Joe Schremmer, a junior in journalism and mass communications (strategic communications emphasis), son of Richard and Janice Schremmer, is a University of Kansas volunteer in the Audio-Reader program. He is one of the volunteers who reads and records various newspapers to be played through the Telephone Reader information system for those who have lost their sight.
Room, board rise studied for colleges

By DAVID KLEPPER
The Star's Topeka correspondent

TOPEKA | College life in Kansas could get a little more expensive under proposed increases to the cost of student housing and meals at six public universities.

For a typical student at the University of Kansas, room and board costs would go up about $330, or 5.4 percent, to $6,474 a year.

Fort Hays, Emporia, Pittsburg and Wichita state universities would see their rates for typical students go up by between 4 percent and 6 percent, or from $276 to $306 more per year.

Kansas State University would see the biggest increase. For a typical student, rates for room and board would go up by $364, or 6 percent, to $6,448.

The actual rates for university housing and meal services vary by student, based on their meal options and which dorm or facility they choose to live in.

The Kansas Board of Regents discussed the proposed rate increases Thursday. A vote to approve the changes is set for next month.

Regent Dan Lykins acknowledged that each increase "seems awful high." But he noted that some of the universities were responding to student requests for new services in the dorms.

The universities reported that the increases were needed to offset inflation, pay for maintenance and upgrade services for students. Even with the higher rates, state higher education officials say Kansas' public schools charge less than their peers.

The average room and board rate at four-year, public universities in the Midwest is $6,800.

To reach David Klepper, call 785-354-1388 or send e-mail to dklepper@kcstar.com.

County: Jackson
State colleges and universities have differing opinions about grading scale

By MIKE NORRIS
Staff writer

From parents to students, and high school guidance counselors to Marion-Florence USD 408 residents, everyone has an opinion on the recently debated topic of the grading scale.

Currently USD 408 has a scale from fourth through 12th grade that is as follows: 94-100, A; 86-93, B; 75-85, C; 68-74, D; and 67 and below, F.

While many variables determine what an A or B really mean, some of the most important decision makers on that topic are the people who work in the admissions and scholarships offices of colleges and universities around the country.

Larry Moeder, Director of Communications at Kansas State University, said while GPA is not the only factor, the school doesn’t decipher from different grading scales.

“We use the GPA provided by the high school,” Moeder said.

Discussion at recent USD 408 board of education and Marion High School site committee meetings has focused on whether students would adjust to whatever scale is set.

Moeder said he could not answer that question specifically, but did say he notices students at KSU who need to re-qualify for scholarships a lot of the times shoot for the minimum GPA requirement to keep their scholarship.

“They work toward what they need,” Moeder said.

Landon Jordan, financial aid administrator at Tabor College, said if a high school was on a 10-point grading scale (90-100, A; 80-89, B; etc.) it would be more beneficial considering most colleges use that grading scale.

However, Jordan also thought students could possibly adjust to any scale put in front of them.

“It’s probably not going to make much of a difference,” he said.

The University of Kansas uses a points system (Tabor does as well) when deciding on who receives scholarships, which includes GPA, an essay, and involvement in outside activities.

Megan Hill, who used to work in the scholarship department at KU and currently is the assistant director of office operations at the university, said there are approximately 5,000 scholarships per year given out to students.

With all the factors taken into consideration, she doesn’t feel GPA alone will make or break a student.

“It doesn’t come down to GPA,” Hill said.

She also thinks students could benefit from a higher grading scale.

“You could use it as a motivator,” Hill said. “In education we want [students] to do the absolute best they can do.”

At Butler Community College, GPA has no bearing on admission, but does on scholarships.

The admissions department at Butler is not allowed to talk to the press, but a scholarship form on its website asks for GPA (not rounded and accurate to two decimal places), rank in class, number of students in class, and ACT score.

Nearly every two and four-year college and university seems to have a different take on what elevates a student to the top. And every high school that reports to them, has a different opinion as well.

At Wichita Collegiate High School, grades don’t exist. Certain number scores stand for excellent, above average, acceptable (or passing), and failing.

The numbers are shown on the transcript, and colleges and universities decipher the data however they wish.

MHS guidance counselor Phoebe Janzen deals with colleges and universities almost on a daily basis, and if one thing is clear, it’s the fact that it’s never completely clear when it comes to grades.

She said it differs from one in situation to the next.

“It all depends on their philosophy,” she said.
Immigrant health needs being met

Editor's note: This is the last in a series by the Kansas Health Institute concerning immigration in Kansas.

By SARAH GREEN
KHI News Service

SUBLETTE — It's a familiar story with a twist.

Immigrants from Mexico move to southwest Kansas seeking work at farms, feedlots or meat processing plants. Public health workers in the region respond with literature and services in Spanish to meet the needs of the immigrants.

But a new wave of newcomers has arrived, pushing public health officials to adapt even further.

Though the number is impossible to pinpoint, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Low German Mennonites, distinct for their language and religion, have started settlements in a number of southwestern Kansas counties, said Cyndi Treaster, director of the Farmworker, Immigrant and Refugee Health Section in the Office of Local and Rural Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

"The last time Low German Mennonites settled in Kansas was in the 1800s," said William Keel, a professor of German at the University of Kansas, referring to a group that settled on farms in central Kansas. "This is like the 19th century all over again."

The new arrivals are sometimes called Mexican Mennonites. Their ancestors migrated from Germany to Russia and then to Canada. In the early 20th century, to avoid Canadian public school laws, they migrated from Canada to Mexico. The families now

(Cont. page 6, col. 1)
Needs
(Continued from page 1)

moving to Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma in search of jobs typically come from the Mexican state of Chi-
huahua.

They began moving to Kansas in small numbers — and appearing on the radar screens of health officials — as early as the 1980s. But by the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were enough here that health officials began reaching out to the Low German Mennonite communities, several of which are in Scott, Gray and Haskell counties.

"It's really interesting," Treaster said. "There's not a lot of preventive health care in their community. They're very isolated."

"From a theological point of view, some degree of isolation is not only expected but regarded in their faith," said Dorothy Nickel Friesen, the Western District Conference minister for the Mennonite Church USA, which is based in Newton. "They are self-sufficient and work very hard, and don't demand much from the world around them."

When they do need med-

ical help, they typically are unaware of the services available. The Mennonite Church, in conjunction with the KDHE Farmwork-
er program, has worked to provide translation, transpor-
tation and information services to them, Nickel Friesen said.

When services are offered to them — dental care, childhood immunizations, early prenatal care — they are accepted and utilized, Treaster said.

"I think what happens is that when they do get hooked up with clinics and health departments, often times they go in because they're going to put some children in public school and need immunizations," Treaster said. "Or they get pregnant and have a baby, and they understand that prenatal care is something we expect people to get here. And then after they have some of their children, they'll have a follow-up visit from the health depart-
ment, where they can talk about family planning, the (Women, Infant and Children) Program and immu-
nizations."

Mennonite Church USA leaders and volunteers help not only with translation and transportation but also offer friendship and "a spiritual presence," Nickel Friesen said. The Low German Mennonite population in southwest Kansas is not affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA, Nickel Friesen said.

"Our conference said that this was a matter of concern and justice," she said. "We knew there were people among us who needed care that had a language barrier that no one else could address. We care about those who are marginalized, as many of us in our own history know about being immigrants. That's an important part of our ministry."

The Farmworker pro-
gram also relies on people within the Low German Mennonite community, typically women, to serve as health promoters within the settlements and as liaisons with local health departments.

"We're very fortunate that we have one individual in our community, who employs members of some of the families on her farm," said Karen Sattler, administrator of the Scott County Health Department. "She herself has been helping with teaching them English, and she does speak some German. They've been very receptive to that."
KU chancellor seeks to expand relationship with Fort Leavenworth

Editor’s note: In August 2004, the Combined Arms Center and the University of Kansas formally agreed to allow the exchange of personnel and resources, and establish formal liaison between the two institutions. A recent example of this relationship was the Military Social Science Roundtable Nov. 15-16 at the Dole Institute of Politics on the KU campus.

In a demonstration of the university’s commitment to maintaining and expanding the relationship, KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway sent the following letter to the KU faculty, reprinted with his permission.

Dear Colleagues:

You may have noticed the recent press release announcing the new KU-Fort Leavenworth Program, to be directed by former Ambassador David Lambertson.

I want to describe the new program and its antecedents a bit more fully, to give you some idea of what we hope it can achieve.

I strongly believe that the attacks of Sept. 11 six years ago heralded a significant new challenge for our country and its institutions, including our armed forces and our universities. Militarily, we are dealing with what has been called “asymmetric warfare” in which the enemy must resort to guerrilla and terrorist tactics, and often does so to dramatic effect. We are pursuing terrorists and their supporting infrastructure in places whose history and culture are unfamiliar to us, compounding the difficulties we face. We are in a struggle likely to continue for some time, one which has imposed severe strains on our military forces. The University of Kansas is in a position to help, and in my view we have a responsibility to help.

Fort Leavenworth, and in particular the Command and General Staff College, is the Army’s central institution for training and doctrine. More than 1,000 officers attend the CGSC each year, where they are prepared for positions of higher responsibility and command. In 2004, I signed a memorandum of understanding with the commander at Fort Leavenworth in which we pledged to pursue cooperative activities including faculty and student exchanges, joint conferences and seminars, curricular development and research. The underlying purpose was to expand, through such cooperation, “each organization’s capacity to serve the nation and the larger world community.”

Much has been accomplished to date, thanks to the efforts of many of our faculty who teach at Fort Leavenworth, welcome students from Fort Leavenworth into their classes here, and participate with Fort Leavenworth personnel in other academic and research activity. In recent months, however, I have concluded that we can and should do more. The purpose of the KU-Fort Leavenworth Program is to step up cooperation across the board between this university and the fort. We hope to increase the number of faculty members and students from the CGSC who come here for advanced degrees, and
we can and will do this without in any way compromising the high academic standards central to our mission. We will continue to pursue joint research opportunities. We are exploring new degree programs to be offered both here and at Fort Leavenworth. We are organizing seminars and symposia, including a Nov. 15 roundtable at the Dole Institute focusing on social science “lessons learned” in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Following an initiative of the leadership at Fort Leavenworth, KU has proposed to partner with Fort Leavenworth in a pilot program that would bring severely wounded Soldiers to KU for undergraduate as well as graduate level education. They would be able to undertake those studies while remaining on active duty, despite injuries that normally would require them to leave the Army, and would be offered positions in the Army educational system upon completion of their degrees. The chancellor, the provost and Ambassador Lamberton have discussed this proposal in Washington with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Army Secretary Pete

Geren, former Senator Robert Dole, Senator Pat Roberts and others. The response was enthusiastic and supportive.

I am also pleased to announce that Dr. Adrian R Lewis, a distinguished teacher and scholar with an academic background in military history and a resume that includes service in the military, will join the KU family in July 2008 as professor of History and director of the KU-Fort Leavenworth Program. Dr. Lewis currently holds an appointment as chair of the Department of History at the University of North Texas.

In addition, Dr. Bradley L. Carter is returning to KU in January 2008 from a position as associate professor of Military Science in the Department of Military History at the Fort Gordon, Ga., campus of the Command and General Staff College. Dr. Carter will serve as assistant director of the KU-Fort Leavenworth Program and will hold a teaching appointment in American Studies and Western Civilization.

I want to acknowledge the work of Professor Felix Moos, over a period of many years, in helping to bring about this new level of cooperation with Fort Leavenworth. Dr. Moos has been an active teacher and mentor in a variety of programs at Fort Leavenworth, and has been an advocate for the proposition that universities must do what they properly can to assist our armed forces in these difficult times. Ambassador Lamberton and I have asked Felix to serve as senior advisor to the KU-Fort Leavenworth Program, which I know will continue to benefit from his participation.

If you have questions about what we are doing, wish to participate in activities currently under way or have ideas for additional areas in which we can work with Fort Leavenworth, please contact Ambassador Lamberton.

Sincerely,

Bob Hemenway
Chancellor, University of Kansas
Volunteers protect Kansas prairies

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — They cut down trees, spray weeds and scout for other intruders. Each month, a band of volunteers does its small part to protect some of the last vestiges of native Kansas prairie.

The group is organized by Frank Norman, who takes the members over the ground at the 140-acre Snyder Prairie, three miles east of Mayetta in northeast Kansas. Red cedars and other woody growth don't stand a chance.

"Since 1998, we've been cutting trees to allow the prairie to grow," Norman said. "Some of it is native prairie. It's never been plowed."

Called Groundhogs, the volunteers are associated with the Grassland Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Johnson County devoted to prairie preservation and education. They are doing their part to preserve and restore the prairie lands in Kansas.

"I've been working in the field for 18 years," said Norman, who earned a master's degree in botany from the University of Kansas in 1989 and is president of Norman Ecological Consulting LLC in Lawrence. "I really love the prairie."

In September, the Groundhogs collected ripe seeds and spread them in areas they are restoring. Also this year, they have cleared dogwoods from an area with abundant Sullivan milkweed, sprayed sericea lespedea to keep it in check; dug thistles; burned trees and some prairie areas; and cut sumac, according to the foundation's Web site.

"In prehistoric times, nature did the maintenance. Now the prairie needs some work to remain prairie," said Sue Holcomb, a member of the foundation.

In late 1977, the late Rachel Snyder, author of "Gardening in the Heartland" and longtime editor of Flower and Garden magazine, bought 160 acres of land three miles east of Mayetta. Norman said the land has four small ponds and a river tributary.

Snyder, who also worked as a reporter for The Topeka Daily Capital and The Washington Post, rebuilt the stone homestead and replanted some of the land that had been used for crops or grazing with prairie grasses.

Visit us online at www.bladeempire.com
TOPEKA — Today, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky announced he is appointing David Barfield chief engineer of the division of water resources.

“The depth and breadth of Mr. Barfield’s understanding of Kansas water issues make him the most logical choice to fill this important position,” Polansky said. “He has the experience and historical perspective needed to ensure continuity and the expertise to address new challenges so our state’s water resources are equitably managed for the benefit of all Kansans.”

Barfield started working for the division of water resources in 1984. He has worked in all areas of water resource management, including municipal and industrial water use, dam safety and interstate water compacts. He was exclusively involved in interstate water issues from 1992 to June 2007, when he was appointed acting chief engineer.

Barfield has a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering and a Master of Science in water resources, both from the University of Kansas. He is a licensed professional engineer.

“I am honored by my appointment to this challenging position,” Barfield said. “I appreciate Secretary Polansky’s confidence in me, and I look forward to working with him and division of water resources staff to fulfill our statutory responsibilities. My immediate plan is to ensure we continue to provide current levels of service while building on the solid foundation left by my predecessor.”

Barfield was preceded by David Pope, who retired in June after 24 years of service as chief engineer.

“Mr. Barfield is a good selection from my standpoint,” Pope said. “I worked with him for many years, and I have full faith in his ability to carry out the duties of the position.”

The chief engineer is responsible for managing the state’s water supply in the public’s interest, for ensuring public safety related to the construction and maintenance of dams and representing Kansas’ interests in interstate water compacts.
Kansans get priced out

The cost of moving up is going up, rapidly. A report released this week by the College Board showed the cost of obtaining a college education had jumped more than the inflation rate for the second year in a row.

The board certainly isn’t suggesting costs have risen so high that at least a bachelor’s degree isn’t a wise purchase.

But the trend of increasing costs suggests higher education and government officials need to pay attention lest they place a college degree beyond the reach of those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder.

The College Board reported the price of tuition and fees at four-year public universities rose to an average of $6,185 this year, up 6.6 percent from 2006, when tuition and fees at public universities increased by 5.7 percent.

To bring the numbers closer to home, tuition at Kansas State University rose from $2,587 per semester for full-time resident undergraduate students last year to $2,812.50 a semester this year.

At University of Kansas, tuition rose from $2,756.25 a semester for the 2006-07 school year to $2,922 a semester for the 2007-08 school year.

Standing alone, those numbers seem like a bargain, but they don’t begin to address the cost of obtaining a degree.

Anyone, student or parent, who is paying for a college education or has paid for one recently knows tuition and fees are only part of the picture.

Those numbers don’t include books and accessories, and rare is the class that doesn’t have some other fee attached that isn’t included in the base sticker price.

Then, there is transportation and room and board for students who move away from home to go to college.

Slowing rising admission prices at our public universities in Kansas — where the Board of Regents last spring asked the Legislature for more than $500 million for delayed building maintenance and more recently approved salary increases for top administrators — may not be easy or politically popular just now.

But education and government officials need to beware of the upward trend and do what is necessary to ensure our public universities remain accessible to all.

—Topeka Capital-Journal
State needs to pay to expand KU School of Pharmacy

Kansas has a growing shortage of pharmacists, but given the resources, the University of Kansas could fix the problem.

KU has the only pharmacy school in the state. The six-year program graduates slightly more than 100 students a year, and that simply is not enough.

Much of rural Kansas in particular is struggling to keep pharmacists - seven counties across the state have no drugstores and 32 have just one.

KU is addressing the situation, seeking $50 million from the state to expand the pharmacy program at Lawrence and Wichita.

KU needs the support first of the Board of Regents to put a request before the Legislature in 2008, then of lawmakers to approve the spending.

The demand is there for a larger program. While there is a shortage of trained pharmacists taking jobs in rural Kansas, there is certainly no shortage of applicants to KU. The school turns away about 335 eligible students a year.

They fill your prescriptions, but more than that, pharmacists fill a vital need in towns throughout the state. Pharmacists are a source of health information and, in some cases, one of the few sources in rural areas with limited access to health professionals.

Legislators should not consider the money a waste. Our state universities are here to serve our state, and this is a good example. Money invested in state universities can pay a big return.

It is far more likely that students from KU's pharmacy school will end up serving our state than the possibility we will recruit more students from other states.

Herington is one example of this. The Barton County community lost its pharmacist early this year but found two students who are going to take on the role in the town.

KU's placement efforts include taking students on tours of the state, which includes rural towns, and a program that places students with professional pharmacists during two years of study. This opens their eyes to the important need and role pharmacists fill every day in rural Kansas.

If regents and legislators, too, approach this with open eyes, well-invested state resources can solve this problem.

The Hutchinson News
LAWRENCE - Former Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis will speak at Dole Institute of Politics at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 20. Dukakis, who term.-Reno

Dukakis splits his time now teaching at Northeastern University in Massachusetts and the University of California, Los Angeles.