then discovered tapes with more than 100 hours of footage recording the abuse. Even with this evidence, the state didn't act until late 2004. By then, the state's two-year statute of limitations had passed, and the Kaufmans were charged in federal court.

Linda Kaufman, a former registered nurse, was also convicted of involuntary servitude and health care fraud in 2005. Originally sentenced to seven years in 2006, her sentence was doubled in 2009 after new evidence of her involvement was presented. She is currently serving a 15-year sentence in federal prison.

[Wichita police suspect stabbing victim was targeted by attacker](#)

A man was hospitalized and released after being stabbed early this morning in the 200 block of S. Green, southeast of Douglas and Grove, police said.

The victim was driving his girlfriend home and came across a man in front of their destination, according to the police. The victim thought the man needed help, got out of the car and was attacked with a knife, Lt. Doug Nolte said.

After talking with the girlfriend, however, police determined the victim knew the attacker and believe the suspect targeted the victim.

The victim suffered severe cuts to his lower left abdomen and right upper arm, as well as minor cuts to the head. He was taken to Wesley Medical Center in critical condition and has since been released.

Police have identified the suspect and are continuing their investigation.

June 21, 2012

[Law enforcement recruit injured by ricocheted metal in firing range incident*](#)

**Shared byline with Amy Renee Leiker*

WICHITA — A law enforcement recruit suffered minor injuries Thursday after a bullet ricocheted off of a target and struck his right thigh, according to a release from the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office.

The 26-year-old recruit, a sheriff's deputy-in-training, was wounded during a training exercise after being hit by a piece of metal "the size of a small pebble," Lt. Mark Pierce said. The incident happened at around 10 a.m. at the firearms range near Lake Afton.

The current target system has been in place for the past 18 years, and the entire system will be replaced next month, Pierce said. A preliminary investigation shows safety protocols were being followed when the incident occurred, according to the release.

The recruit was taken by ambulance to Via Christi Hospital on St. Francis, where he was later released with minor injuries. The metal piece is still in his leg, "barely below the skin," Pierce said. It is expected to work its way out, police said.

June 22, 2012

[Crops arrive early for picking in Kansas](#)

[Mild winter, warm spring bring fruits, veggies weeks ahead of time](#)

It's peach pickin' time in Kansas.

At area orchards, berry farms and "you-pick" farms, most crops are coming in two weeks early.

Scott Beck at Beck's Farms in Newton said Thursday that they have been picking peaches for two weeks now. Beck, who also grows tomatoes, apricots and cherries, said he has never seen a crop ready this early before.

"I'm not the conductor on this train," Beck said. "I just have to run along with what happens."

The early crops can be attributed to the mild weather in 2012.

"We had a warm spring, so everything bloomed earlier," Sedgwick County horticulture agent Rebecca McMahon said. "We didn't have a late freeze, luckily, and continued to have consistently warm temperatures, so everything is pretty much two to four weeks ahead of harvest."

"Fruits are perennials, so they just produce when the weather is right and when they've matured."

At Sargeant's Berry Farm in Haysville, Gaylord Sargeant grows potatoes, squash, corn, blackberries, peaches and more. Last year's extreme hot and cold temperatures hurt his crops.

"Last year we froze out completely," Sargeant said. "We didn't have anything. And then, when the heat hit, we lost all our vegetables."

Lance Chastain's blueberry and blackberry crops at Chautauqua Hills Farm in Chautauqua were hit hard by the abnormally low temperatures in February 2011. This year, he said, the farm's berries are ready to pick two to three weeks early.

"Blueberries are usually ready for picking by June 10," Chastain said. "This year, they were ripening in mid-May."

Sargeant's crops were ripening early as well. The farm normally doesn't have sweet corn until July 4, but they have already started selling it, he said.

Gaeddert Farms Sweet Corn opened its stands around the Wichita area on Tuesday. The stands usually open up around July 4.

"It's the earliest we've been out," employee Staci Ranfeld said. "It was super hot and dry last year. The weather conditions have been better (this year)."

Tamela and Rick Unruh were at Sargeant's Berry Farm on Thursday picking sand plums to make jelly. Tamela Unruh said her aunt and uncle used to have an orchard, so picking fruit brings back many memories.

“That’s the nice thing about the produce being ready earlier,” she said. “You beat the heat. The weather is still nice.”

The earlier harvests will continue this year as long as Kansas stays “within normal seasonal temperatures,” McMahon said.

If there’s a stretch of hot temperatures this summer, crops won’t ripen as early, and quality will be affected more than anything else.

Conversely, a stretch of below-normal temperatures would slow everything down, and farmers would see a “more normal growing window,” she said.

“I’d be surprised to see a significant cold spell to slow things down,” she said.

Coming up next

Although many fruits and vegetables are ready now, more will be coming soon.

McMahon said pears and apples will be ready next, though they’re usually ready to pick by August. Cucumbers, squash and tomatoes are already in “full swing,” as is sweet corn.

Up next for Sargeant’s Berry Farm are melons, which Sargeant also expects to ripen earlier than usual.

Last year’s weather is still affecting the crops, however. Tamela Unruh said she found peaches at Sargeant’s and another orchard in Belle Plaine to be a little on the small side.

“Peach trees don’t handle stressful conditions as well,” McMahon said. The trees will produce, but some trees will be weaker than others.

There will still be peaches available, however.

Beck’s Farms grows more than 40 varieties of peaches, and the fruit will ripen and be ready to pick at different times of the year, Beck said.

“We’ll be picking peaches right through the summer,” Beck said. “Peach picking is wonderful this time of year.”

More information**Beal Orchard**

Peaches, tomatoes, apples. 131 NE 100 Road, Harper, 620-896-7044. Open: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. Payment: cash or check.
<http://www.bealorchard.com>

Beck's Farm

Peaches, farm market, tours of the operation, group tours. 7620 S. Anderson Road, Newton, 316-282-2325. Open: Through Sept. 3, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Payment: Cash only. www.becksfarm.com

Blackberry Heaven

Blackberries, raspberries (red, yellow and black), U-pick and already picked, snacks and refreshment stand, picnic area. 1870 SW Santa Fe Lake Road, Towanda, 316-541-2729, blackberryheavenks@gmail.com. Open: Daily, from 8 a.m. to dark during picking season. Payment: Cash or check. www.facebook.com/blackberryheaven

Chautauqua Hills Farm

Blueberries, blackberries, asparagus, garlic, honey. Chautauqua County, 620-249-3369. Can be found at Food For Thought and the Old Town and Andover Central farmers markets. Pick-your-own by reservation only. <http://chautauquahillsfarm.com/>

Elderslie Farm

Blackberries, raspberries (spring, black). 3501 E. 101st St. North, Valley Center, 316-519-1545, eldersliefarm@gmail.com. Open: Select Saturdays. Payment: Cash or check. Next You-Pick Extravaganza: Saturday, 7 a.m. to noon. Weekly You-Picks: Monday and Thursday morning, 7 to 11. eldersliefarm.com

Entz Orchard

Cherries, apricots, peaches, apples. 8604 S. Webb Road, Newton, 316-799-2515. Open: Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. www.facebook.com/EntzOrchard/

Sargeant's Berry Farm

Blackberries, cherries, peaches, strawberries, tomatoes and prepicked produce. 9836 S. Hydraulic, Haysville, 316-788-1370. Open: Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sunday. Payment: Cash and check. www.facebook.com/pages/Sargeants-Berry-Farm/128781490489307

Steffen Orchard

Peaches, apples. 1345 W. 90th Ave. North, Conway Springs, 620-456-2706, nick@sktc.net. Open: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. when peaches are ripe.

If you know of other places to pick your own produce, contact Annie Calovich at acalovich@wichitaeagle.com.

17 graduate from Detention Basis Training

17 recruits trained to be detention deputies

Sedgwick County law enforcement officials welcomed their newest members on Friday as 17 recruits graduated from Detention Basic Training.

At the ceremony, held at the Wichita-Sedgwick County Law Enforcement Training Center, 15 men and two women received certificates. Proud parents, girlfriends and wives also pinned departmental badges to the deputies' chests, signifying their completion of the program.

The graduates will go on to serve as detention deputies at the Sedgwick County Jail.

Afterward, new deputies and their families ate cake and laughed at videos of each other being shocked with an electronic stun gun and sprayed with mace during training.

During training, the deputies received more than 400 hours of instruction over 11 weeks, Sedgwick County Sheriff Robert Hinshaw said. Deputies were required to pass physical tests, as well as personal history checks. The deputies also learned how to administer first aid, county policy and procedures, and self-defense.

Much work awaits the deputies at the county jail.

On a typical day, deputies will watch over 1,500 inmates, "more inmates than any individual prison in Kansas," Hinshaw said. The Sedgwick County Jail also serves more than 4,300 meals a day and books more than 30,000 people a year.

Hinshaw said there was no training when he started working in the jail in 1979, and said new deputies were warned not to walk too close to the bars. "How things have changed," he said.

Deputy Andrew Jansson, selected as class president by the other deputies, gave a short speech about how the group was "transformed from strangers into friends."

Lt. Mark Pierce echoed Jansson's observations after the ceremony and said the class worked well together.

"They gelled together quickly and helped each other out," Pierce said. "I think this class is going to do well."

June 23, 2012

[Free HIV testing in Wichita area Wednesday](#)

Clinics and organizations in the Wichita area will sponsor free HIV testing on Wednesday as part of National HIV Testing Day.

Testing is encouraged for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

Cody Patton, executive director for Positive Directions, a nonprofit AIDS service organization, is surprised by the number of people that don't get tested.

"The CDC recommends anyone ages 13 to 64 should be tested," Patton said. "Anyone in that age group having sex or sharing needles should be tested."

People who don't consider themselves at risk should also get tested, Patton said.

"The stigma is people thinking they're not at risk," Patton said. "But if you're having unprotected sex, you're at risk. The majority of infections are coming from people not getting tested or not disclosing their status (to their partners)."

According to a Kansas Department of Health and Environment annual report, 658 people were living with AIDS/HIV in Sedgwick County last year.

In Region 8, which includes Sedgwick and surrounding counties, 24 people were diagnosed with AIDS and 31 people were diagnosed with HIV last year. Data wasn't provided for new diagnoses by county.

By the end of 2011, there were 1,070 people living with HIV and 1,265 people living with AIDS in Kansas.

Free HIV testing is often available at several locations in the Wichita area, not just on National HIV Testing Day. Positive Directions is one organization that offers free HIV tests daily.

“Many locations observe the day with free testing and gifts,” KDHE’s HIV counseling and testing director Jamie Anderson said. The gifts can be items such as T-shirts, bracelets and “goodie bags” with prevention information.

Those who decide to get tested will find one of two tests available: rapid or conventional testing.

Conventional HIV tests involve a blood draw or oral swab and take a week for results.

Many places offer rapid testing, which involves a finger prick and takes 15 minutes for results.

Should someone test positive with a rapid test, a follow-up conventional test will be used to verify the diagnosis, Anderson said.

“I think there are a lot of people that still don’t know their status,” Anderson said. “Getting proper health care (now) is much better than finding out later when you are showing symptoms.”

Sites for free HIV testing

The following locations are among clinics and organizations offering free HIV testing as part of National HIV Testing Day on Wednesday, June 27. Check with other clinics and health care providers for additional dates and costs.

Hutchinson:

Reno County Health Department, 209 W. Second St.

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Newton:

Harvey County Health Department, 316 Oak St.

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Wichita:

KU School of Medicine, 1010 N. Kansas, Suite 3034 C

9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

*free rapid testing

*prevention goodie packets available for those who get tested

Hunter Health Clinic, 2318 E. Central

8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m., Wednesday

*free rapid testing

*gift for those who get tested

Positive Directions, 414 S. Commerce

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**free rapid testing daily*

June 25, 2012

[Power outages affect more than 2,500 in northwest Wichita](#)

Some residents in Wichita experienced power outages Monday evening.

At approximately 6:30 p.m., power outages were reported to Westar Energy, and more outages were reported at approximately 8:15 p.m.

More than 2,500 customers, most concentrated in northwest Wichita, were without power at one point. The power started coming back on gradually and, as of 11 p.m., that number was down to just over 100 customers, Westar Energy spokesman Shane Batchelder said.

Batchelder attributed the power outages to the heat and increased energy use.

“A lot of sporadic outages were caused by overloads on the system,” he said. “I expect as people increase usage, it will directly affect the pull on the system.”

The remaining customers should get their power back on between midnight and 2 a.m., Batchelder said.

June 26, 2012

[Deputy accused of sexually assaulting inmates appears in court](#)

The Sedgwick County deputy accused of sexually assaulting inmates was formally charged today.

David E. Kendall faces 12 charges in connection with events alleged to have occurred between April 1 and June 3. The charges include sexual battery, criminal solicitation to commit unlawful sexual relations, aggravated criminal sodomy and making a false writing.

Kendall's bond was set at \$500,000. A preliminary hearing has been set for July 10.

[Six-year-old killed in southeast Wichita crash](#)

A 6-year-old child was killed in a two-vehicle accident at approximately 8:15 p.m. Tuesday at the intersection of Mount Vernon and Edgemoor in southeast Wichita, police Lt. Jeff Gilmore said.

Three passengers were taken to the hospital with serious injuries, and the child was pronounced dead at the scene, Gilmore said.

Police think one of the cars may have run a stop sign but are still investigating the cause of the crash, he said.

June 27, 2012

[Catholic Conference plans rally for religious freedom in Topeka on Friday](#)

The Kansas Catholic Conference will rally for religious freedom on Friday in Topeka.

Part of the "Fortnight for Freedom," sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the rally is intended to promote religious freedom as well as protest the mandate requiring employers to provide contraceptive coverage that is part of President Obama's health care law.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue its ruling on the Affordable Care Act today.

Michael Schuttloffel, executive director for the Kansas Catholic Conference, calls it a coincidence that the rally is scheduled for the day after the court's ruling. Regardless of the court's decision, the rally will go ahead as planned, Schuttloffel said.

"The mandate, while the most high-profile attack on religious freedom, isn't the only one," Schuttloffel said. "The theme remains salient regardless of what happens."

Ann Walden, a parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish in Wichita, plans to attend the rally with her oldest daughter.

"We want to raise awareness about the issue," Walden said. "It's not just about birth control; it's about religious freedom."

Bonnie Toombs, director of the Respect Life Social Justice Office in the Wichita Diocese, said she is going because she is morally opposed to the mandate. She doesn't know what the Supreme Court will decide but doesn't think it will affect the turnout. Organizers expect more than 2,000 people from across Kansas to attend.

All four Kansas dioceses are providing buses for some participants, and the Wichita Diocese plans to send 10 busloads of people. Dodge City is planning to send three buses, Salina five and Kansas City 19.

"It will either be a celebration or a protest," Toombs said, depending on the court's decision.

The rally is scheduled from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on the South lawn of the State Capitol. An assortment of speakers are scheduled to attend the rally, including the bishops of the four Kansas dioceses, Gov. Sam Brownback, U.S. Senator Jerry Moran and keynote speaker Cathy Ruse, senior fellow for Legal Studies at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C. Prayers, scripture readings and readings of the nation's founding documents will also take place.

The event is open for anyone to attend, regardless of their religion.

[Two armed robbers strike at south Wichita convenience store](#)

Two armed teenagers robbed the La Michoacan convenience store in south Wichita on Tuesday night, police say.

The robbers entered the store at 2310 S. Southeast Boulevard, just northeast of Hydraulic and Pawnee, at 5:40 p.m. and pointed guns at the 41-year-old clerk, demanding money from the cash register, Lt. Doug Nolte said.

She complied, and they left the store. The two men had their faces covered with hoodies, the clerk told police.

They are both between the ages of 15 and 17, and both were Hispanic males about 5-foot-5 with thin builds, she said.

June 28, 2012

[Census: Sedgwick County population surpasses half-million people](#)

The milestone passed quietly some time last year.

There was no celebration, and hardly anyone noticed.

Last year was the first time Sedgwick County reached the half-million mark, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released on Thursday.

Every year after each census, the bureau calculates the nation's population from many sources, including IRS data for migration and vital statistics.

Sedgwick County reached 501,076 people, up 2,711 people from 2010, according to the 2011 estimates.

Wichita also increased in size, growing from 382,368 people to an estimated 384,445 people in 2011. The Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area, which encompasses Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey and Sumner counties, grew as well, to an estimated 625,526 people.

While increased population and population milestones are important, the growth rate of the city is what matters, said Jeremy Hill, director of Wichita State University's Center for Economic Development and Business Research.

"Growth is a reflection of the regional economy," Hill said. "If the population growth slows, housing slows because there's less demand, less population accumulating from year to year."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city grew 1.1 percent each year during the past decade, and the Wichita metro grew 0.9 percent each year during the past decade.

Both Sedgwick County and Wichita's growth rates so far are estimated at 0.54 percent for the past year.

Hill isn't worried, however, because the growth rate isn't that slow compared to the historical average.

Although it reached the half-million mark, Sedgwick County isn't among the fastest-growing counties in Kansas. The top two spots go to Geary and Riley counties, ranked 71st and 79th in the nation, respectively.

The five Kansas cities with the fastest growth rates include Ogden, Junction City, Grandview Plaza, Manhattan and Dodge City.

Kansas' overall population also increased, from 2,853,118 people in the 2010 census to 2,871,238 people, according to the just-released 2011 estimates.

June 30, 2012

[Downtown YMCA changes name](#) **[City Council members tour the new facility](#)**

The Robert D. Love Central YMCA is changing its name – to the Robert D. Love Downtown YMCA.

On Friday, the mayor, City Council members and other officials went on a hard-hat tour of the in-progress facility.

The 110,000-square-foot, \$23 million Downtown Y will feature a large lobby with lots of seating and 92 TVs. A large window in the lobby will look across the zero-entry family pool and, farther down, the eight-lane lap pool.

The purpose of the lobby is to provide a “real sense of community,” said Dennis Schoenebeck, executive director of the Greater Wichita YMCA. “We really just want it to be a gathering place.”

The third floor features studios, racquetball courts, workout areas and an indoor track around the perimeter of the entire floor, as well as views of the downtown area. The second floor includes the Downtown Y's offices and childcare facilities.

The facility was designed to reflect the older buildings nearby, such as surrounding churches and the federal courthouse.

Architect Samuel Frey said his firm is seeking LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, certification for the building. To get the certification, the Downtown Y will need to have connectivity with public transportation, consume less energy and even recycle some of the water from the pools, Frey said.

Glass was also an important feature in the design of the building, for light and energy reasons, Frey said.

“Daylight reduces the energy needed (for) lighting,” he said.

“There’s a lot of transparency to capture the energy about the building.”

City Council member Janet Miller called the new facility fabulous.

“People driving by will see activity in here, and it will encourage people to be more active,” Miller said.

According to Schoenebeck, there are 100,000 people and 20,000 kids in a three-mile radius of the Downtown YMCA.

He said the Downtown YMCA hopes to attract at least half of them to the facility.

Once construction is complete, the old YMCA facility will be razed for parking.

The Downtown YMCA is expected to open in December 2012.

[Curtis McClinton Sr. remembered as desegregation leader, first black state senator](#)

In 1950s Wichita, blacks and whites could not eat lunch at the same restaurants, and they couldn’t stay at the same hotels. They couldn’t even share the same restrooms or water fountains.

Curtis R. McClinton, the first African-American elected to the Kansas Senate, began to change that after he was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives in 1956. He introduced public-accommodation laws calling for equal treatment for individuals,

regardless of race, religion or national origin, that predated the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Mr. McClinton died Wednesday in Wichita. He was 99.

“He had the passion for freedom and the passion for education and knowledge,” Curtis McClinton Jr. said of his father. “But he did not just care to get his foot wet in the pond of freedom. He wanted to get all of the sticks and rubbish out of it.”

Mr. McClinton was born to William and Agnes Dad McClinton on March 22, 1913, in Braggs, Okla. Growing up in segregated Poteau, Okla., he attended political rallies and courtroom proceedings with his father.

“I think he just wanted us to be exposed” to what was happening in the community, Mr. McClinton said in a 2000 interview with The Eagle.

After getting his degree in education and a minor in business administration from Langston University in 1937, Mr. McClinton worked as a teacher, then ran a grocery store in Oklahoma. He moved to Wichita in the early 1940s.

In Wichita, Mr. McClinton opened a grocery store on East 12th Street and joined the NAACP. Then he made the move into politics.

In 1960, he became the state’s first black senator, serving two terms.

Curtis McClinton Jr. said he remembers his father as a “very focused and committed person” with great commitment to education.

“If he said something, he meant it – whether it was an order or a direction,” he said. “... My father always wanted his kids to get a good education. We’ve just always kind of matriculated toward that.”

Friends and peers of Mr. McClinton respected him and described him as modest but persistent.

Former state Sen. U.L. “Rip” Gooch was friends with Mr. McClinton, and they once opposed each other in a state Senate race. Gooch called Mr. McClinton honest, straightforward and a fighter.

“He did a lot for the city,” Gooch said. “(He was) not one to give up.”

State Rep. Melody McCray-Miller remembers the deep respect her late father, former state legislator Billy McCray, had for Mr. McClinton. She views Mr. McClinton as the forerunner for African-American officials elected after him.

“His long, committed life he lived speaks volumes to the person Sen. McClinton was and the legacy he left behind,” McCray-Miller said. “He was important.”

Mr. McClinton is survived by his son, Curtis McClinton Jr.; his daughter-in-law, Devonne McClinton; granddaughters Tobe McCay and Marguerite Mary McClinton; and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Mary Ella McGee McClinton; one brother and five sisters.

A service will be at 6 p.m. Friday at the Jackson Mortuary Chapel, 1125 E. 13th St.; the funeral will be at 10 a.m. July 7 at Calvary Baptist Church, 2653 N. Hillside.

Contributing: Amy Renee Leiker; Eagle staff

July 3, 2012

[Train derails near downtown Wichita](#)

Crews spent Tuesday cleaning up a mess after three train cars derailed just south of Kellogg near downtown Wichita on Tuesday morning, authorities said.

The derailment occurred at 5:19 a.m. at Gilbert and St. Francis, about two blocks south of Kellogg, a Sedgwick County dispatch supervisor said. No injuries were reported.

The cause of the derailment is still under investigation.

Hazardous-materials crews were called to deal with a small leak of sodium hydroxide, authorities said, but the spill was not hazardous.

Crew members on the scene Tuesday night said the rail line was expected to be back in service before midnight.

Contributing: Sarah Tucker of The Eagle

July 4, 2012

[American flags through the ages adorn Wichita man's front yard](#)

At 2448 Cardinal Drive in the Benjamin Hills neighborhood, flags whip in the wind.

Eight feet tall, the flags command respect, and passers-by stare at the display of patriotism. Some flags are obvious variations on the official American flag; others seem foreign or old-fashioned.

All 70 flags on display represent the history of the United States, as well as one man's patriotism.

David Martin says he has been displaying historical flags of the U.S. for decades. He's not sure when the hobby started or what initially drew his interest, but he feels compelled to continue the display to promote patriotism and honor the memory of those who came before us.

"Our flag is what we make of it," Martin said, before quoting Woodrow Wilson's Flag Day speech in 1917, "'It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation.'

"Those are not my words, but essentially true," Martin said. "The entire totality of our history is bound up in our flag."

On patriotic holidays such as today, Martin spends about an hour each day unfurling the flags and placing them in rows on his lawn. And each night, he takes them down.

Martin said he and his wife moved from the College Hill neighborhood several years ago to a corner lot in Benjamin Hills in west Wichita partly to better display the collection. He said he gets his flags from online stores and has even made some.

Besides displaying the flags in the front yard, Martin also shows them to different groups and organizations, such as schools, libraries and neighborhood organizations.

The flags are arranged in chronological order from the oldest flags to fly over American soil to today's official flag. Each pole is numbered and labeled with the name of the flag and year or years it was used.

Every flag tells a story about the U.S. and the people who carried them, Martin said.

The first flag, in the front of the house, is the royal standard of Spain. Next are the personal flag of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain and the flag of France.

Until 1737, flags that flew over the U.S. were of exploration and discovery, Martin said. That changed with the Bedford Flag.

Used by the Bedford, Mass., militia, the flag depicts a mailed arm holding a sword emerging from a cloud on a red background. A ribbon with the words "Vince Aut Morire" (Conquer or Die) surrounds the arm.

This flag is thought to have been carried by Minutemen into the opening battle of the Revolutionary War at Concord, Mass., in 1775.

"It wasn't American in design, but American in its uses," Martin said.

The Bedford flag and several others don't seem related to the present American flag at all. Some feature rattlesnakes, a popular motif during the Revolutionary War, and others include the Union Jack.

Two flags have had a greater influence than others on the design of the first official U.S. flag.

One flag, the Sons of Liberty Banner, features 13 red and white horizontal stripes and was used during the Boston Tea Party.

The other flag, used by the Rhode Island Regiment, is white with a blue anchor and a banner with the word "hope." It also features a blue field with 13 gold stars in the upper left corner.

Martin encourages visitors to wander through the flags. He keeps two binders with information on the flags for visitors to learn more.

Although he already has 70 flags, Martin said his collection is far from complete, and he intends to add more.

"There's no such thing as a complete list of American flags; it just doesn't exist," Martin said.

Martin plans to continue displaying the flags until he is no longer physically able. Then, he'd like to donate the flags to a group that would continue to display them.

“They are a community asset,” Martin said. “I consider myself to be more of a curator for the collection.”

July 5, 2012

[Andover teen killed in crash had a 'passion for life'](#)

Janel Balmer was looking forward to Wednesday evening, her family said.

She was going to have dinner at home with them. Then, they would all go to a friend's house for fireworks.

But first, she was going to pick up a friend and go to the mall.

Balmer drove north on Butler County Road in the family's Dodge van. Shortly before 3 p.m., authorities said, she rolled through a stop sign at K-254 and was struck broadside by another Dodge van. She died an hour later at Via Christi Hospital on St. Francis.

The Kansas Highway Patrol said Balmer wasn't wearing a seatbelt. It said she was not texting at the time of the accident.

The occupants of the other van, a couple from Wichita in their 80s, suffered minor injuries.

Friends and family spent July 4 remembering Balmer, a happy teen who made everyone around her laugh.

“She had such a passion for life,” her mother, Julie Balmer, said Thursday. “She loved being with her friends, doing stuff with her friends every chance she got. She loved being around people.”

Janel Balmer, 16, would have been a junior this school year at Rose Hill High School. The family had moved from Derby the year before to a home near Pawnee and Butler County Road, and she made friends at her new school quickly.

Dakota Shaye Jones, a sophomore at Rose Hill, had known Balmer for only a year but said they were already very close.

“If I needed anything, she'd always be there for me,” Jones said. “She was always there for everybody, even if she was going through a hard time. She always tried to be happy, to make others happy.”

Other friends and classmates echoed those sentiments on Facebook and Twitter throughout the day Thursday.

“She could always make me smile,” Jones said. “She was hilarious.”

Her friends and family said Balmer had two passions in life: sports and her faith. At Rose Hill, she played softball and basketball.

Assistant Coach Ray Boese worked with Balmer on the softball team and as her geometry teacher. He called her a “bright spot” on the team and in class.

“She really was always, always, always positive; always smiling and always giddy,” Boese said. “She was a great student to coach.”

Her mother said Balmer was going to try for the volleyball team in the fall. She said her daughter also wanted to be a physical therapist. A knee surgery in 2010 inspired her, Julie Balmer said.

Janel Balmer also spent many hours at Countryside Christian Church, where she sang with the worship team and participated with the discipleship and youth groups.

“She could light up the room,” said Rosie Skaer, a family friend and the church’s music director. “She was a party waiting to happen.

“She’s definitely going to be missed.”

Memorials have been established with Countryside Christian Church, 1919 S. Rock Road. A memorial service will be held for Balmer at 2 p.m. Sunday at the church.

In addition to her mother, Balmer is survived by her father, John, and brother, Justin.

July 6, 2012

[Father arrested after leaving children in car while shopping](#)

A man who thought it would be safe to leave his children in the car because it was difficult to take them into the store was arrested by Wichita police.

Police said Friday that the 33-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of felony child endangerment charges, as well as driving with a revoked or suspended license and possession of marijuana, which was found in the car.

The incident took place about 7:45 p.m. Thursday when police responded to a report of child endangerment in the parking lot of the West Kellogg Walmart.

Three children – ages 6, 2 and 8 months – were left in a running vehicle parked in a fire lane. The vehicle's air-conditioning appeared to be on. It was 95 degrees outside and the vehicle was parked facing the sun, police said.

Passers-by alerted management who called police.

Police aren't sure how long the children were left unattended but said 40 minutes passed between the initial call and the father returning to the vehicle.

The children were taken into police protective custody after the mother, who was shopping at another store, could not be reached. The children were unharmed.

Woman hit by bullet fragments during argument

A 25-year-old woman was hit by bullet fragments after her boyfriend shot at her during an argument this morning, police said.

The incident happened about 4:30 a.m. in the 600 block of South Kansas, Lt. Doug Nolte said. The victim was having an argument with the suspect, her 25-year-old boyfriend, police said.

During the argument, the suspect pulled out a gun and fired two to three shots at the victim, police said. Pieces of one bullet hit the victim after ricocheting off a metal pole behind her.

Her injuries were minor, and she didn't need medical attention.

Police are looking for the suspect.

Man shot in chest outside southeast Wichita apartment

A man was shot in the chest around 6 a.m. Friday at an apartment in the 8900 block of East Harry, Wichita police Lt. Doug Nolte said.

The victim, a 25-year-old man, was sitting outside when he was approached by an unknown man who asked to use his phone, police said.

The suspect then pulled out a gun and shot the man in the upper left chest.

The victim was transported to Via Christi Hospital on St. Francis in serious condition.

The suspect was described as 5-foot-8, 180 pounds, with a tattoo on his right forearm, a shaved head and goatee. The suspect was also wearing dark jeans, a dark shirt with white lettering and boots.

Police are still looking for the suspect.

July 8, 2012

[After last year's cancellation, Wichita's Black Arts Festival returns](#)

The Black Arts Festival will return this year, organizers say.

Last year's festival didn't happen due to lack of funding.

In the past, board members would pay for extra costs out-of-pocket, said Dana McPherson, president of the Wichita Black Arts Festival Association. But the additional costs were too high last year, and the festival had to be canceled.

"Yes, it was disappointing, because we didn't have our biggest event," said Carl Stovall, fundraising chair and former president of the association. "But after we discussed it, (it was) better to not throw something together, better to table it."

McPherson said the board has learned from the past and will continue learning how to get community support for this type of event.

This year's festival will rely mostly on fundraising, as well as private and corporate donations, McPherson said. The organization has applied for grants as well, but isn't relying solely on them, she said.

The festival is scheduled for Sept. 1-3 in McAdams Park, near 13th Street and Ohio. It will feature a dance workshop with Darrin Henson, a car and bike show, live music and a parade.

The Umoja 5K Walk/Run is still on as well. It is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 25, and will cost \$12 to \$25, depending on the runner's age and when they register.

“Arts – visual and musical – speak a universal language,” Stovall said. “The festival is a great opportunity for the city of Wichita to come together.”

More information

If you want to volunteer, participate or donate to the festival, contact Carl Stovall at 316-687-5624 or visit wbafa.org for more information.

July 9, 2012**[Monday hours at Wichita driver's license office prove popular](#)**

More than 70 people were waiting in the hall outside Wichita's driver's license office at 7:45 a.m. on Monday.

That's right, a Monday.

To help alleviate summer lines, the Kansas Department of Revenue opened the driver's license office in Wichita on Mondays in July and August. Monday was the first day of the extra hours. The Revenue Department also opened an office in Olathe on Mondays, too.

“During the summer, we have a huge crush of people coming into the offices,” said Jeannine Koranda, spokeswoman for the Kansas Department of Revenue. She attributed much of the increase to teens being out of school and having time to get their licenses.

“There's an increase in wait times (over the summer) at all the offices, but especially in urban areas,” Koranda said.

Mike Fowler said he arrived at 6:30 a.m. to be the first in line at the office at 1823 W. 21st St. at Twin Lakes. He said he has waited many hours in line several times before, trying to get his motorcycle license.

“I came early to beat everyone,” Fowler said.

Others showed up a little later, and one man even brought a chair to sit in until the office opened.

Not many seemed to mind the early-morning wait, but several people were upset by a new text-based service that seemed to allow latecomers to jump ahead in line.

Carol Francis said she had been waiting in line since 7 a.m. People who arrived after her and texted got bumped to the front of the line, she said.

The line management system, called QLess, is a recent addition to Kansas' busier driver's license offices. It allows people to get in line without having to be present.

Koranda called QLess a "fairly new system (that) not everyone knows about yet."

Drivers can join the line via computer but will need texting capabilities on their phone to know their place in line, Koranda said.

Driver's license offices began using QLess a little more than a month ago, Koranda said. It is in use in four offices, including Wichita, with plans to expand into Andover, she said.

By the end of the day, 368 customers were served in Wichita, and 328 in Olathe, Koranda said.

"That's almost 700 people who won't try and come in on another day," she said. "It's spreading those lines out."

In addition to its usual hours – Tuesday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. – Wichita's driver license's office will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Mondays through Aug. 27.

The state doesn't plan on opening other driver's license offices on Mondays, Koranda said.

How to: Skip the line

To avoid waiting in line at Wichita's driver licensing office, you can join the QLess three ways:

- Go online to ksrevenue.org/Qless.html and sign in.
- Text "Wichita DL" to 714-333-1234.
- Sign in at the touch-screen kiosk located in the driver licensing office. You will need a cellphone with texting capabilities to use the QLess line management system. Texts are used to notify you of your position in line.

[Wichita police identify man killed after crashing into parked semi](#)

Wichita police identified Monday a driver who was killed after his vehicle crashed into a parked semitrailer early Saturday morning.

Galen K. Haaga, 23, was driving his 2004 Chevy Avalanche westbound on West Irving, near Kellogg and West Street, when his vehicle drifted to the left side of the road, Lt. Joe Schroeder said Monday. The accident happened at about 2 a.m. Saturday.

Haaga's vehicle struck a parked semitrailer, moving the trailer 10.5 feet, police said.

A sleeping passenger in the vehicle was not injured. The man woke up and called police, police said.

The men were leaving Old Town and heading to Haaga's house. However, the road they were on is in an industrial area and not part of the route to Haaga's house, police said.

The crash may be alcohol-related, based on statements made by the passenger, Schroeder said.

Police don't know how fast Haaga was driving but said both men were wearing seatbelts. Distracted driving was not a factor in the accident.

Haaga's death is the 12th traffic-related fatality this year. There were 19 traffic-related fatalities this time last year.

[Crews find drowning victim at Lake Afton](#)

Firefighters found the body of a man Monday morning who disappeared at Lake Afton over the weekend.

Dwight Dewayne Givens, 47, disappeared underwater while swimming in the lake at around 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Sedgwick County and Wichita fire crews spent the weekend searching for him but were hampered by poor visibility and strong winds and currents.

The crews suspended their search Sunday night and resumed searching at approximately 5:30 a.m. Monday.

According to the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office, Givens was found shortly after daylight on the surface of the lake in the general vicinity of where he disappeared.

The body was transported to the Sedgwick County Regional Forensic Science Center for an autopsy. The drowning is still under investigation.

Mother, daughter surprise burglars

Police responded to a burglary in the 2800 block of South Custer, southwest of Pawnee and Meridian, close to midnight on Sunday.

A mother and daughter returned home to find two men inside their house in the process of stealing items such as electronics, Lt. Doug Nolte said.

The suspects fled on foot with a red duffel bag and left behind a car, police said.

Later, a 21-year-old woman came to pick up the car. When police stopped her, they determined it was one of the suspects' cars. The woman, who was not involved in the robbery, was cooperative and took officers back to her apartment, where police arrested two 19-year-old men and recovered items belonging to the victims, police said.

Among the recovered items was a camera that the suspects used to take a picture of themselves after the burglary.

Caller says he was kidnapped, leads police to body at North Broadway apartment

A man called police early Monday morning to say he had been kidnapped and that he had witnessed a murder, according to Wichita police.

Police responded to the call, placed from a payphone in the 1300 block of North Grove, police Lt. Todd Ojile said Monday.

Police met the man at his residence on East 11th Street. He led them to the Interdale Apartments at 916 N. Broadway, Ojile said.

Inside an apartment, police found a 34-year-old man dead from a gunshot wound.

According to the police, the caller said he was inside the apartment when one or two men entered the apartment, and shot and killed his friend.

There was no kidnapping, and police are still interviewing the caller, a man in his early 20s.

The dead man was a gang member, Ojile said, but police do not know if the shooting was gang-related.

Nothing appeared to be stolen from the apartment, and there are no suspects at this time, police said.

July 10, 2012

[Police make arrest in Monday's homicide at North Broadway apartment](#)

Wichita police have made an arrest in connection to the death of a 34-year-old man on Monday in the Interdale Apartments at 916 N. Broadway, Lt. Todd Ojile said.

Matthew McDaniel, 22, was arrested on suspicion of first-degree murder.

According to police, the victim, Ronald Wilson, was at his apartment with three men, including McDaniel and the man who reported the murder.

McDaniel pulled out a gun and fired shots that killed the victim, police said.

Ojile said the caller made up a kidnapping story because he was scared at the time.

Police suspect robbery was the motive behind the killing, and the robbery may have been drug-related.

[Police: Woman uses stun gun on another, takes her purse over debt](#)

A woman was hit with a stun gun and robbed around 11 a.m. Monday in the 1900 block of North Grove, Lt. Joe Schroeder said Tuesday.

According to police, the woman, 54, was at another woman's house when she was confronted by the woman, 39. The 54-year-old owed money to the younger woman, police said.

The 39-year-old hit the 54-year-old in the back with a pink stun gun, then stole her purse and demanded her cellphone, Schroeder said.

The 54-year-old did not require medical attention, police said. Police are still investigating and have identified the younger woman.

July 11, 2012

[Sedgwick County Commissioners approve AirTran subsidy](#)

Sedgwick County commissioners approved a subsidy to guarantee lower airfares for another year on Wednesday.

Commissioners Karl Peterjohn, Tim Norton, Dave Unruh and Jim Skelton voted in favor of the subsidy for AirTran Airways, and to continue a transportation agreement between Wichita and Sedgwick County.

The Affordable Airfares agreement requires Wichita to pay half of the AirTran contract after state funding, said Chris Chronis, Sedgwick County's chief financial officer.

The state is chipping in up to \$4.75 million. The city and county will contribute up to \$1.75 million, or up to \$875,000 each.

Norton recalled traveling to other cities in the past because of lower airfares. He agreed to "hang on" and support the subsidy until Southwest Airlines is flying out of Wichita, he said. AirTran, which has been bought by Southwest Airlines, is expected to transition its Wichita operations to Southwest in 2013.

Peterjohn expressed some concern over the contracts becoming routine.

"The program was intended, at least initially intended, to be a temporary program," Peterjohn said. "I plan to support this motion here because the original intent was to try and bring Southwest Airlines to this community."

Commissioner Richard Ranzau voted against the subsidy and the agreement, saying it creates dependence and a sense of entitlement. Ranzau also called the agreement a form of indirect price control.

Airfares in Wichita and southeast Kansas were among the highest in the country in 2002, and several businesses left because of that, Chronis said. The city enticed AirTran

to Wichita and, in 2005, Sedgwick County joined Wichita's agreement with AirTran and began managing the contract.

Sedgwick County received more than 400 fireworks complaints over the Fourth of July

The non-emergency line set up for fireworks complaints received 406 calls over the July 4 holiday, a dispatch official told Sedgwick County commissioners Wednesday.

Randy Bargdill, director of Sedgwick County Emergency Communications, told commissioners that during the same time last year, the 911 system processed 353 calls dealing with fireworks complaints.

On a regular day, the 911 system receives about 1,400 calls. During the 27-hour period from midnight July 4 to 3 a.m. July 5, the lines received 2,718 calls, including emergency and non-emergency calls, Bargdill said.

During the last nine hours, the non-emergency line was staffed and fielded 377 fireworks complaints, or about 42 calls per hour, Bargdill said. That's more than the 302 calls received during the same period last year, but last year's calls came in on the 911 lines.

"This provided tremendous relief to the 911 system itself," he said.

Bargdill said he hopes to staff the non-emergency line over New Year's Eve, the second-busiest night of the year after July 4.

July 17, 2012

Oaklawn residents rebuilding houses 'unsafe to occupy' after tornado

The 16 Oaklawn homes previously marked "unsafe to occupy" by Sedgwick County are being rebuilt.

The EF-3 tornado that struck the Oaklawn neighborhood on April 14 caused no severe injuries but affected 429 homes in the Wichita area, according to a damage assessment by the Midway Kansas Chapter of the American Red Cross in late April.

Jennifer Tafoya's house on East Idlewild was one of them. She began rebuilding immediately only to find out she needed a permit to build.

Then her home was marked "unsafe to occupy" because her roof was severely damaged after a tree fell on it. Still, she stayed in her home because her insurance company wouldn't pay for a hotel stay, she said.

"The roof looked wavy because of the beams," Tafoya said. "The county orange-tagged me."

Orange tags allowed limited access to the buildings, while red tags prohibited entry.

Homeowners had 30 days to get their homes inspected or face demolition by the county.

"The houses were put on an abatement list," said Bud Lett, interim director of Sedgwick County's Department of Code Enforcement. "(The homeowners) were required to get engineers' evaluations of the structural damage and give the required list of repairs for each house."

After the inspection, homeowners like Tafoya could file a permit to rebuild. This is standard procedure after storms, fires, tornadoes and other disasters, Lett said.

During the rebuilding process, the homes will also be inspected multiple times to make sure they are up to code, Lett said.

"Anything that is going to be concealed when finished is looked at – plumbing, mechanical, electrical," Lett said. "We want to make sure everything that's being concealed has been installed to code."

Rick Waylan had 10 homes that were marked unsafe to occupy. His company, Oakview at the Park, owns and rents approximately 300 homes in the Oaklawn area, and he is currently rebuilding his damaged properties.

"Like a new build, (the county) has to make sure it meets safety standards," Waylan said.

Sedgwick County Commissioner Jim Skelton visits the Oaklawn community once or twice a week. He's glad to see homeowners rebuilding.

"It indicates that things are going to slowly return to the way things were," Skelton said. "It's much better than how it was after the tornado."

Andree Sisco, the Oakland Improvement District board treasurer, doesn't know when the area will be "back to normal," but she hopes most of the homes will be completed within a year's time.

"It's going to take those with more properties longer to finish," Sisco said.

"For us to have some of these homes rebuilt, it shows people care," Sisco said. "It means a lot."

At Tafoya's house, the roof and siding are repaired, but she still has to fix her shed, awning and fencing. She says the work is "going slowly."

"There's so many people out here fixing (things), you have to wait," she said.

According to a Sedgwick County damage assessment released earlier this year, the tornado caused an estimated \$146.3 million in damage to homes and businesses. The tornado also caused extensive damage to the Pinaire Mobile Home Park, and it heavily damaged Spirit AeroSystems.

Hawkins, Schneider to meet in GOP race

Two political newcomers are running to become the Republican candidate for a House seat left vacant by redistricting.

Bridget Schneider and Dan Hawkins seek the House District 100 seat formerly held by Mario Goico in western Wichita. The winner of the Aug. 7 primary will face Democrat John Willoughby in November.

Redistricting shifted the boundaries of District 100 to include parts of District 90, 94 and 105. Goico was placed in District 94, where he is running unopposed. About 45 percent of District 100 remains the same as before.

Schneider, a stay-at-home mom who grew up on a farm in Lebo, has lived in the district for seven years.

She decided to run for office after seeing friends lose their jobs and families move out of state for work.

"That pulls on my heartstrings," she said. "The economy needs to be jumpstarted."

To do so, Schneider wants to continue Brownback's tax and spending cuts. She doesn't think it will be difficult to find areas in which to cut spending.

"There's a lot of waste in government," she said. "There are a lot of areas we can do with less."

She could not say for certain what areas could be cut. She also did not offer specifics about what areas of the state budget would be a priority for her. She said she would learn should she become elected.

"I don't think it's necessary for me to speak in specifics right now," Schneider said. "I'm not going to say things that I'm not yet comfortable with, if I haven't grasped all the information. I think it's important that I learn and grow before I make a specific decision."

Schneider said it's important to create jobs, reduce taxes and reduce regulations on small businesses.

She offered the way she runs her own family as an example.

"We're a cash-only family — we don't spend what we don't have," Schneider said. Kansans should expect the same from her regarding the state budget, she said.

"Nothing is sacred when the funds aren't there."

As for education, Schneider, a former elementary schoolteacher, doesn't think schools need more money.

"We can't keep doing the same thing and expect different results," she said. Teachers "don't need more money, they need less restrictions."

Hawkins takes a slightly different approach to education but agrees that the education budget doesn't need to be increased.

"Throwing more money doesn't solve the problem," Hawkins said. "Maybe what we need to do is to start looking at some of the internal parts of the school."

Hawkins has owned his own insurance business for 21 years. He said he would bring a business approach to education and suggested possibly combining school districts to find efficiencies.

“Before we cut or add to our education budget, wouldn’t it be nice to know if the system itself is operating properly?” he said.

Hawkins would apply this business logic to other areas of government.

“There are a lot of places where we can make government more efficient,” he said. “I don’t necessarily think cutting is the answer, but we have to have a balanced budget.”

Like Schneider, Hawkins doesn’t have specific areas he would cut. He said changes in taxes and regulations would encourage businesses to come to Kansas.

On taxes, Hawkins would like to see relief for grocery sales taxes and property taxes. He also is intrigued by the flat tax and “fair tax” models.

Should a “fair tax” be proposed in the House, Hawkins said he would support it.

One area Hawkins would like to focus on is getting health care for the uninsurable.

Hawkins, who has specialized in employee benefits for 11 years, opposes the Affordable Healthcare Act and thinks health care should be administered at the state level.

“In Kansas, we have the ability to do that right now,” he said. “Instead of redoing the entire system, why don’t we subsidize that system and help the uninsurable?”

House District 100, Republican primary

Daniel Hawkins

Age: 51

Occupation: Employee benefits insurance consultant

Education: Bachelor’s degree

Experience: One term as precinct committeeman

Phone: 316-722-7307

E-mail: dan@vote4hawkins.org

Website: vote4hawkins.org

Are the income tax cuts Gov. Sam Brownback signed into law a good thing for Kansas?

Yes, I believe that tax cuts are essential to fuel the economy. I think this will be revisited in the 2013 legislative session.

What further changes, if any, would you advocate in the state's overall tax laws?

Property tax relief and sales tax on groceries.

How would you change the state's laws or budget to improve K-12 education?

A school's budget should be based on outcomes, with most of the money being spent in the classrooms. Those school systems that subscribe to this thought will survive and prosper. Those that don't should be merged with systems that do operate effectively.

What was the most meaningful event or experience in your life, besides births and marriages?

My military experience was both rewarding and important in shaping who I am and how I approach life. Life is about being disciplined and making good decisions. If you ask my children what I have taught them, they will say that dad says every decision you make in life has a consequence. That consequence may be positive or negative. You must be willing to accept the consequence of your actions or decisions and learn from them.

Bridget Schneider

Age: 37

Occupation: Homemaker

Education: Bachelor's degree, Friends University

Experience: None

Phone: 316-558-8464

E-mail: bkschneider@cox.net

Are the income tax cuts Gov. Sam Brownback signed into law a good thing for Kansas?

I do believe the tax cuts are good for Kansas. Government growth has become burdensome on our families. Reforming the tax code will both spur growth and change how future legislatures prioritize spending initiatives. I believe government needs to learn to live by the same budget constraints as our families.

What further changes, if any, would you advocate in the state's overall tax laws?

I would support the continued reduction of the personal income tax. The disparity between an individual's personal income tax and that of LLC's and subchapter S corporations needs to be addressed.

How would you change the state's laws or budget to improve K-12 education?

I believe both revenue and spending decisions need to be more local. Centralizing K-12 funding decisions to the state and federal governments has transferred education decisions away from families.

What was the most meaningful event or experience in your life, besides births and marriages?

Growing up on a farm, I learned the value of hard work. Difficulty and suffering strengthen us, and the best seeds to plant are gratitude and kindness.

What candidates have to say about the issues

July 20, 2012

[Soldier reports theft of trailer with lawnmowers, landscaping materials](#)

A trailer containing a soldier's lawnmowers and other landscaping equipment was reported stolen Thursday from The Shores apartment complex at 2701 S. Emporia.

Philip Crabtree, an Army National Guardsman attending training in Salina this week, said he let a friend borrow his equipment while the other man's mower was being repaired.

The equipment and trailer, worth an estimated \$12,000 according to Crabtree, was stolen off the back of his friend's truck. An air compressor owned by his friend, Sam Rudd, also was stolen, according to a report filed with Wichita police. Rudd's truck was reportedly damaged during the theft as well.

Crabtree, who owns ASAP Lawn Care, has been in the business for 12 years. His entire fleet of equipment is now gone, and he will probably have to find new work, he said.

"Everything that I had (stolen) I pretty much use on a daily basis," he said.

Crabtree doesn't blame his friend, who said he feels bad about what happened.

"I've never heard of this happening to anybody," Rudd said. "I'm trying to do everything I can to help him find his mowers."

Crabtree has been checking Craigslist and hopes his stolen property turns up.

“Usually when these things go missing, they’re just gone,” he said.

July 28, 2012

[Kingman athlete to compete in world duathlon championship two years after accident](#)

Brad Saens is a born competitor.

Friends and family describe Saens, 42, as passionate and proud about everything he does, whether it’s competing in duathlons or working as an IV therapist at Via Christi.

“Everything he puts his mind to, he excels at,” his wife, Julie Saens, said.

On Sept. 22, Brad Saens will compete in the Duathlon World Championship in Nancy, France. He qualified after outsprinting a competitor by two-tenths of a second to place 18th last April at the national championships in Tucson.

He completed the five-kilometer, 35K bike ride and 5K run in 1 hour, 37 minutes and 50 seconds. Saens considers it one of his worst times.

“It was horrible,” he said. “(I was) 8, 9 minutes slower than what I usually do.”

What makes Saens’ story unique isn’t his drive, his newness to the sport — he has only competed for four years — or even his age. It’s the fact that he’s competing in a world championship just two years after a serious accident that left him afraid to ride a bike and unable to work.

The starting line

Saens said he got involved in duathlons after Thomas Beck, a co-worker at Via Christi, convinced him in 2008.

“It’s a lonely sport, and it’s helpful to have training partners,” Beck said. “I thought maybe a sport like duathlons would be good for him.”

So, Beck loaned him a bike, and Saens would drive from Kingman to northeast Wichita a few times a week to work out.

“I taught him everything I knew, and he took it from there and ran with it,” Beck said. “He got to my level, and then he exceeded that.”

The Topeka Tinman was Saens’ first race. He took second place.

He competed in four more duathlons in 2008, taking second or third in all of them. In 2009, he competed in six duathlons, winning every race.

The accident

On Feb. 18, 2010, Saens was gearing up for another year of competitions. He had just finished a five-mile run and was four miles into a 50-mile bike ride when a man hit him with a vehicle going 65 mph.

Saens said he doesn’t remember the accident, and witnesses told him later how he flew over the SUV.

Julie, Brad’s wife, said his conditioning helped him withstand the accident. Still, he suffered a broken thumb, wrist and knee; torn Achilles tendon; mild concussion; and herniated discs in his lower back.

Saens also experienced panic attacks and sleepless nights. He often had nightmares about a car running him over again, his wife said.

Often, he would repeat himself and not remember what he said.

“The concussion was the hardest part,” Julie Saens said. “He was just so scattered-minded afterwards.”

Brad Saens also lost use of his dominant right hand and was unable to insert IVs at the hospital.

But he was determined to get back to work as soon as possible. Saens called his boss 10 days straight until she finally allowed him back to work in a manager position in March 2010.

“I told her from the beginning (my goal) was to get back out on the floor,” Saens said. “That’s where I serve patients the best. Working on a desk — that’s just not my thing.”

By June 2010, he was working again as an IV therapist.

Back on the road

With the encouragement of friends and family, Saens began thinking about riding again.

His wife was leery and initially told him no when he asked for another bike. It was Brad's daughter, Kayla, who finally convinced him to start riding again.

"If it wasn't for my daughter, I wouldn't have bought another bike," he said.

Saens began practicing inside on a cycling trainer in May 2010 and started riding outside with the encouragement of Shawn Stafford, a friend who "knew how to push my buttons," Saens said.

Stafford was impressed with Saens' first ride after the accident.

"The guy rides like 20 miles per hour, and I'm thinking, 'You sure you got hit by that car?'" Stafford said.

Still, those first few rides were tough for Saens.

"It was hard to hear the cars go by me," he said. "Before, it never crossed my mind."

Throughout 2010, he didn't know whether he was ever going to race again, but friends and family encouraged him to compete.

In March 2011, Saens competed in his first race after the accident. He took seventh place, and that "didn't settle well with me," Saens said.

He competed in five more races and won them all, even setting some course records.

Saens initially planned to compete for just one more year — and then he qualified for nationals.

Headed to France

In September, Saens will compete with athletes from around the world, as well as 117 others from the U.S. He is also bringing his own bike to France, for which the Bicycle Pedaler is providing a special suitcase free of charge.

Saens is busy training this summer and, though he still experiences pain from the accident, he isn't afraid to suffer in preparation for the competition.

“It doesn’t matter how much you train, it all hurts,” Saens said. “I don’t think it gets any easier, you just get stronger and faster.”

This won’t be the last race for Saens, but he plans to reduce his commitment to the sport after the championship.

He said he is considering becoming a personal trainer to help other athletes.

“I won’t ever stop riding and running,” Saens said.

July 30, 2012

[Police: Woman said she used kung-fu to escape man with hatchet](#)

A homeless 38-year-old female and her 29-year-old brother said they were attacked at about 1 a.m. Sunday in the 3700 block of South Broadway, police say.

The siblings were under a bridge when a group of eight people walked through acting, according to the woman, “loud and obnoxious,” Lt. Doug Nolte said Monday.

The woman told the group to “be quiet and find another bridge,” police said. The group began to punch and kick the woman.

When her brother got involved in the fight, a man in the group pulled out a hatchet and put it to the woman’s throat, Nolte said. The woman said she knew kung fu, police said, and disarmed the man.

The siblings fled and went to Wesley Medical Center’s emergency room.

Police did not recover the hatchet from the scene.

[Police: Push through glass door brings on attack with bat](#)

Officers arrested a 41-year-old man on suspicion of aggravated assault at about 11:15 p.m. Sunday night in the 2700 block of East Douglas.

The assault was the result of a previous altercation where the man said he was pushed through a glass door by the 24-year-old victim, Lt. Doug Nolte said Monday.

The man left the scene and returned with a bat, which he began swinging at the 24-year-old, police said.

The younger man threw a small knife at the man but did not hit him.

Officers located and arrested the 41-year-old in the 100 block of Estelle.

August 1, 2012

[Mid-Continent Airport to expand security checkpoint with new X-ray machines](#)

Wichita Mid-Continent Airport will be expanding its security with the installation of four new X-ray machines beginning Friday.

Three of the machines are expected to be installed and operational by Aug. 14, and the last machine will be operational by Aug. 22, said Keith Osborn, Wichita's federal security director for the Transportation Security Administration.

Passengers should plan for delays during construction, and expect some walkway constriction when exiting the terminals, Osborn said.

August 2, 2012

[Andover residents to vote on local option budget increase](#)

Voters in Andover will decide whether or not to approve an increase to their school district's local option budget on Tuesday.

The Andover School District is proposing a 1 percent LOB increase that would raise a little more than \$433,000 in additional property tax revenue to restore previously cut faculty, coaching and support staff positions.

A mailer sent out this week by supporters of the increase encouraged Andover residents to vote yes and listed some of the positions that would be restored with the funds.

Steve Hardin, a parent of two students in the district, said he supports the increase and is part of the group of parents who posted signs and sent out the mailers. Hardin said

the group is “as tax averse as everybody else,” but they want to see their children succeed in both the classroom and extracurricular activities.

“With this particular (increase), we see exactly the positions it will fund,” Hardin said. “It’s like making a donation to your schools.”

Proponents of the increase say it will cost the owner of a \$100,000 house less than 50 cents a month.

According to the Andover School District, 35 coaching and activity sponsor positions would be restored, along with more than 13 additional teaching staff and instructional support positions. Superintendent Mark Evans said more coaching and activity positions are being restored because they only cost \$2,000 each, whereas the teaching positions are more expensive.

Should the increase pass, the district plans to spend roughly \$228,000 – 53 percent – on teaching staff positions and roughly \$67,000 – 15 percent – on coaches and activity sponsor positions. The remaining funds would go toward instructional support – about \$118,000, or 27 percent – and district maintenance – \$20,000, or 5 percent.

Whether the LOB increase is passed or not, the district’s mill levy will go down for Andover residents due to several factors, Evans said, including refinanced bonds and increased enrollment.

If the LOB increase is passed, the mill levy would be reduced by 2.5 mills. If it is voted down, the mill levy would be reduced by 3 mills.

Under state law, Kansas school districts are allowed to raise the LOB 1 percent to a maximum of 31 percent of their general budget through a referendum only. Evans said that 90 to 95 percent of Kansas school districts are at the 30 percent LOB already, while a handful are at 31 percent.

The Andover School District has held the LOB at 30 percent for the past four or five years, Evans said. The past year’s LOB budget was approximately \$8.7 million.

District officials say they are unaware of any organized opposition to the increase.

August 5, 2012

[Women's interest in guns shoots up](#)*

**for related audio slideshow 'Women's Handgun 101', please see the multimedia folder*

Becky Blackburn and Kristie Wichert have never shot a gun before.

But on a Thursday evening, they were sitting in a classroom at Bullseye Shooting Range in Wichita with four other women to learn how to shoot handguns.

"The reason why I'm here tonight is so I don't feel foolish if I went to a firing range on my own and looked like a newbie," Blackburn said. "I want a good education tonight so I feel comfortable if I go someplace else and do it and not have a man looking at me like, 'What are you doing?'"

The two friends had driven from Hutchinson to learn how to shoot a gun. They chose Bullseye because of the women-only handgun class.

Blackburn and Wichert said they intend to use their guns not just for protection but for fun, too.

"I don't buy purses; I don't buy shoes," Blackburn said. "So, this is my new little hobby."

The pair are examples of a growing trend: More and more women are becoming interested in guns and learning how to shoot.

Numbers rising

According to statistics from the Kansas Attorney General, 2,491 women submitted concealed-carry applications in fiscal 2012. That represents more than a 57 percent increase in applicants from the previous year.

In Sedgwick County, 512 women applied for concealed-carry licenses in fiscal 2012, a 43.8 percent increase from the previous year.

Patricia Stoneking, owner and instructor at Target Master Shooting Academy in Bonner Springs, says she's seeing more women in her beginner classes and on the range.

"One or two years ago, there would be one or two women and six men in a class," she said.

Now the ratio is reversed.

“When you’re dealing with it every day, it’s obvious to see the increase of women shooting,” she said.

Stoneking, who is also the president of the Kansas State Rifle Association, attributes the growing numbers of women and guns to a “concerted effort” by the National Rifle Association and state associations to help women become more comfortable and welcome on a shooting range.

One way for women to learn about guns is Women on Target, an instructional gun clinic for women sponsored by the NRA and its state affiliates.

“Instructors walk (women) through, and give them a taste of what it’s like to shoot,” Stoneking said. “They meet other women and get to explore and enjoy the sport of shooting safely and comfortably.”

Maria Brock attended Bullseye’s women-only handgun class to learn how to shoot different guns. Although she is afraid of guns, Brock said she chose Bullseye because of the shooting options the class offered.

“It said you could try out different weapons, which is something I wanted to do,” Brock said. “I know nothing about guns.”

Guns and the outdoors

Women are becoming interested in more than handguns and concealed carry. Numbers also are up in shooting sports and hunting.

According to data from the National Sporting Goods Association, female participation in target shooting increased about 50 percent or from 3.3 million to 5 million nationally from 2001 to 2011, and female participation in hunting increased from 1.8 million to 2.6 million during the same time span.

Women also are purchasing more hunting licenses.

In Kansas, the number of resident women purchasing hunting licenses has grown 178 percent between 2006 and 2010, according to data from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism.

Jami McCabe coordinates Kansas' Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program in the spring and fall. She said all the classes — sponsored by Wildlife, Parks and Tourism — are popular and fill up quickly, especially the shooting classes.

Shooting “is something more and more women are doing,” McCabe said.

McCabe, who has been the program's state coordinator for the past 11 years, said she's heard of more women-only sporting clay shoots, hunter education classes and concealed-carry classes.

“That leads me to think a lot more women are getting interested and involved,” McCabe said.

A new target

Wichita's three indoor ranges have seen more women in their stores for a couple of years now.

Mike Relihan, owner of Bullseye Shooting Range, said he's seen a “dramatic explosion” of female customers. Business is up 60 percent since he bought the store more than two years ago, and half the increase is female, he said.

At Gander Mountain Academy, instructor Randy Pugh said they're also seeing more women in their classes, as well as on the range and in shooting sports in general.

“Just based on what we see here, probably one-third of our clientele are female,” Pugh said.

Pugh thinks the increase of female shooters is due to better education about guns, as well as a changing climate toward guns and more interest in home defense. It also doesn't hurt that stores and gun manufacturers are targeting their newest demographic.

“Marketing for women has increased drastically over the last couple years,” Pugh said.

Gander Mountain sells more “pretty guns” and hosts women-only classes, ladies' night at its shooting range and even Mother's Day specials, Pugh said.

Bullseye sells more pink guns and accessories than before, and Relihan said he's made an effort to “soften” up the store to make women feel comfortable.

“When I bought this place it was like an old white guy's club,” Relihan said.

He changed the targets that greeted customers at the front door to targets of zombies and monsters and made purchases he never expected.

“We sell purses now,” Relihan said.

Don Holman, owner of The Bullet Stop, also has seen an increase in the number of women in his store but takes a different approach: “Everyone has to learn together,” Holman said. “Women need to compete with men.”

To Holman, women-only classes encourage the “weaker sex” mentality.

Still, The Bullet Stop does sell purses and pink ear protectors and hosts a ladies’ day for members every Wednesday. Women-only classes are offered only if there’s enough interest, he said.

No longer a boys club

By the end of the Bullseye class, each woman knew the proper shooting stance, how to grip and shoot a gun, and had gotten to practice with different weapons on the range.

Sarah Sotomayor and her mother, Katy, enjoyed themselves, though they almost skipped the class to go shopping.

Katy said she was learning how to shoot because her husband bought her a gun.

Sarah said she was attending the class to prove to her father she could shoot well enough to get a gun, preferably a pink one.

“He gives me a hard time because I’m a girl,” Sarah said. “I’m his daughter; I’m his baby.”

Although she was initially nervous, almost all of Sarah’s shots were in the bull’s-eye on her target sheet.

“It’s pretty impressive,” Sarah said. “I’m really proud of myself for that, too.

“I definitely want to come back and shoot some more.”

More information

Upcoming women-only classes and events:

- Bullseye Shooting Range, 1455 N. Terrace

Women's 101: 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday

Ladies' day on Wednesdays; lane fee waived for members

- The Bullet Stop, 2625 W. Pawnee

Ladies' day on Wednesdays; no range fee for members

- Gander Mountain Academy, 605 S. Wichita

Handgun Fundamentals: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 16

Intermediate Handgun Fundamentals: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Aug. 30

Ladies' night 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursdays; 50 percent off range time

August 7, 2012**[Voters turn down Andover's local option budget increase](#)**

Residents of the Andover school district voted down a proposed increase in the local option budget, which is funded by district property taxes.

On Tuesday, 851 voters cast their ballots against the increase, while 732 people voted for it.

Superintendent Mark Evans said he was disappointed about the outcome but pleased to have given people the opportunity to vote.

"We will make the most of it," Evans said. "Obviously it was very close. I'm not sure everyone understood taxes were going down regardless."

The district's mill levy would have decreased no matter what the outcome. Because the measure failed, the district's mill levy will go down about 3 mills. If the LOB had passed, the mill levy would have gone down about 2.5 mills.

Evans said he wouldn't worry about the what-ifs and planned to focus on the upcoming school year.

"They would have made a difference for kids," Evans said. "(But) we will have a great year regardless."

The 1 percent LOB increase would have generated \$433,000 for the district.

About 53 percent of the increase, or \$228,000, was to go to fill teaching staff positions, and 15 percent of the increase was to be spent on coaches and activity sponsor positions. About \$118,000, or 27 percent, would have been spent on instructional support, and \$20,000, or 5 percent, would have helped with district maintenance.

State law allows Kansas school districts to raise the LOB to a maximum of 31 percent of their general budget. However, the last 1 percent of the LOB must go to a public vote.

[Bartlett Arboretum puts drought to good use](#)

The drought is taking its toll on Bartlett Arboretum in Belle Plaine.

Trees are beginning to lose their leaves, and faithful volunteers water around the clock.

"The yard looks pretty lush until you look way up in the sky" and see the brown leaves, said Robin Macy, the arboretum's owner and steward.

But it isn't all bad news at the arboretum.

Macy is using the drought as an opportunity to dredge Euphrates Creek, which often floods the arboretum when it rains. The creek has only been dredged twice in its 102-year history: once in 1910 by the original owner and again in the 1950s.

Dredging the creek will not only alleviate flooding but will also help the ecosystem and minimize blue-green algae.

The drought is "really the best time to clear out ponds, clear out creeks," Macy said. "It's kind of ugly, but part of the life cycle."

Besides the drought, the dredging is possible for two other reasons: a grant originally received in 2008 and help from a local concrete construction company.

In 2008, the arboretum won a \$25,000 Mark of Distinction grant from Markham Winery in California, beating projects in New York City, Phoenix and other, more populated areas, Macy said. The money was to be used to dredge the creek to address flooding and runoff issues, but it was delayed due to excessive precipitation in 2009 and 2010.

“You just have to wait for Mother Nature,” Macy said.

The creek was dry for most of 2011, but finances kept Macy from going ahead with the project. Then Beran Concrete and Excavating offered to help.

Ken Beran, the company’s owner, said his company is committed to completing the project “no matter what the cost.”

Macy said she has employed the company for projects at the arboretum before, and she was “overwhelmed with joy” when they began work Thursday.

“Their generosity is turning \$25,000 into a lot more,” Macy said.

Macy plans to recycle the dirt from the creek and put it in a meadow behind the arboretum. She intends to plant tallgrass prairie, “so people can walk through the forest and into the prairie,” Macy said.

“Prairie is one of the ecosystems not represented here.”

Until the drought ends, however, Macy is preparing for a possible repeat next year. She is talking to a hydrologist about digging new wells and testing the water from old wells, too.

“Having the creek cleared out is good – we can use runoff to irrigate with,” she said.

Beran expects the project to be completed Friday. They’re ahead of schedule because of the drought.

“It will rain again,” Macy said. “And we’re gonna have a deeper creek and maybe a cistern and maybe a way to harness Mother Nature.”

Sheriff’s races: Herzet wins Butler, Chambers takes Sumner

Kelly Herzet was elected Butler County sheriff Tuesday, receiving nearly 70 percent of the vote.

Herzet received 4,968 votes, while Enterkin received 2,236 votes.

Herzet, who was appointed sheriff approximately 15 months ago, said he was excited to be elected for the first time and attributed the victory to his positive campaign.

“I just let the people know what I wanted to accomplish, and the voters decided,” Herzet said.

Herzet, who has been with the Sheriff’s Office for 24 years, says his next step is to continue the good work performed by his office, as well as expand the reserves and move forward with a program called Senior Patrol.

“I’m going to work at 8 a.m. and (I’m going to) continue to lead the Sheriff’s Office and make it the best in the state,” Herzet said.

The Butler County sheriff’s race got controversial when Enterkin criticized Herzet’s handling of a jail death in 2007.

At the time, Herzet was a sheriff’s detective and conducted a joint investigation of the death with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

Enterkin could not be reached for comment.

In Sumner County, voters elected Darren Chambers for sheriff in the primary.

Incumbent Chambers received 1,871 votes; his opponent, Gerald Gilkey, received 743 votes.

Chambers replaced his opponent as sheriff last August when Gilkey stepped down for another job.

The two winners in the Republican primary face no opponent in November’s general election.

August 8, 2012

[Salvation Army distributes school supplies](#)

The Salvation Army began distributing school supplies on Wednesday, the first of four distribution days.

At the downtown location, the line stretched for nearly a block on Market Street as parents, some with their children, waited to pick up supplies.

Shortly after 10 a.m., Xiomara Milton was waiting in the middle of the line to pick up supplies for her two sons.

"It'll help out some, and whatever else I have to get, I'll get," Milton said.

Consuelo Viscarra was near the back of the line at 10:15 a.m. and had been waiting just 30 minutes.

She was picking up supplies for her four kids, ages 8, 11, 12 and 14.

"I come every year," she said.

For her, the line and the wait was typical.

"Most people come the first day because they're worried about (us) running out," said Brian Carroll, development director for The Salvation Army.

Once inside, families waited downstairs for their number to be called. Then, they went upstairs to the gym.

After a volunteer verified their income, residency and identification, parents were handed supplies based on their child's grade level.

All supplies are donated, and monetary donations are used to purchase supplies, too.

"Spirit brought in 17 pallets of school supplies donated by their employees," or about \$20,000 of supplies, Carroll said.

In addition to that, Spirit gave The Salvation Army a check for more than \$60,000, he said.

"If it weren't for the generosity of our community and the businesses we work with, this wouldn't be possible," Carroll said.

By 10:30 a.m., the line was getting shorter outside, but the wait still seemed long.

Teresa Goodman stood outside with her daughter, Maddison, who will be a kindergartener this fall.

Teresa came because supplies are expensive, and she needs the help right now.

“What I don’t get, I can get later,” Teresa said.

While Teresa was waiting, Kathy Aguirre was already leaving, school supplies for her four youngest children in hand.

“Whatever money I (don’t) waste on supplies, I can spend on a phone bill,” Aguirre said. “I really don’t want to ask grandma for help.”

This was Aguirre’s fourth year getting supplies from The Salvation Army. She had waited two hours in line.

“As long as you come in early, you get out fast,” Aguirre said.

School supplies will continue to be distributed from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Monday at three Salvation Army locations.

Last year, The Salvation Army provided school supplies to 12,498 children in the Wichita area.

Where to get supplies

Pick up school supplies at these Salvation Army locations from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Monday:

- 1739 Elpyco
- 1910 S. Everett
- 350 N. Market

Other programs that help with school supplies:

- Operation School Bell — Contact your school social worker who can request new clothing and uniforms. Or, donate used clothing to the Assistance League Thrift Shop, which helps fund the program. Call 316-687-6107 for more information.
- Communities in Schools — Site coordinators at area schools determine the neediest students and provide school supplies and clothing. For more information or to donate, call 316-973-5110.

August 12, 2012

[Kansas, Nebraska head to court over years-old water dispute](#)

Kansas and Nebraska are continuing their fight for water in the Republican River Basin.

On Monday, the two states will begin a trial in Portland, Maine, before a special master appointed by the U.S. Supreme Court. The special master will then make a recommendation to the Supreme Court on how to proceed.

This particular disagreement stems from a 2003 settlement of a 1998 dispute in which Kansas accused Nebraska of using too much water.

This time, Kansas contends that Nebraska violated the terms of the settlement and used more than 78,000 acre-feet — over 25 billion gallons — of water from 2005 to 2006.

In May 2010, Kansas asked the Supreme Court to reopen the case and enforce the terms of the previous settlement. The court granted the request in April 2011 and appointed the special master.

According to a 1943 river compact, 49 percent of the Republican River's water goes to Nebraska, 40 percent goes to Kansas and 11 percent goes to Colorado.

The Republican River starts in eastern Colorado and flows through Nebraska and Kansas before joining the Smoky Hill River and becoming the Kansas River. The river feeds the Milford Reservoir and is used by farmers for irrigation. The river basin covers almost 25,000 square miles.

Contributing: Associated Press

August 13, 2012

[Andover local option budget vote tied](#)

The Andover school district's local option budget increase may pass after all.

After canvassing on Monday, Butler County voters still rejected the increase, 856 to 744.

But the school district lies in two counties, and when Butler County's final results are added to Sedgwick County's votes, the issue is tied: 1,575 to 1,575.

Sedgwick County still has to count its remaining votes, which include more than 1,000 provisional ballots. Not all of those voters live in the Andover school district, but some might, and some may have voted on the issue.

Tabitha Lehman, Sedgwick County's election commissioner, learned of the tie Monday.

"I've not heard of a tie on something like this before, but that certainly doesn't mean it hasn't happened," Lehman said.

With candidates, ties are broken with a game of chance, such as flipping a coin or drawing a name out of a hat. But according to state law, "if a question vote ends in a tie, it's a no vote because it fails to pass," said Ronald Roberts, Butler County's election officer.

Because Butler County is the home county for the issue, Sedgwick County will tally and report its votes to Butler County and let it decide the issue, Lehman said. She expects Sedgwick County's canvassing to be completed by Thursday night or Friday morning.

Andover superintendent Mark Evans said the district planned to present two budgets to the Board of Education meeting on Monday: one with the local option budget increase and one without.

Passage of the issue would raise the Andover local option budget by 1 percentage point, and the mill levy would decrease by 2.5 mills instead of 3 mills.

The local option budget would generate over \$430,000 for the school district, and the money would fund faculty, coaching and support staff positions, among other things.

Should the increase eventually pass, the positions would require approval and would be on the Board of Education's September agenda, Evans said.

"It's a great example of every vote does count," Evans said.

As of Election Night last Tuesday, the LOB increase had failed in Butler County, 851 to 732. In Sedgwick County, the vote had passed, 831 to 719.

August 16, 2012

[Andover schools' local option budget passes — by two votes](#)

The Andover school district's local option budget increase passed — by two votes.

Sedgwick County completed its canvassing of provisional ballots Thursday afternoon and officially counted 847 votes for the issue and 733 against. When added to Butler County's final results, the local option budget increase passed, 1,591 to 1,589.

Mark Evans, superintendent for Andover schools, said he was pleased with the results.

"It's a win-win situation," Evans said. "Not only are we restoring positions, but we are lowering taxes for our residents."

Evans said the district will hold a special board meeting Monday to present the list of positions the local option budget increase will restore. After the positions are approved, all will start this year. Some of the coaching positions will start immediately, Evans said.

The local option budget increase will generate more than \$430,000 for the school district and will fund faculty, coaching and support staff, among other things. The mill levy will also decrease 2.5 mills. It would have decreased 3 mills if the issue had failed.

On election night, the local option budget increase had failed in Butler County, 851 to 732, but passed, 831 to 719, in Sedgwick County.

On Monday, after Butler County's canvass, the vote was tied. The final numbers in Butler County were 856 votes against the increase and 744 for it.

After Sedgwick County's canvassing, an additional 16 yes votes and 14 no votes broke the tie.

August 17, 2012

[Derby police seek burglar caught on tape](#)

Derby police are looking for a man who burglarized three businesses early Wednesday morning in the 100 and 200 blocks of South Baltimore.

A blue gym bag and approximately \$30 were reported stolen from the VFW, a barbershop and a landscape business, said Derby Police Chief Robert Lee.

According to police, the suspect kicked in a door or used a window to get into the businesses.

Police think the suspect was familiar with the businesses, as he seemed to know his way around some of the security apparatuses, Lee said.

The suspect is described as a white male with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a grey polo-type shirt, black shorts and black tennis shoes. He may also have a tattoo on the outside of his right calf.

Police have posted a video of the suspect on their Facebook page, and are asking anyone with information to contact the Derby Police Department at 316-788-1558, Crime Stoppers at 316-788-TIPS or their local police department.

Marion County sets world marshmallow-roasting record

Marion County Park and Lake has set a world record for the most people roasting marshmallows at once: 1,272 people, to be exact.

Originally, there were 1,282 entries, but 10 participants were disqualified when their marshmallows fell off their sticks or weren't roasted enough, said Steve Hudson, the park's superintendent.

Marshmallows had to be blackened, browned or discolored to qualify as "roasted."

To make sure Guinness World Records would count their attempt, the Marion County team had to submit official statements by two auditors and supervisors of the event, as well as video and photo documentation, Hudson said.

Organizers could have hired an official from Guinness, but that would have been too expensive, Hudson said.

So, on March 24, approximately 1,400 people, including fire and emergency crews, gathered around a bonfire that was an eighth of a mile long, 6 feet wide and 3 feet tall.

But there was a slight problem: The fire was too hot.

"It was really smoky and hard to approach the fire," Hudson said.

After the fire department hosed off the fire to cool it down, a cannon went off, and all 1,282 participants put their roasting sticks, with marshmallows attached, into the fire for 10 seconds.

Boy Scout troop leaders served as marshmallow specialists to verify that each marshmallow had been roasted, Hudson said.

During the record-setting event, Jackie Volbrecht sold T-shirts and sweatshirts to raise money for Circles Initiative, a national organization whose goal is to eradicate poverty.

Her organization started selling the shirts three weeks before the event.

Marion County has about 1,200 people, Volbrecht said. She ordered 500 shirts and sold all of them, making \$6,000.

“Most people didn’t think we’d get it done,” she said.

After the last sweatshirt sold, Volbrecht’s group was the last to get in.

“I looked down the row and all I saw were these sticks with little white marshmallows on them,” she said. “It was kind of surreal to see those little marshmallows floating in the air.”

About 50 bags of large marshmallows donated from a local grocery and more than 1,900 roasting sticks made of willow branches were used to set the world record.

Marion County Park and Lake will receive official certificates from Guinness World Records, and they are looking into how participants can get their own copy, too, Hudson said.

Hudson said they don’t plan to host another marshmallow roast but would consider it if they need to regain their title.

The world record came out of jokes about what to do with a large brush pile left after a windstorm in June 2011.

“Out of that bad storm came a really fun event and helped start (our) organization,” Volbrecht said.

Beccy Tanner of The Eagle contributed to this report.

Chapter 5: SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS

With the rapid growth of digital technology, media watchers often see “convergence” as the present and future of today’s journalism profession. Knowing how to write and edit no longer seems to be enough, and journalists must also know how to shoot video, edit audio and basically be a jack-of-all-trades. Journalism schools seem to be one, if not the only, path to learn these skills and achieve success in the industry.

But are journalism schools teaching the skills their students need to be successful? And in the rush to teach convergence, are key journalism skills being overlooked? The answer, according to 11 graduates from the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism, is mixed.

The 11 graduates in this qualitative study live and work around the United States. Although some are now in public relations or other fields, all studied converged media at Missouri sometime between 2005 (the start of the J-School’s convergence program) and 2010. Not all were Convergence Sequence majors, but all had taken at least one convergence course while at Mizzou.

Despite differences in careers or graduation year, each offered a similar perspective that the J-School prepared them well with a basic skillset to land their first jobs and the ability to improve upon these skills. But several also mentioned

having to teach themselves some basic skills that no journalist should graduate from school without.

J-School Skills

In each interview, graduates described a variety of skills they felt the Missouri School of Journalism taught them. Some mentioned specific software and basic journalism techniques they had learned, while others described conceptual skills or skills they valued that wouldn't necessarily be considered specific to journalism education or the profession.

AS₁, a 2007 Convergence Sequence graduate, said the completeness of the program was the greatest professional value to her. She was particularly glad she learned convergence software, such as Flash, Avid and Audition as well as the basics of photography and how to make infographics. But she also included teamwork as another important skill set learned at Mizzou.

"One thing I thought was really useful with convergence was working in teams and sharing ideas and learning how to come together to work on a story, instead of just working on your own ideas and doing everything by yourself," AS₁ said. "I think that has been a skill that has stayed with me and helped a lot in what I do now."

TK, a 2005 broadcast graduate, learned how to use a content management system, as well as FinalCut and Avid, but seemed most thankful to have learned “the thought processes and approach to storytelling for news.”

The technological focus may be what sets the Convergence Sequence apart from the rest of the J-School tracks, but journalism basics and broader concepts were what several considered their key skill sets.

MS, a 2009 Convergence Sequence graduate, said she learned how to write, shoot video, take photos and record audio when she was at the journalism school. The first skills she mentioned in her interview, however, were identifying what makes a good story and how to pitch it well. AR, a 2005 news/editorial graduate, said research skills were key to her experience, specifically an investigative reporting class. AR also considered reporting a valuable skill, as well as how to relocate as a journalist.

“Going into a new town and having to build sources and relationships and learn the lay of the land — I feel like those are skills I gained at Mizzou,” AR said.

MM, a 2006 news/editorial graduate, said she learned a lot about reporting, but also about the “concept of convergence news” and knowing how news works. MM’s first job out of the journalism school was reporting for a radio news service in Washington, D.C. She used a typical day on the job as an example of what she learned at Mizzou: “So the reporting skills, knowing what’s going on, knowing what the leadership needs to be asked, following the political angles of it. Knowing who

the other reporters are, who the other radio reporters are, knowing how to get my sound bite and things like that, that was stuff I learned from journalism school.”

The value of convergent-storytelling skills varied. Most agreed that Mizzou had addressed the basics of storytelling well, but one graduate wasn't satisfied. MS, now a freelance multimedia journalist in New York City, enjoyed the autonomy of the Convergence Sequence but regretted not being fully versed on in-depth reporting. She felt that she lacked a certain “reporting rigor” that other, non-multimedia journalists seemed to have and wished she had received a better education in basic reporting skills: “We just spent so much (expletive) time sitting around and talking about where new journalism was going. And now I just feel like that was probably a waste of time. Like we could have been learning ... It just changes anyway.”

J-School courses

Often, the graduates brought up specific classes they thought were effective in teaching them their skills, as well as some that were less so. TK said the best class he took in the J-School was “Journalism and Conflict,” which taught him the art of negotiation. He also said he “refused to learn” tape editing in one course because he thought it was “archaic.” One program in particular, Avid, was viewed as out-of-date by several. The computer-assisted reporting class was also mentioned by a few graduates both as an important class and skill that seemed unique to the J-School.

Some did not think the theory classes were worthwhile. AH, a 2011 Master's graduate who began studying convergence in 2005, was one who enjoyed the journalism theory classes. She now works in IT for a Washington, D.C. publication and said she often has to "bridge the gap" between tech-speak and journalism-speak.

"But whenever I can talk to the editorial people about journalism and why this is how it is and where we came from as a culture, that really helps me ... build some credibility that I kind of know what I'm talking about," AH said.

Although theory and non-practical classes were disliked or seen as pointless by some, the graduates still acknowledged the importance of a shared basic understanding of journalism ethics and principles in the industry. MM has no use for reporting skills in her current PR job, but she values knowing how news works, and MS appreciated the integrity and "sense of duty" to a journalistic code the school provided her. Working as a multimedia journalist for nonprofits, MS said without the journalism background it would be easy to be swayed by an organization's wants.

"It's not about raising money. It's not about making someone look good... There's a purpose behind what I do," MS said "I'm glad that really struck me and dug deep within me while I was at the J-School. Because I carried that on. And I don't think I'll ever lose it."

Each also mentioned classes that, in hindsight, they wish they had taken or the J-School had offered. More than one graduate believed a self-marketing or branding class and a journalism business class would have been worthwhile as students and helpful in their present careers or immediately after graduation. TK thought the business component of journalism is something Mizzou needs to work on.

“There’s a real lack in the fundamentals of business coming out of ... (the journalism school). I don’t know if it’s gotten better,” TK said. “It amazes me on the Mizzou listserv when people say ‘well, how much should I charge?’ Like, come on, you should (know) that; you should be aware of what your worth is.”

A few also expressed interest in a social media course or some coding instruction. JM, a 2009 Convergence Sequence graduate, wished for both. Now a PR/marketing coordinator in New York City, JM said it would have made her transition from college to career much smoother.

“I think in all honesty, everyone can benefit from learning some basic HTML skills, Web CSS skills,” JM said. “The world is digital now. ... The more you know how to code, the more you open up your skill set and open up your job prospects.”

Into the real world

After Mizzou, first careers varied, depending on classroom experience and professional goals. Several worked in some type of newsroom environment before

finding their niche elsewhere or having to find different work due to a shrinking market: MS worked as multimedia producer and editor for a national daily before transitioning to multimedia work for nonprofits, and ER's first job was as a videographer for a St. Louis university where she was also pursuing a dual masters in the medical field.

AS₂, a 2008 Convergence Sequence graduate, worked as a multimedia journalist in North Carolina and left the broadcast industry after her two-year contract was up. She now works in online communications for St. Louis college. JM used her social media skills — Twitter, specifically — to transition from a brand journalist/marketing coordinator to a digital PR position for an advertising agency in New York City. Just one graduate, AS₁, remains at the same publication more than four years later. She began as a multimedia producer for a Wisconsin daily but now focuses solely on entertainment for the publication.

No one said their job search was hindered by their studies at the J-School, though the burden of student loans was occasionally mentioned. One even said her journalism school experiences made them overqualified for her first job: AH's first job out of college was working as a night Web editor for a large Texas daily. As amazing an opportunity as it sounds for a recent grad, AH was unenthusiastic about the work she did there.

“It was something that I think someone my age was a great candidate for,” AH said. “I came with the skill set that just blew the hiring managers and the person who trained me — it blew them away.”

Not all looked back fondly on their time at Mizzou. TC said she was frustrated by her graduate experience, felt unprepared and called her time at the J-School “discombobulating.” TC entered the graduate program without any prior journalism experience and said she continued to feel clueless throughout her time there. TC used her first job at an alternative paper to teach herself AP Style and is teaching herself Photoshop and Illustrator via online tutorials for her current PR job at a Michigan school district. As strange as it sounds that one could graduate with a journalism degree and not learn AP Style, TC maintains she never learned it fully after dropping an editing class.

One graduate in a hiring position spoke of how a formal journalism education from Mizzou let her know potential candidates had a certain skill level. GR said Missouri students “stand apart by miles” and that they don’t need to be taught the basics, the “little things” journalists may take for granted. The little things are more than “just knowing how to write,” GR said. “It’s about knowing how to communicate and fit into a professional environment. You’d be surprised how some of these people come in and don’t function well in an office. And this is coming from someone who freelanced for a year and worked by myself from the couch.”

Recommendations for improvement

Regardless of their experiences, skill sets and present jobs, the 11 graduates had a largely positive impression of their education at Mizzou on themselves and within the industry. And despite some classes they wish they took or ones they disliked, all expressed the same basic opinion that Mizzou gave them the tools they needed to become successful. Armed with a foundational skill set, these graduates continued to learn and to expand their knowledge, to make themselves more marketable in journalism and other industries.

Still, the Missouri Method could be perfected. Required courses in basic coding would greatly help some convergence journalism students, increasing their skill set and worth in the job market. Courses on freelance marketing and self-branding and promotion would also be extremely useful. Most journalists turn to freelance at some point in their careers, whether to make a living or for extra income, and a class or a few sessions on freelance basics would go far in many journalists' careers.

An evaluation of the Convergence Sequence at the J-School is also needed. Several were convergence graduates when it was a new program, but no student should be able to graduate from any journalism school without knowing AP Style or feeling they lacked a certain "reporting rigor." Making the sequence more streamlined with more step-by-step required courses could ensure Convergence Sequence students don't graduate without knowing these key basic skills (or at least

can't take the next class until they have mastered important journalism fundamentals).

Evaluations of convergence students a year or two after graduation would also help determine what software students should learn how to use. Several graduates called Avid outdated even while they were in school. If the program was already outdated in the real world, it should have been phased out or not taught at the J-School. Post-graduate evaluations would also allow Mizzou to see where instruction in some skills or principles are weak in the Convergence Sequence and allow the school to make adjustments sooner rather than later.

The J-School should also consider combining the print/digital sequence with convergence. As these graduates have explained, today's journalists have to know how to do it all: How to write and edit, as well as how to shoot video, record audio, and take pictures, among many other skills. Removing this label, which creates a mental divide and indicates that one type of journalist writes and another works with multimedia, would go a long way in getting students to understand the varied skill set they need to be successful.

A separate convergence label also seems to indicate a lesser amount of instruction in essential journalism skills. Good writing and reporting is key in all aspects of journalism, whether on paper or tape. Just because one is learning about new technology and video storytelling does not mean they should have a lesser

understanding of the principles of journalism, as some graduates suggested happened to them.

Missouri's learning-by-doing method seems to be the key to graduates' success. Skills are taught and improved upon in an environment conducive to education — and one where mistakes can be made and learned from. In a job, the environment may not be so welcoming to novices, and mistakes can cost one their job. This learning-by-doing method is then carried over into journalists' careers, where they continue to teach themselves the skills they need to be successful. With a few tweaks, the Missouri School of Journalism will be worth it for all aspiring journalists.

Appendix 1. ORIGINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Converged media is the present and future of the journalism industry today. Knowing how to write and edit no longer seems to be enough. Journalists must be a jack-of-all-trades, and journalism schools seem to be one, if not the only, path to achieve success in the industry. Through semi-structured interviews, this project looks at the changing skill sets of recent graduates to determine how effective journalism schools are in preparing students for future industry success.

Introduction

Six months after graduating from the University of Houston, I knew I needed to go back to school. My year spent working for the student newspaper had convinced me to become a journalist. I told my favorite journalism professor, expecting him to be proud and encouraging. Instead, he tried to dissuade me, saying I didn't need more school; I just needed to start working in journalism. I disagreed, and I applied and was accepted to the University of Missouri's Graduate School of Journalism.

Once at MU, I reported for the *Columbia Missourian*, polished my editing skills as a Dow Jones News Fund intern at *The Grand Forks Herald*, learned how to manage online content for *VOX Magazine* and even produced radio features for KBIA. The skills I gained and improved upon could never have been done elsewhere. But still, my undergraduate mentor's words bothered me. Could I have learned everything

just by working in a newsroom? Although MU touts its classes as “real-world experience,” at the end of the day, it’s not the real world. I’m still in school, still paying to learn what most of my professors learned on the job 10, 20 and 30 years ago.

VOX, *KBIA* and the *Missourian* newsrooms are lucky: as teaching laboratories, they’re on the forefront of technology and are able to observe and adapt to trends as they happen. The professors, veteran journalists themselves, teach the inverted pyramid and other building blocks of the trade, as well as the latest industry trends and multimedia software. We students are lucky, spoiled even, to have this experience from the beginning. As Amanda Hicks said in her 2008 master’s project on the newly converged *Missourian* newsroom, “an innovative mindset, which seemed to bombard me at the *Missourian*, is not the norm for large-scale news media.”

I experienced the opposite of this mindset while interning at the *Herald*. Mike Brue, the online editor, held a meeting to discuss SEO headlines. Brue was a self-taught Web editor. He started as a reporter and migrated into online content management. Much of what Brue talked about that day was old news to me but was still not being implemented on the copy desk. Later that same day, when I tried to use SEO headlines, others on the copydesk stopped me. Brue’s presentation was pointless. Change would have to be forced upon this newsroom not suggested.

One reason for this is that the *Herald*, unlike larger newspapers, didn't have a truly integrated newsroom. Posting and updating online content was done primarily by two Web assistants, who also complained about issues with innovation and how older members of the newsroom didn't respect or understand their roles in the newsroom. The Web assistants also happened to be two of the youngest employees at the *Herald*, and one was a journalism student at the University of North Dakota. This lack of innovation could be interpreted as the failings of a small-town newspaper, but I suspected it was something more common within the industry. Converged newsroom or not, the tension and misunderstanding between convergence natives and veteran journalists are, I think, a common theme played out in newsrooms around the country.

My experiences at the *Herald* are a stark contrast to the forward-thinking atmosphere at the *Missourian*. It makes me wonder what I will face in my future career and has inspired me to pursue a master's project examining how journalism school education is perceived today within the mostly now-converged industry. The research will provide me with further networking opportunities, and the professional skills component will allow me to produce the quality clips I desire to land my first "real-world" job. But this project will also allow me to reflect on my own experiences at MU and, hopefully, allow me to finally respond to my mentor's comment.

Professional skills component

The professional skills component of my project will be conducted at *The Wichita Eagle*, the largest newspaper in Kansas, where I will be working as a general assignment reporter on the metro desk. The internship will run for 12 weeks and will begin on May 29 and end the week of August 21. I'll work approximately 40 hours a week, though it is likely to be more.

Although I will be working on the metro desk, I will also have the opportunity to work in specific topic areas if I wish. My duties will include producing daily news features, police and courts coverage, city and county government coverage and education coverage. I will write for both the daily and weekend papers, as well as contribute daily to Kansas.com. I expect to produce a minimum of four clips a week, either text or multimedia. By the end of the summer, I will have at least 48 clips, though I expect this number to be much higher. I also intend to work with the *Eagle* to develop and produce at least one print or multimedia feature on a topic they find desirable of coverage. Copies of my print clips will be included in my final project report, and I will maintain a blog to document my work, especially my digital work and anything else that may not be able to be reproduced in print. This documentation will meet the "abundant physical evidence" requirement for my project. The direct supervisor during my internship at the *Eagle* will be Tom Shine, deputy print editor. We will meet once per week to

discuss my progress. Additionally, I will send weekly emails to my committee chair, Professor Clyde Bentley.

Based on skills learned at MU and previous journalism experiences, I know I will excel at the *Eagle*. I have experience reporting and producing multimedia from my time at *VOX*, KBIA, the *Missourian* and freelancing. I have experience as a copyeditor and page designer thanks to my summer at the *Herald*, and I also have Web management experience from *VOX* and the *Herald*. Interning at the *Eagle* will allow me to polish my skills while producing professional clips that will help me get a job after graduation.

The results of my project will be summarized in an analytical article suitable for publication in the *American Journalism Review* or *Columbia Journalism Review*, both of which I intend to contact at the completion of this project. Organizational change is a hot topic in the industry today, as “news executives need to figure out how to get large organizations to abandon old habits, build new products, and create new cultures in the newsroom and on the business side” (LaFrance, 2012). Understanding the role of journalism schools in preparing future journalists for these changes is an important variation of this topic.

Research component

Novice journalists, raised in an innovative mindset, face many obstacles when they work for real-world media, most of which seems to come from their peers. On the other hand, old-school journalists, while respected for their

experience, are often seen as outdated by their younger and less-experienced coworkers. In Carl Stepp's 2007 interviews at the *Charlotte Observer*, he found that younger journalists valued their work at newspapers but were often "bewildered" by what their older colleagues didn't know (p. 36). The younger journalists at the *Observer* also noticed a lot of "oldthink" (p. 37). But, as time goes on, these young journalists will eventually become the masters and deal with the next generation of journalists who will then be "bewildered" by their perceived lack of knowledge.

Understanding how these convergence natives transition into successful journalists provides the first research question: After graduating from journalism school, what specific journalism skills did they have, and, according to their own perceptions, how well did this prepare them for their first jobs? A sub-research question would be how has their perceived skill sets changed from the beginning of their careers to now?

Answering this research question will provide perspective on the second research question: Is journalism education necessary to be a successful journalist or could they have learned all they needed on the job? This research question will also provide some insight into how journalism education is viewed within the industry today and if the education one receives matches skills required by the industry.

This research will provide a snapshot of today's converged newsroom. Through interviews with recent University of Missouri School of Journalism graduates, I can find out how these convergence natives were received, if they felt

prepared to enter the workforce and what their first impressions of working in the “real-world” were. It will provide me, personally, with insight into how to be a successful reporter. By comparing their self-perceived journalism-school skill sets to those skills the newsroom demands of them, I can also find out if journalism schools adequately prepare students, or if it’s just as easy to be successful in the industry without a degree.

The professional skills component of the project allows me to work in a converged newsroom, interacting with and observing veteran journalists. Conducting standard journalism coverage (reporting education, breaking news, etc.) while also producing multimedia and practicing social media (Tweeting, audio slideshows, etc.) is a perfect blend of these two topics: the converged native with the veteran journalist’s experiences and expectations.

Theoretical framework

As technology changes, organizations are forced to adapt to remain relevant. This adaptation occurs in many ways, whether through changes in organizational goals and practices, infrastructure development or even desired employee skill sets. Organizational development is the theoretical study of how organizations handle change. Given recent changes and challenges in the newspaper industry, it is important to understand how the newsroom has adapted to convergence and the impact convergence has on newsroom staff.

In Rosabeth Moss Kanter's book *Change Masters*, innovation is described as "the generation, acceptance, and implementation of new ideas, processes, products, or services" (1983, p. 20). Innovation isn't just technology-related, though it often seems to stem from it. Technical innovation must be accompanied by social and organizational innovation, too, or else "its use in practice can either be dysfunctional or negligible" (p. 20). Successful innovation within an organization relies on cultural integration. Such integration "grants power to individuals to encourage fresh thinking and creates opportunities" (Gade, 2004, p. 8). Companies that are highly divided in work responsibilities "find it difficult to innovate or to handle change" (Kanter, p. 28). She calls this anti-innovative stance "segmentalism."

At first glance, increasing innovation seems like a call to scrap the old methods and employees and start over with younger people and fresh ideas. However, this would do little for innovation because it would also remove the existing workplace culture. In order for innovation to work, it must be built in a stable environment, and employees must "feel integrated with the whole" rather than specific roles within the organization (p. 113). This integration allows employees used to the previously less-innovative school of thought the ability to develop innovation, for providing this freedom to act encourages the desire to act (p. 142).

Education plays a role in organizational change as well. Even in 1980, Kanter noted that the American population, and thus the workforce, was becoming more

educated. Census data verifies this trend and the fact that it will continue as “younger, more educated age groups replace older, less educated ones” (Stoops, 2004, p. 20-550). Kanter addresses the need for specialists (and thus specialized education) but also advocates for generalized education because it broadens the organization’s “innovative capacity” (p. 369).

Kanter’s book may have been written in the 1980’s as an analysis of declining innovation in American corporations, but her theory is extremely applicable to the American newspaper industry today. The industry has been struggling in the face of technological changes and economic pressure, and only innovation can keep it alive. The fairly recent transition of newsrooms from segmented departments to converged organizations provides an almost perfect opportunity to examine them through the lens of organizational change theory.

Literature Review

Since the development of the radio, the press has fought against and ultimately embraced technological change. Today, newspapers are in direct competition with television, cable networks and the internet. The world grows more digital every day, and newspapers are constantly seeking new ways to maintain and improve circulation to increase revenue. Besides cutting staff, methods include reducing printing costs by going online and creating and establishing digital products to attract online readers. Convergence is a necessary adaptation to move a once print-focused product into the digital world. This literature review will define

convergence, briefly explore types of converged newsrooms and look at how this intersection of print and digital media affects journalists' skill sets and journalism education.

Convergence is a difficult word to define. For some, it means they publish content online or outside their traditional medium; for others, it means they share information and stories with another publication or media organization. According to Birge (2004), instructors at journalism schools tend to define convergence more along the lines of "across platforms" and "cross training" (p. 10). In *Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and the Changing Horizons of Journalism*, Rich Gordon says convergence has five different meanings, each depending on the layer of journalism to which it applies. Leslie-Jean Thornton and Susan Keith noted the difficulties in determining media outlet convergence due to trouble defining the word in their 2008 research (p. 257-276). They defined convergence as collaboration between different media systems (print/broadcast), but noted a rise in what they termed "webvergence," or news organizations independently producing multimedia content for their websites. For the purpose of this research, their webvergence definition will stand for convergence.

It's difficult to pinpoint when exactly convergence began within the media industry, but it can be traced back to the rise of the internet. Once publications began going online, there was no stopping them. In a 1995 AJR article, Ron Javers discusses the divide between those who embraced technological changes within the

industry and those who didn't, the "Techs" and "Lits" (p. 16), Javers saw and defined what has become today's convergence natives and veteran journalists clearly: techs (convergence natives) are "often but not always younger and they view themselves as the next wave," where as Lits (veteran journalists) "tend to see the world as a series of interrelated stories, tales that are spun and that both inform and entertain" (p. 17). Even in 1995, Javers saw convergence as the end goal and encouraged Techs and Lits to unite and "turn technology to [the newspapers'] advantage" (p. 17). Singer, in her 1997 research, found similar groups and placed journalists in three categories: the "benevolent revolutionary" (Techs), "nervous traditionalist" (Lits) and "rational realist," or those who don't think technological changes will affect them (p. 4).

Gradually, the Techs and Lits (and revolutionaries and traditionalists) did unite, and newspapers transitioned from being print-oriented to focusing equally on print and digital media and promoting interactivity. Newspapers have tried and are still trying many different approaches, attempting to figure out what works best for their newsroom, audience and the bottom line. The literature and industry blogs are full of examples of convergence. The *Columbia Missourian* integrated their print and online components to create an interactive copydesk and print/digital newsroom, and *VOX* magazine has developed an iPhone app to complement their weekly print product. *The Seattle Times* reorganized their newsroom into three "teams" focusing on creativity, community and curation. Each team essentially combines various print-only expertise with digital knowledge (Gibson, 2011, p. 10-11). The *Wichita*

Eagle, working with the Knight Digital Media Center, restructured their newsroom as well to emphasize a Web-first, print-second mindset (p. 10-11). Still, some approach convergence from an entirely different angle. At *The Register Herald* in Torrington, Conn., the newspaper has opened their offices to the public — anyone and everyone are welcome at the community newsroom (Olson, 2011, p. 37-39).

Although most newspapers have embraced convergence as a method to promote their content to greater audiences and tell multidimensional stories, some journalists are still wary. Newsrooms are highly resistant to change, whether it stems from convergence or not, and various studies reflect this viewpoint (Ryfe, 2009; Gade/Perry, 2003; Williams, 2005; Nguyen, 2008). Edward Wasserman's 2006 editorial warned about the dangers of rushing into convergence, of deemphasizing good reporting and writing, of "publishing now and editing later" (p. 34). Wasserman questions the "round-the-clock Internet time" and asked if the public really wants this from their newspapers (p. 35). Singer's 2004 study echoed Wasserman's concerns about convergence. In her sociological study of newsrooms, she observed a "we" versus "them" mentality that implied a resistance to convergence (p. 846). Her research also found that "good writing and reporting was seen as a priority and basic skill, while cross-platform skills were secondary." But while print reporters in her study were wary and negative towards TV reporters and convergence in general, they still strongly appreciated those who had skill sets different from their own (p. 847). Singer (1996) also surveyed journalism students to determine their stance on emerging technology and how it could affect

journalism. She found essentially the same three types of journalists as her industry survey and added one more — the “skeptical optimist,” or a journalist who doesn’t think that new media will eliminate their job (p. 43). Despite these slightly negative perceptions, Singer encouraged journalism educators to begin addressing the role new media could play in journalism.

In a 2012 review of the industry at 50 newspapers in 50 states, Paul Steinle and Sara Brown found more positive views of convergence within the industry. They determined that journalists need to be like “Swiss Army Knives,” capable of doing it all. Journalism school is one place to learn these skills. By 2002, many journalism schools around the country were beginning to offer multimedia and convergence courses, even when half the industry was yet to be converged (South, 2002, p. 10). Disagreements over what to call the courses, as well as what exactly to teach, were typical. The “foundational skills,” however, were still considered essential (South, p. 12). In 2005, MU began offering the convergence sequence, the first new track at the school in 50 years (Lum, 2004, p. 30).

Around this same time, other schools began to resist the convergence trend. They taught their students the basics and offered multimedia courses, but didn’t expect them to be masters of it all. Charles Bierbauer, dean of the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies at the University of South Carolina, said he didn’t believe students needed to be a jack-of-all-trades. This sort of multitasking is good economically but not journalistically (Quinn, 2006, p. 93-99). One school,

Brigham Young University, adopted a converged curriculum and in 2005, after 10 years, got rid of it because faculty felt that students weren't getting enough "depth" in journalism (Wenger, 2005, p. 40). Preparing for the future of media seems to be as much a "guessing game" for the instructors as it is for the industry (Birge, 2004, p. 11).

Although journalism schools may not agree what to teach or even what to call it, formal education is still the best way to learn convergence skills. Journalists who haven't attended journalism school typically find it more difficult to learn these newer skills. They can and often do take advantage of training programs offered by their publication or professional journalism organizations, but there aren't as many opportunities to learn these new skill sets outside of the classroom. Johanna Cleary's 2006 study of professional education programs of broadcasters found a lack of training opportunities and professional development across the field and especially within the broadcast medium (p. 254-266).

But recent studies show that the schools that resisted emphasizing convergence curriculums may have been on to something. In teaching a converged curriculum, students may have missed out on a deeper understanding of basic journalistic practices. In 2011, Jean Herskowitz looked at the major journalism schools in the U.S. to see how much convergence students were exposed to (p. 44). Industry professionals saw the change in students from these schools, observing that graduates were "much more tech and Web savvy than previous generations," but often lack the necessary basic reporting skills (p. 51). In 2011, Ying Du and Ryan

Thornberg compared the “perceptions of skills, concepts and duties” of online journalism educators and professionals (p. 218-230). Through surveys, the researchers found a gap in terms of what educators and professionals emphasized as the most important skills necessary for online journalists, yet the necessary reporting skills (grammar, news judgment, etc.) were the same.

So, are journalism schools the best place to learn convergence skills? And, once learned, does this mean a successful career? Maybe. The verdict is still out. Convergence remains a difficult term to define and, even then, industry and educators still can't agree on what skills are necessary to be a successful convergence journalist. The industry and some schools still resist change, and many young journalists encounter resistance to change and convergence at their first jobs. More research is necessary to see if the skills convergence natives develop in journalism schools translates into a successful career within the industry.

Methodology

This project will use qualitative methods to answer the two-part research question. Through semi-structured interviews with convergence natives, the research will determine the perceived skill sets participants arrived with and presently use, as well as their perception of journalism education preparation for the industry.

Semi-structured interviews are the best qualitative methodology for this research because it allows for exploration of participants' ideas, perceptions and

attitudes regarding their career experiences and skill sets. Interviews are also the best method for this research because “it is a method which is familiar to media workers,” and participants will be more willing to be involved in something they do on a regular basis (Stokes, 2003, p. 115). Questions and their general order will be determined beforehand, and each interview will utilize the same format but will be adjusted depending on participants’ responses as necessary.

Difficulties of semi-structured interviews include being aware of the researcher’s own agendas and paying attention to responses, altering follow-up questions as necessary. In their 1998 oral history research on women, Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack said researchers must “learn to listen in a new way” and change their questioning as necessary to fully explore the information provided (p. 164). This research doesn’t address gender roles or oral histories, but this is good advice to follow regardless.

Participants of the project will be convergence natives contacted through the Mizzou Mafia listserv. The listserv offers the most access to participants with a variety of experiences. Not every MU journalism school graduate is on the listserv, but it is commonly used by many on a daily basis to post about job openings or exchange information. The listserv will provide contact to only former MU students, but that is fine. As an MU student myself, I understand their experience and can relate to them and establish rapport more easily than if I contacted former students of another program. In Hoffman’s 1973 research, she experienced resistance while attempting to interview hospital board members in Quebec (p. 45-56). Once a

personal connection was established with a source however, she was able to gain greater access to the sources and information she needed. As former MU students, participants may be more inclined to respond to the email, especially if they completed a similar project for their own graduation requirements.

I intend to interview 10 to 15 participants, approximately one a week during the professional component of my project. If I am unable to reach and interview enough participants via the listserv, I will find more participants via suggestions from my committee, journalism faculty and staff and my own personal contacts within the industry. The participants can work at any size publication, anywhere in the United States. A global perspective of journalism education would be interesting, but this research looks at American journalism education and doesn't account for other countries' journalism practices and education. Participants' specific title or role within the newspaper doesn't matter, just their education: participants must have majored in convergence or taken convergence courses while students at MU. These participants should be working at the publication for six months or more so that they have adjusted to their new role and feel settled within the newsroom. Ideally, participants should have graduated after 2005, since this was when the School of Journalism began their convergence track. Before this time, convergence and new media curriculums may not have been as thoroughly developed or attended by students. Also, the longer participants have been out of school, the more difficult it becomes to remember their first experiences and the knowledge they began their career with.

Participants will be given the option to participate anonymously. If they opt for anonymity, their names and the name of their publication will be changed. Initials or a fake name will be used in place of the participant's name, and the publication will be given a fake name based on size or location (ex. Large Midwestern daily). All data and information pertaining to this research will be stored on my personal laptop that no one uses or has access to but myself.

The majority of the interviews will be conducted over the phone or via Skype. I will record all interviews, with participants' permission, and transcribe the interviews, too. Stokes suggests interviews via email, as it is easier for the participant to respond and requires no transcription, but I find email interviews to be dull and less informative than other methods (Stokes, 2003, p. 117). I will rely on email interviews only as a last resort or for brief follow-up questions or clarification. I may conduct in-person interviews, but it depends on the location and schedule of both me and the participant. If at all possible, I would also like to interview someone the participant considers a journalism veteran counterpart within their newsroom, to find how perceptions of convergence natives and journalism school education may have changed over time.

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