A Tonganoxie resident was among students honored at the 50th annual spring honors banquet conducted by Kansas University’s department of mathematics.

Bryan Gurss, Tonganoxie, received a certificate from the Kansas Algebra Program for his outstanding contributions to teaching, tutoring and extra duties.
Meatpacking remakes rural U.S. towns in new immigration frontier

BY ROXANA HEGEMAN
Associated Press Writer

This is the home of Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson, of Boot Hill and the Long Branch Saloon, of cattle drives, buffalo hunters and the romance of the American West.

But that's the Dodge City of yesteryear.

Today, downtown has Mexican restaurants and stores more reminiscent of shops south of the border than Main Street Kansas. The city of 25,176 even has a new nickname: "Little Mexico."

Signs advertising "Envios a

Please see CHANGE, page 6

Jose Flores, who calls himself a "Mexican hillbilly," sits in his real estate office in Dodge City. When he arrived in 1987, the only Mexican-owned business in town was a secondhand store.

ORLIN WAGNER/ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHANGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mexico — retail outlets where workers send hard-earned wages back home to Mexico and other countries — hang outside many Dodge City stores. Houses occasionally fly Mexican flags, whipped hard by the prairie winds.

Dodge City ... Cactus, Texas ... Fort Morgan, Colo. ... Postville, Iowa: For more than a hundred years, this region provided a bucolic idyll and a ready example of American life and values. Today, iconic farm towns struggle with a new economic model, one that requires a workforce that is poor and overwhelmingly Hispanic.

It's not easy. The immigrants who have flooded these communities are stretching schools and law enforcement. Still, at a time when other rural towns are slowly dying, Dodge City and meatpacking towns like it boast thriving economies.

"If these people can get past the gauntlet of the border, we welcome them here with open arms," said Ford County Sheriff Dean Bush, Dodge City's modern-day counterpart to Wyatt Earp.

But many of his fellow citizens seem lost. Randy Ford and his wife, Betty, have lived in Dodge City for 35 years. They no longer attend the city's Independence Day events. They can't understand what the singers — Spanish crooners singing Latin favorites — are saying.

"We don't go anymore because we don't want to be Mexican," he said. "We want to be American."

In Washington, the debate over immigration sometimes seems to be a clash of extremes. But here, in the wide-open spaces where one-dimensional economies stoke small towns, there is plenty of room for ambivalence.

HOW IT GOT THIS WAY

Just as the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad here in 1872 brought white settlers to populate the dusty towns and farms of a fledgling country, the relocation and consolidation of the meatpacking industry has transformed these icons of the American West. The result: diverse, multicultural communities that challenge breadbasket notions of wheat fields, white fences and even whiter demographics.

The transformation of the nation's meatpacking industry began in 1960 when plants began moving out of cities in favor of their livestock sources in right-to-work states like Kansas. The first big slaughterhouse came to Emporia in the 1960s, followed by plants near Garden City and in Dodge City in the 1980s.

For Dodge City — famed as the "Queen of the Cowtowns" during its cowboy heyday — the advent of the slaughter plants seemed a natural fit. Locals have long recognized that the odor of manure here is the smell of money.

"They are a major hub of business and economic activity and a huge employer," said Ted Schroeder, agricultural economist at Kansas State University. "You can't go into those communities without sensing the presence and importance of those large economic facilities. Everything around there is either working with, complementing or __
The poverty rate in Dodge City plunged from 28 percent in 1980 to 14 percent in 2000. The poverty rate also was halved in Guymon, Okla., where there are an estimated 600,000 head of cattle on farms within 25 miles of the Seaboard Foods plant.

But no one is living high on the hog, or cow. Dodge City's per capita income of $15,538 in 2000 may be an improvement, but it still remains far below the $21,587 national average.

In Cactus, the average per capita income has increased, but only to $8,340. Many who work at the Swift plant in Cactus live in former military barracks or in dilapidated rental trailer homes where yards contain little more than dirt, weeds and rocks.

“A lot of people are working, but working at jobs that don't pay well,” said Don Stull, a University of Kansas anthropology professor and industry expert.

It's a hard life. In Cactus, the population is more than 90 percent Latino. There are no doctors or banks. Most plant workers deal only in cash, making them easy targets for theft. As much as 70 percent of offenses in town relate to alcohol use, especially on weekend nights when cars cruise up and down the main drag for hours.

Dodge City grapples with drug trafficking as narcotics flow across the Mexican border through the Hispanic community. Gangs are a problem, too. But there is some equity in a town infamous for its lawless Wild West history.

“Dodge City has always been a pretty wild Western town,” said Bush, the sheriff, “and there are days when it still lives up to its name.”

GOING TO SCHOOL

Alfredo Villegas was clearly frustrated as he struggled to read an English-language book in a small newcomer class in the Dodge City high school.

Villegas, 15, has been in the U.S. for five months and his father works at Cargill.

“I don't know what I want to be,” he said, in Spanish. “I may not even graduate.”

Just as he struggles with his new language, the public schools are struggling with the new students who have come with families drawn to work in the meat-packing plants. Educators have found themselves grappling with language barriers, academic gaps and poverty.

School districts once troubled with aging and tax-resistant local populations and dwindling school enrollments suddenly had to deal with crowded classrooms that came with young migrant families.

Villegas' modern, sprawling school was built five years ago as enrollments boomed.

Dodge City school officials count 23 different languages spoken by immigrant families, though the town is overwhelmingly Latino.

About 44 percent of students in Dodge City have limited English proficiency, prompting the district to establish a "newcomer program" for immigrant students geared heavily toward language acquisition, and includes help from Spanish-speaking assistants.

Just a decade ago, about 70 percent of Dodge City students were English-speaking whites. Today, that statistic has flipped: about 70 percent of the 5,800 students who now attend Dodge City school are Hispanic, with non-Hispanic whites now comprising nearly 25 percent.

There has been some success. An analysis of high school graduation rates at
meatpacking towns nationwide shows improvement between 1980 and 2000: up 9 percent in Dodge City; up 5 percent in Cactus; up 6 percent in Crete, Neb.

Still, graduation rates were below state averages. For example, the graduation rate of slightly over 17 percent in Cactus, Texas, was still well below the state average of nearly 76 percent or the national average of more than 80 percent.

In Postville, Iowa, visitors to Corn B. Darling elementary and middle school are greeted with a world map adorned with red-and-gold foil stars pasted on Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Israel, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico and other nations. Each designates the home country to some of the school's 370 students.

"The biggest population coming in right now are from Guatemala," Postville principal Charlotte Tammel said. "The challenge for us is finding teachers who speak all these languages."

Earlier this year, Dodge City teacher Debby Chipman gathered a small group of her second and third graders for an English lesson. Three of them speak Spanish, one boy speaks Vietnamese, the other boy speaks only Quiche, a Guatemalan dialect.

Even as the schools spread American culture to newcomers, the immigrants reciprocate, infusing their schools with their own cultures.

Everyone on the high school soccer roster in Liberal — players, coaches, trainers and managers — is Hispanic, and during soccer season in the fall, the ambience around a Liberal game takes aim at the American stereotype of sweater-clad soccer moms in SUVs.

Though Friday night football still matters in the heartland, soccer clearly has a home here. Shouts of "Aqui, aqui!" blend easily with "Here, here!"
Rock Chalk Road Show To Visit Kearny County

For the fifth year, University of Kansas staff will take the “Rock Chalk Roadshow” to 60 high schools and community colleges in central and western Kansas, beginning Sunday, Aug. 19, and ending Friday, Aug. 24.

The roadshow includes stops at Deerfield High School and Lakin High School on Wednesday, Aug. 22. An evening event for parents and students will be held Wednesday, Aug. 22, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Garden City Community College, Beth Tedrow Student Center.

Students attending may enter a drawing to win prizes such as a $250 textbook certificate when the student enrolls at KU, free registration for a KU campus visit, KU football tickets and KU gear.
Rock Chalk Road Show to visit 60 Kansas high schools

LAWRENCE—For the fifth year, University of Kansas staff will take the “Rock Chalk Roadshow” to 60 high schools and community colleges in central and western Kansas, beginning Sunday, Aug. 19, and ending Friday, Aug. 24.

The Rock Chalk Roadshow will cover more than 3,000 miles in a swing through 40 counties to meet school counselors during the day and with parents and students at evening receptions in five cities. Students attending may enter a drawing to win prizes such as a $250 textbook certificate when the student enrolls at KU, free registration for a KU campus visit, KU football tickets and KU gear.

The evening events for parents and students are in the following communities:
• Manhattan: Manhattan Public Library, 629 Poyntz Ave., 3:30-5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 19
• Hays: Hadley Center, 205 E. Seventh St., 6-7:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 20
• Colby: Colby Community Building, 285 E. Fifth St., 6-7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 21
• Garden City: Garden City Community College, Beth Tedrow Student Center, 801 Campus Drive, 6-7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 22
• Hutchinson: Kansas Cosmosphere, 1100 N. Plum, 6-7:30 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 23

Staff members from various offices, including the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, will attend the events.

“Our visits in these communities are an opportunity for students and their families to meet with KU early in the school year,” said Lisa Pinamonti Kress, director of the Office of Admissions and Scholarships. “Although our office has had contact with many of these students through earlier visits or college fairs, the roadshow receptions allow time for families to meet us and to learn ‘why choose KU’ and the admission and scholarship application process.”

The roadshow includes area stops at the following high schools and community colleges:
Thursday, Aug. 23: Bucklin High School, Fairfield High School, Greensburg High School, Haviland High School, Hutchinson Community College, Hutchinson High School, Kinsley High School, Macksville High School, Spearville High School, Stafford High School and Trinity High School.
Bartkoski named as KU peer educator

Kansas University's Learning Communities program has announced its 23 peer educators for fall 2007.

Elizabeth Bartkoski, a Basehor junior majoring in business management, is one of them.

Peer educators are KU students who serve as academic resources and mentors to help first-year KU students adjust to campus life.

The Learning Communities program began in fall 2003 and is part of the Academic Achievement and Access Center within the Student Success office. Gail James is director of Learning Communities, and Linda Dixon is associate director.

Each Learning Communities group typically consists of about 20 students enrolled in two courses and a seminar that focuses on a particular theme. Each group has its own faculty facilitator with coordination assistance from the peer educator.

Students enroll, then are assigned to specific Learning Communities based on their major, courses they take or experiences related to the overall theme of the communities. Learning Communities are either residential or nonresidential. In the case of residential courses, the participants and peer educator live on the same floor in student housing designated for the Learning Communities program. Students in nonresidential Learning Communities can live either on or off campus, and the peer educator arranges meeting times for study groups and social activities.

Learning Communities are either residential or nonresidential. In the case of residential courses, the participants and peer educator live on the same floor in student housing designated for the Learning Communities program. Students in nonresidential Learning Communities can live either on or off campus, and the peer educator arranges meeting times for study groups and social activities.
Corn-fed ethanol production fuels controversy

SCOTT ROTHSCILD

Ethanol has been touted as the fuel of the future. Made with a renewable resource—mostly corn—vehicles running on ethanol will help reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil, its proponents say.

“I think it’s a good thing for everybody,” said Lawrence farmer Pat Ross, who feeds his livestock a high-protein byproduct of ethanol production. But ethanol is coming under increased scrutiny.

Some are concerned that the recent increase in corn crops used in making ethanol will further deplete dwindling groundwater reserves, and increase the use of fertilizers that run off into waterways and kill aquatic life.

“There are huge hidden costs,” said Ken Warren, managing director of the Land Institute, a Salina-based research organization that supports sustainable agriculture.

In the long run, he said, the amount of energy needed to make and transport ethanol exceeds the energy produced. “It depends on how you want to do the accounting,” he said.

Ethanol pumped up

Regardless of the debate, more Kansas farmers are joining the effort to produce ethanol.

There are 3.7 million acres of corn being grown in Kansas this year, about 8 percent more than last year, according to Kansas Agricultural Statistics.

“Corn is increasing primarily because of the demand of ethanol,” said Eldon Thiessen, director of the agricultural statistics office.

Ethanol is produced by fermenting food crops, such as corn, and grain sorghum.

Ethanol production plants are popping up all over Kansas. Ten years ago, the state produced approximately 20 million to 25 million gallons of ethanol per year. Now, 215 million gallons are produced per year, and plants under construction will add another 300 million gallons to that number.

“It has been really good for our state and the Midwest in general,” said Sue Schulte, a spokeswoman for the Kansas Corn Growers Association.

Ethanol vs. oil, water

To that, Kansas University geology professor emeritus Ernest Angino says ethanol couldn’t compete with other fuels without its governmental subsidies and protections that total roughly $1 per gallon.

“It’s popular now because the government gives a huge subsidy to produce it. It’s not competing on a level playing field,” said Angino, who taught an energy and minerals resources course for decades.

But Schulte said oil also receives subsidies. “It’s not like this is the only subsidized fuel in the stream,” she said of ethanol.

Warren, with the Land Institute, said one of his major concerns is that ethanol provides an enticement to rotate up irrigation of corn crops. He said he had heard about irrigators in western Kansas deciding to dryland farm (no irrigation), but when the price of corn started going up “they were back in business.”

Schulte said there is plenty of water available.

Only about half of the corn acreage in Kansas is irrigated and the other crops, such as grain sorghum, which is generally a dryland crop, are also being used to produce ethanol, she said.

Energy producer?

The amount of energy to produce ethanol and transport it also is often cited as demerits for the fuel. It’s also the subject of numerous conflicting studies.

A 2005 study by scientists from Cornell and University of California-Berkley said ethanol production using corn grain “required 29 percent more fossil energy than the ethanol produced.”

But ethanol supporters cite other studies.

Schulte pointed to a U.S. Department of Energy study conducted in 2005.

The report states that the fossil energy put into growing corn for ethanol is lower than the amount of energy produced — 0.74 million British thermal unit fossil energy consumed for each 1 million Btu of ethanol delivered. That was much more efficient than gasoline, the study concluded.

The study notes that some of the energy used to produce ethanol is “free solar energy used to grow corn in the first place.”

Greg Krissek is director of government affairs for ICM Inc., a Colwich-based company that is involved with the development of approximately 60 percent of the ethanol plants in the country.

Krissek said ethanol helps the environment because it’s a cleaner burning fuel than gasoline and it takes less energy to produce.

The most common blend of vehicle fuel with ethanol is called E-10, which is 90 percent gasoline and 10 percent ethanol.

About 145 billion gallons of gasoline is used in the United States per year. Two years ago, ethanol represented 3 billion gallons of that amount; now it is 6 billion and is expected to double in two more years, Krissek said.

Kansas ranks seventh in the nation in producing ethanol, with Iowa and Illinois leading the pack, Schulte said.

“We see a tremendous impact in the community where the plant is being built,” Krissek said. “You may be looking at $80 million to $160 million in construction costs and that helps local suppliers and we usually use local labor.”

When the plant is finished, he said, “you have a $100 million to $200 million revenue generating company.”

He said the development of ethanol is crucial, not only for the rural economy and environment, but to help quench the nation’s increasing demand for fuel.

“The farmer has responded to this demand,” he said.

To Ross, the Lawrence farmer, ethanol is a win-win for the taxpayer and farmer.
The demand for ethanol has raised the price of corn, he noted. “That helps out the American farmer so they don’t have to be subsidized so much,” he said.

KENT NUNEMAKER, co-owner of Nunemaker-Ross, Inc., cuts corn for silage in North Lawrence. Increasing amounts of corn are being harvested for ethanol production, but opponents say that production consumes more energy than it produces and also depletes groundwater supplies.
Eudora News
Eudora, KS
Circ. 1253
From Page:
9i
8/16/2007
32201

Eudora High School graduate brings art of tea to Kansas

The Shiau family is a tea drinking family.

Almost daily, the Shiaus gather around steeping leaves and discuss the happenings of their day.

It is from them Fanny Shiau and her husband Gary Peterson took inspiration to bring the way of tea to Kansas from Taiwan.

Before then, Fanny came to Eudora High School during her senior year as an exchange student from Taipei.

"It's a small town. People were friendly," she said of Eudora.

After graduating in 1992, she attended Kansas University and met Peterson. She received a degree in microbiology and, later, a masters degree in business administration.

Her husband, her degrees and her passion for tea mesh together in their business, The House of Chá, 21 W. Ninth St. in Lawrence.

The business has been open for more than four years now, sprouting from an Internet tea wholesaler to a full-fledged teashop.

Fanny has reached the point where she can run most of the store herself. She multitasks. At any given time she might be talking to customers, boiling water and steeping the various varieties of leaves.

Being involved in the business boils down to one thing.

"It's very exciting because I get to teach people about tea," Fanny said.

The House of Chá imports high-end teas from Taipei and Japan. The shop stocks many varieties of green, oolong and black teas. Customers can also buy their own tea sets complete with teapot and cups.

A glance at the menu yields the opportunity to try oolong tea varieties such as Emerald Jade or Snowy Moon.

"Oolong is by far the most precious, the most complex tea," Shiau said.

When new customers drift in, she usually starts them out with something basic if they are unfamiliar with tea.

"I always introduce a lower-grade tea for customers who are trying it for the first time," Shiau said.

Eventually, their customers get used to the subtleties between the leaves, Peterson said.

"It's really like fine wine," Peterson said.

Peterson also has noticed the need continue local education about tea.

Sometimes it goes as far as getting customers to understand how a teashop differs from a fast-food restaurant.

"One of the biggest things is getting people to sit down and enjoy their drinks," Peterson said.

The shop's décor is open. Wide windows let light pour in. The couple's inventory of teas line the walls.

"The whole concept of drinking tea is drinking and being social," Peterson said.

The House of Chá's menu doesn't end with steaming cups.

Like teashops in Asia, the shop also offers small foods like rice cookies and cakes.

The shop also makes varieties of bubble tea, or drinks infused with tapioca pearls.

The restaurant's basic bubble tea includes tea iced with milk and the gummi-like balls.

"Bubble tea is the most labor intensive," Fanny said.

For more information about the House of Chá, call 785-830-8888.
Fanny Shieau pours a pot of tea Monday afternoon. Her family owns a tea plantation in Taiwan. It is from them she and her husband, Gary Peterson, took the inspiration to open the shop at 21 West Ninth St., Lawrence. Business hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and noon to 6 p.m. Saturday.

TEA TOTALITY

Gary Peterson shows the difference between whole and dried tea leaves.
Customers can try fresh brewed teas from both Taiwan and Japan as well as cold, frothy bubble teas. The shop also offers small snack foods.

The teashop's interior features plenty of natural light mixed with Asian themes. Light music poured through the speakers Monday afternoon.
State universities to assist students from counties hit by storms and floods

TOPEKA -- In an effort to assist state university students from the 43 Kansas counties affected by natural disasters over the past few months, the Board of Regents announced recently that the state's six universities will offer those students the option to defer tuition and fee payments which are normally due next month.

Under this option, the state's universities will waive late payment penalties and develop individual deferred payment plans for affected students. To qualify for the waiver and payment extension, students are encouraged to contact the following office at their university: Emporia State, (620) 341-5340; Fort Hays State, (785) 628-5251; Kansas State, (785) 532-6420; Pittsburg State, (620) 235-4163; University of Kansas, (785) 864-3322; and Wichita State, (316) 978-3070.

"Students that have been affected by the recent natural disasters have had more immediate and pressing concerns than tuition due dates," said Christine Downey-Schot, Chair of the Board of Regents. "It's important that we do everything we can to ease the back-to-school transition for these students."

This assistance offer presently applies to residents in 20 flooded southeast Kansas counties and students in 24 storm-damaged and flooded counties, including McPherson County, who were declared eligible for individual federal assistance.
University of Kansas develops system for issuing emergency alerts

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — More than three months after a gunman killed more than 30 people at Virginia Tech, officials at the University of Kansas have begun testing a system to alert students and faculty to similar on-campus emergencies.

The new system allows police and fire officials to notify the university's public safety dispatchers of potential emergencies and then relay an emergency message to one building or the entire campus.

"That's pretty powerful," said Bob Rombach, the university's fire marshal and architect for Design and Construction Management.

Rombach said officials at Virginia Tech had limited options in April when they tried to issue a campuswide alert between two series of shootings by a student.

He said his school's new system can handle alerts for hazardous spills, terror threats or anything else "that arises in today's crazy world."

Last month, the university approved installation of a $10,000 to $12,000 fire alarm system that builds on the university's past efforts to replace standard warning horns with speakers that also direct people to safety in the event of a tornado.

The speaker alerts will ensure more of the campus is aware of an emergency, said Ralph Oliver, the university's police chief. He said emergency officials now rely on mass e-mailed messages that would miss people not near a computer.

By the end of the month, workers will have tested the system in 16 buildings on campus. Several other buildings also will receive fire alarm upgrades by the end of the year, in addition to the mass notification system.

University leaders also plan to roll out a new system this fall that would send out emergency text messages to mobile devices.
From NASA to calendar girl

Two years after graduating from high school, Erika Meza-Zerlin is a woman of distinction at The University of Kansas. She is featured in the 2007-2008 "Women of Distinction" calendar, standing alongside professors and graduate students who have made a significant mark in their chosen fields.

How did you get selected for the calendar?
I was nominated by somebody. I'm not really sure who. I am pretty young. A lot of these women are PhDs and graduate students. So it is a huge honor, especially for me, even to be nominated. I feel a little intimidated by it. I mean, look at all these women I am being photographed with, and I haven't done anything in comparison to them. I think I was nominated because of my internship with NASA.

You worked at NASA?
My internship was 10 weeks during the summer, from June 4 until Aug. 10. I worked on ARED — Advance Resistive Exercise Device. I helped with the testing, and I helped make prototypes of it with foam.
It is like an expensive Bowflex. That is what everyone at work used to say. It is a machine that simulates free-weight maneuvers. They created a vacuum with air cylinders. It is kind of like the concept of an air pump. If you close the end of the pump and still try to push down on it, it is going to be really hard. This machine will be able to do 29 different exercises with resistance of up to 600 pounds.

In Johnson Space Center, they have a building where they have all the mockups — life-size replicas of the space station and the space shuttle. Actual one-to-one ratios. They are training models for the astronauts.

We got to go in and install the ARED prototype in the actual node within the space station where it was going to be placed. Just seeing that replica, walking through — it was really cool. It was like I was actually there. Obviously without the floating, though. I had to walk.

It was funny because all the little kids who came in with camps, they would all be waving at me. They think everyone is an astronaut at NASA, so I waved back. It was a lot of fun.

Did you see any of the astronauts who were training up in the shuttle Endeavour on Aug. 8?
A couple of them were training right next to me. I didn't get to meet them, but I saw them. They were going through the whole pre-launch thing. I was like, "Hey,

WHERE TO FIND IT
The University of Kansas "Women of Distinction" poster-calendar recognizes the accomplishments of female faculty, alumni and students. The 2007-2008 calendar is available at several campus locations, including the KU bookstore and the Student Involvement and Leadership Center at the Kansas Union in Lawrence; the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan.; and the Edwards Campus in Overland Park.
The calendar is free, but donations are accepted.

I've seen that girl on TV! It was Barbara Morgan, the teacher.
I actually got to meet Sunita Williams, the woman astronaut who set the record for the longest space flight — six months. And I met Gene Krantz. He was the flight director of Apollo 13. He was Ed Harris in the movie.

It was crazy. I was getting all this history all at once, and I am just a little college kid from Kansas.

Did you always want to go to NASA?
I wasn't really one of those big NASA freaks because, you know, in Kansas we don't really have that much exposure to it. I just got this opportunity, this scholarship through the MUST program — Motivating Undergraduates in Science and Technology. A benefit of the scholarship was getting the chance to intern at a NASA facility.

I wanted to go to Johnson Space Center in Houston because that is the facility that does the really cool stuff with human space flight.

You are majoring in engineering. Is that still a male-dominated field?
I typically see maybe 10 girls in a class of 70 people. But there are more of us now than before.
I think a lot of girls are very intimidated to come in. They think math and science are too hard for them. It is hard, but it's not impossible. It just takes perseverance, mostly, and hard work.

Girls just need to focus on what they
believe their goals are, and not just step down because they believe they shouldn’t be doing something because it’s not their role as a woman. They shouldn’t dumb themselves down.

Erika Meza-Zerlin had a 10-week internship with NASA this summer during which she worked on ÅRED — Advance Resistive Exercise Device.