

Mizzou Weekly

Dec. 3, 2009 Volume 31, No. 14

Saving a piece of history



Removing the original Academic Hall cornerstone during the week of Thanksgiving break are Mid-Continental Restoration crew members John Kruger, kneeling, and Jonas Greenway, center. Ed Drane, right, project manager for Campus Facilities-Planning, Design and Construction, supervised on the job. Rob Hill photo

Past and future

Original Academic Hall cornerstone finds a new home in Jesse Hall

For more than 90 years, it might have been out of sight and out of mind, but it was still very much a part of Mizzou's historical legacy — the original cornerstone from old Academic Hall, the university's first building, which burned in 1892. The stone was saved from Academic Halls ashes, and in 1915 it was mortared into place in the memorial gates at Eighth and Elm streets that form the north entry to Francis Quadrangle.

Now, the venerable icon is moving again. During the Thanksgiving break, a crew from Mid-Continental Restoration Co. of Ft. Scott, Kan., used a concrete saw and chisels to cut the stone out of the surrounding structure, load it onto a pallet and haul it away on a front-end loader.

The move is expected to be completed by next spring when it takes up residence in its new home in the rotunda of Jesse Hall. The cornerstone will be positioned to face the Columns, and a surrounding display will feature information about Academic Hall, the fire and the Columns. Design for the display will be decided in a contest for students in the architectural studies program in the College of Human Environmental Sciences. A formal dedication will take place next fall.

The cornerstone was first laid during an elaborate Fourth of July ceremony in 1840. By the time of its most recent move, the stone had settled into obscurity. It was located at the very bottom of the west gate, and visitors had to crouch on their hands and knees to read the faded inscription. As the roadway was built up over the years, paving material covered the first few inches of the stone.

According to a centennial history of the university written by former MU history Professor Jonas Viles, the memorial gates weren't built until 1915. They were constructed with some of the \$3,383 that Mizzou finally received from the federal government in reparation for damages caused by Union soldiers who occupied the university during the Civil War.

Yankee troops were garrisoned in Academic Hall during 1862. Viles' book documents a report from that time which found that soldiers had used virtually every room in the building. They broke or stole all the chemistry lab equipment. They looted carpets, building fixtures and hundreds of library books. The room was used as a military prison and "had little left but floor and walls," the report said.

Tom Schultz, director of development for MU who helped engineer the cornerstone's move, estimates it will cost about \$30,000, with the entire amount coming from private donations.

"The cornerstone is a very important part of our university's history," Schultz says. "We want to make sure we preserve it for future generations. Now, with the help of some very generous donations, it will be restored and become the centerpiece of an educational display showcasing MU's history."

Why go to all the trouble? Because artifacts like the cornerstone give us a flavor of the university and how things have changed over the years, Schultz says.

"It's about more than just these objects themselves," he says. "Nearly 170 years ago, the people of Missouri said, 'Let's build a great university.' It's the vision of the university that's projected. Don't you think that's what makes us a great university, that we have all this tradition?"

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Mizzou instructors are tackling teaching with the Tegrity system

Lecture capture

New program puts the classroom online

Although Tegrity is still in its first full semester on campus, the new “lecture capture” system that debuted this fall is catching the attention of students and faculty.

Instructors can use the system to easily record lectures and other course materials, such as PowerPoint presentations. Students can then watch them online or download those materials through MU's Blackboard course management system and review them on personal computers, iPods and other mobile devices.

And students are taking advantage of the new technology. During the third week in October, the Tegrity system at MU was No. 1 in the country in student views of lecture captures, with 6,934 views, according to figures compiled by Tegrity staff.

“It’s amazing,” says Danna Vessell, director of Educational Technologies at Missouri — ET@MO for short. “Just wait until we really get going.”

Mizzou students and faculty have embraced the Blackboard course management system as well, Vessell says. As of Nov. 19, nearly 1,900 courses at MU used the Blackboard software, with 96,612 course enrollments and 27,599 unique users. It’s not unheard of for MU’s Blackboard system to tally 6 million page hits a day.

Nearly 80 faculty members use the new Tegrity system in their courses, Vessell says, and ET@MO staff are available to work with faculty interested in trying the new technology. “We’re working one-on-one with instructors right now. That lets us make sure it works for them,” she says. Most of the instructors who currently use the system tend to teach large classes.

ET@MO is rolling out the program in conjunction with the University’s Division of Information Technology, which provides the infrastructure and background support. Funding comes from the student information technology fee. More information about using the Tegrity system is available online at courses.missouri.edu by clicking on faculty help or by e-mailing [tegrity@missouri.edu \(mailto:tegrity@missouri.edu\)](mailto:tegrity@missouri.edu).

Tegrity is one of several brands of lecture capture programs on the market. MU tested it and several others in a pilot program last spring assisted by three chemistry faculty members: John Adams, Steven Keller and Phil Silverman. “Tegrity won out eventually,” Vessell says.

Reviewers in particular liked its ease of use, and little in the way of special equipment is necessary, she says. It’s easy and convenient for students to use, as well.

“Faculty colleagues have adopted Tegrity lecture capture to help student learning by making the material available beyond class,” says Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies.

“Students can review material discussed in class to help them improve their understanding and learning. If students must miss class for reasons like illness, not only can they get notes from classmates, they can now hear the information as presented and discussed by the instructor.”

That opportunity for direct review might be especially helpful for students with disabilities or for whom English is a second language. Vessell says one faculty member using the Tegrity system had a student who was out of class for several weeks with pneumonia, but was able to catch up relatively easily.

The national discussion over lecture capture programs includes concerns among some faculty that recorded lectures might cause class attendance to slip.

“I’m not sure we really know how having Tegrity is impacting attendance,” Spain says. “The general impression is that having it available creates an option for students to miss class, but I am not sure that this really happens. It does allow students that miss class for whatever reason to have the opportunity to learn the material.”

ET@MO cites several recent studies at Leeds University and SUNY-Fredonia that found courses that provide podcasts or enhanced podcasts experienced a 6 percent to 9 percent increase in test scores.

MU conducted its own technology usage survey this spring of 1,044 students and 226 instructors. It found that 93 percent of those students own a laptop computer, and fewer than 1 percent do not own any computer; 89 percent use e-mail to communicate with their instructors.

Among students surveyed, 77 percent said that technology makes coursework more convenient, while 80 percent of instructors surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that technology makes their teaching more convenient. The complete survey is available online through a link at [etatmo.missouri.edu \(http://etatmo.missouri.edu\)](http://etatmo.missouri.edu).

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Both benefits and tensions for female breadwinners

Gender norms

Societal expectations can add household pressures

In nearly a third of U.S. households, women are the sole or main breadwinners for their families, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This number is increasing as many families experience layoffs of highly paid husbands during the economic recession. University of Missouri researcher Rebecca Meisenbach has found that women who take the role of lead breadwinner for their families experience both benefits and tensions.

“The female breadwinner is becoming increasingly more common and important in contemporary society,” says Meisenbach, assistant professor of communication. “They challenge and impact traditional middle and upper class views of familial relations, individual identities and organizational policies.”

In the qualitative study, Meisenbach interviewed 15 female breadwinners in professional occupations in the United States and had them describe their own experiences as breadwinners. Meisenbach found that the female breadwinners described six essential experiences: opportunities for control, independence, pressure and worry, valuing partner’s contributions, guilt and resentment, and ambition.

Societal standards still exist among white-collar families in the United States, such as that men are expected to be the breadwinners of married families, and women are expected to take care of the children, even if they are working. These societal expectations and gender norms can leave the female breadwinner with feelings of worry, pressure, guilt and resentment, Meisenbach says.

For example, female breadwinners experience moments of guilt about care giving, pressure to perform at work and for their families, and occasional resentment at the demands of their multiple and atypical roles.

The negative effects for female breadwinners are balanced with opportunities for control, independence and ambition. The study found that while some of the women did not want the control, they all did enjoy a sense of independence based on being the main source of income in a family. Most of these women also identify themselves as having strong ambition regarding career success and goal achievement.

Previous research has linked breadwinning to issues of masculinity, and this study supports those links by finding that an essential part of a married female breadwinner’s experience is expressing to her male partner and others how much she values his contributions to the household, Meisenbach says.

“Understanding how females experience the breadwinner role can lead to improvements in how female breadwinning couples communicate and deal with societal expectations,” Meisenbach says.

“Also, many public policies are based on the model of males as breadwinners. Research on female breadwinners will encourage policies that recognize both male and female employees as breadwinners. As one potential outcome, awareness of the pressure to perform and sense of ambition that many female breadwinners experience may convince organizations that these highly motivated employees warrant changes in company policies.”

The study, “The Female Breadwinner: Phenomenological Experience and Gendered Identity in Work/Family Spaces,” was published online in November in Springer’s journal *Sex Roles*.

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Is eye response a biomarker for autism detection?

Eyes have it

Early intervention can improve children's outcomes

Autism affects 1 in 150 children today, making it more common than childhood cancer, juvenile diabetes and pediatric AIDS combined. Despite its widespread effect, autism is not well understood and there are no objective medical tests to diagnose it.

Recently, University of Missouri researchers have developed a pupil response test that is 92.5 percent accurate in separating children with autism from those with typical development. In the study, MU scientists found that children with autism have slower pupil responses to light change.

"No comprehensive study has been conducted previously to evaluate the pupils' responses to light change, or PLR, in children with autism," says Gang Yao, associate professor of biological engineering. "In this study, we used a short light stimulus to induce pupil light reflexes in children under both dark and bright conditions. We found that children with autism showed significant differences in several PLR parameters compared to those with typical development."

In the study, scientists used a computerized binocular infrared device, which eye doctors normally use for vision tests, to measure how pupils react to a 100-millisecond flash of light. A pupil reaction test reveals potential neurological disorders in areas of the brain that autism might affect. The results showed that pupils of children diagnosed with autism were significantly slower to respond than those of a control group.

"There are several potential mechanisms currently under study," Yao says. "If these results are successfully validated in a larger population, PLR response might be developed into a biomarker that could have clinical implications in early screening for risks of autism. Studies have shown that early intervention will improve these children's developmental outcome."

Yao's study, completed with post-doctoral fellow Xiaofei Fan, Judith Miles, professor of child health, and Nicole Takahashi, senior research specialist at MU's Thompson Center for Autism and Neurological Disorders, has been published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

In October, the scientists received a grant from the National Institutes of Health for the next phase. For this study, the researchers hope to amplify the earlier study's measurements and investigate any correlation between PLR and several other medical conditions that could be associated with autism.

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Online focus on kids

Maintain & nurture

Program supports and educates separated parents

More than half of all marriages end in divorce, and the majority of these involve children, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Conflict between parents, before and after divorce, is associated with feelings of anger, helplessness, loneliness and guilt in children. Now, an online program created by MU researchers is teaching separated parents to maintain and nurture relationships with their children.

“There is a great need for effective online programs to support and educate separated parents,” says Larry Ganong, co-chair of human development and family studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences. “In many cases, parents who divorce also move apart, and relocation makes it difficult to attend court-mandated trainings or develop effective strategies for co-parenting. Children are often the ones who suffer when parents don’t take steps to minimize issues caused by separation.”

Researchers in Ganong’s department developed Focus on Kids Online, a training course that helps parents going through divorce build stronger, more supportive relationships with their children. The Web-based program is designed to offer parents an alternative to in-person trainings.

After completion of the course, parents reported improved relationships and better awareness of separation-related problems and how to solve them, according to new research by David Schramm, assistant professor of human development and family studies, and doctoral student Graham McCaulley.

The face-to-face version of Focus on Kids satisfies the Missouri law that requires parents who are divorcing to attend an educational program. It is conducted in cooperation with Missouri’s circuit courts and available in 50 counties. Ganong says the online program is growing and will be made available to other states in the future.

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Mizzou has new flagship

MU has long been known as Missouri's flagship public university, but now the campus has another flagship. When the University of Missouri Police Department was reaccredited Nov. 21 by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies annual conference, the department was also recognized as one of the commission's Flagship Agencies.

The Flagship Agency program recognizes agencies that meet strict guidelines on the accreditation process.

That accreditation process is valuable because it provides external validation that the department is maintaining international standards for police agencies, says Jack Watring, the department's chief.

The process is not unlike one of MU's academic departments or colleges asking outside experts to review its programs, Watring says. "We are part of an educational institution, and our department very much plays a role in the education of our students here."

The Flagship Agency designation is icing on the cake, Watring adds. "The flagship status says, 'This is an organization that other agencies can look at to model themselves after.'"

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A forum on the future

Gary Forsee, president of the University of Missouri System, will join MU Chancellor Brady Deaton at an open forum for faculty and staff from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in Monsanto Auditorium at the Bond Life Sciences Center.

Forsee and Deaton will discuss the current economic climate, its effects on the university, and actions being taken to assure the future stability and success of MU and the UM System. Deaton said supervisors are encouraged to enable staff to attend or to listen to the forum proceedings. They will be available on a live Web cast at www.umsystem.edu (<http://www.umsystem.edu>) and also will be streamed on KBIA 2 (go to kbia.org (<http://kbia.org>) and click on kbia2 link).

Deaton said audience participation will be welcomed. Those employees who prefer to listen via the Web will be able to submit any questions they have to townhall@missouri.edu (<mailto:townhall@missouri.edu>). If time permits, Forsee and Deaton will address those questions, too.

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Yuletide yearnings

With the holiday season quickly approaching, two campus student organizations will be making it easier for the community to spruce up their homes for the Christmas festivities.

Well, not spruce actually, but how about Scotch pine and balsam fir? Members of the MU Forestry Club will be selling Christmas trees during the first two weekends of December.

The sale will take place Dec. 3-6 and Dec. 11-13 — or until the club runs out of trees — at the northeast side of Memorial Stadium. Sale hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. all days except Dec. 3, when the sale will run 3 to 8 p.m. Pine trees will sell for \$5 per foot, and firs will start at \$20 per tree. Proceeds will fund club activities and trips.

Member of MU's Horticulture Club will hold their annual holiday poinsettia sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and tomorrow, Dec. 3 and 4, in the main lobby of the Natural Resources Building.

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Ending gender-based violence

MU's Department of Women's and Gender Studies will celebrate its 30th year of teaching, research and service about women and gender with a lecture by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Sheryl WuDunn. She will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 8, in Waters Auditorium.

WuDunn, the co-author of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression in Opportunity for Women Worle-Wide*, will present an agenda for ending gender-based violence and will ask the audience to accelerate change and show how a tiny gesture can inspire huge change. The lecture is free and open to the public. WuDunn's book will be available for purchase following the lecture.

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