KU awards degrees to area students

A dozen Ellsworth County area students were among the 4,450 candidates for degree at the University of Kansas.

Participating in graduation ceremonies Sunday were:

- Matthew Alan Doubrava, son of Alan and Kristi Doubrava of Ellsworth, Bachelor of Science degree in journalism.
- Ryan J. Peschka, son of Randy and Nancy Peschka of Ellsworth, Master of Business Administration.
- Tyler Allen Williams, son of Kurt and Shaun Williams of Ellsworth, Bachelor of Science degree in education.
- Danielle S. Wright, daughter of Rhonda Wright of Ellsworth and Joe L. Wright of Brookville, Bachelor of Social Work degree.
- Megan F. Homolka, daughter of James and Katherine Homolka of Holyrood, Bachelor of General Studies and Human Biology.
- Jordan Michael Robertson, son of Jerry Robertson of Holyrood, Bachelor of Science degree in atmospheric science and mathematics.
- Rebecca A. Orozco, daughter of Peter and Bonnie Orozco of Kanopolis, Bachelor of Arts degree in biology.
- Amber Lynn Kepka, daughter of Jerry Macek of Wilson, Doctor of Pharmacy degree.
- Joanie Marie Soukup, daughter of Philip and Joanne Borell, Master of Arts degree in museum studies.
- Bryan George Vopat, son of Richard and Mary Vopat of Wilson, doctor of medicine.
- Christopher Lynn Petitjean, son of Mark and Janet Petitjean of Brookville, Bachelor of Science degree in business and accounting.
KU announces top scholars graduating with Class of 2008

LAWRENCE — More than 165 members the Class of 2008 will be recognized as top scholars during commencement at the University of Kansas today.

Each year, KU awards its most prized four-year scholar- ships to students whose academic records and other qualifications make them eligible for selection. These students are Chancellors Club Scholars, Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger Scholars, Solon E. Summerfield Scholars, Endowment Meritorious Scholars, National Merit Scholars, National Hispanic Scholars and National Achievement Scholars. KU Endowment manages the funds for these scholarships.

In addition, 11 McNair scholars are among the graduating seniors being recognized. The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant that serves undergraduates who come from low-income families, are first-generation college students or are from groups underrepresented in higher education. The program prepares them to be successful in graduate school.

Area students include: Neal A. Bates, Hoisington, son of Gary and Donna Bates, recognized as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar; and Amber Marie Humphrey, Larned, and Rebecca J. Deeds, Little River, daughter of Doug and Rita Deeds, recognized as Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger Scholars.

The Chancellors Club, the major-donor organization at KU Endowment, annually awards 10 renewable scholarships worth $1,500 to $2,000 to recognize National Merit finalists, five from Kansas and five from out of state, who have outstanding high school records.

Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger and Solon E. Summerfield scholarships provide $3,000 a year for four years to 100 Kansas high school graduates in recognition of their outstanding high school academic achievements and records of community service and leadership. Summerfield scholarships for men are funded through an endowment established by Solon E. Summerfield, who was a Lawrence native and KU graduate. Watkins-Berger scholarships for women are financed by the estate of Elizabeth M. Watkins of Lawrence and an endowment in memory of Emily Berger, a KU graduate, by her brother, the late Arthur Berger of Dallas.

Endowment Meritorious Scholarships provide $500 to $2,500 a year for four years to high-achieving students who enhance the diversity of the student body.

The National Merit Scholarship is regarded as the most prestigious national award bestowed upon high school seniors. Fewer than 9,000 students of the 1.3 million who compete for the award, or fewer than 1 percent, receive National Merit Scholarships. Recipients are chosen based on their academic abilities and extracurricular activities.

The National Hispanic Scholars and National Achievement Scholars programs are the nation’s most prestigious competitive scholarships for minority students. National Achievement Scholarships are provided through the National Merit Scholarship Corp. in Evanston, Ill. National Hispanic Scholarships are coordinated by the National Hispanic Recognition Program, through the College Board offices in New York City.

KU’s National Merit, National Hispanic and National Achievement scholars in this year’s graduating class received a scholarship for tuition (15 credit hours each semester), campus fees and a housing stipend, renewable for four years.

The Class of 2008 includes graduates from the spring 2008 and summer and fall 2007 terms. The commencement procession begins at 2:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium.
Commencement exercises at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, will begin at 3:30 p.m. Sunday at Memorial Stadium.

Among the 4,450 candidates for degrees, those from Marion County include:

William James Scriven of Florence, bachelor of science in geology. Scriven is the son of Gayle Scriven of Florence.

Karson Craig, bachelor of science in education-sport science. She is the daughter of Kevin and Debbie Craig of Marion.

Nicholas Conquest, bachelor of science in electrical engineering. He is the son of Rod and Kim Conquest of Peabody.

Sarah McLeod, master of social work. She is the daughter of Nancy McLeod of Peabody.

Casey Cole, daughter of Curtis Cole of Wichita and graduate of Peabody-Burns High School, bachelor of science in business/accounting.

Shelly Weibert of Kansas City, graduate of Hillsboro High School, master of health services administration.
Vet, Boyd a speak out for new GI bill

BY SARAH KESSINGER
Harris News Service
kessinger@dailynews.net

TOPEKA – McPherson High graduate Dan Parker spent five years on the battlefields of Iraq and Liberia. Now finishing a degree at the University of Kansas, he is urging Congress to restore the GI Bill to its original role – paying soldiers for a full ride to college.

President Bush’s threatened veto of the budget measure containing the “new GI Bill,” passed by the House and pending in the Senate, would be a “politically devastating mistake for the president to make,” Parker said. “This is a good piece of legislation.”

“It’s not very often that you get a piece of legislation like this, that everyone can get on board with. So when one comes along, you’ve got to take advantage of it, you’ve got to get it into law.”

Parker, a political science student, heads KU’s Collegiate Veterans Association. He spoke to reporters Monday at a news conference conducted by 2nd District Congresswoman Nancy Boyda, a Topeka Democrat.

Boyda said the original GI Bill “launched millions of families on a course of prosperity and toward achieving the American Dream – and set the American economy on the right course.”

“We’ve lost sight of the intent of the bill,” she added, “and how to do right by our veterans.”

Backed by all major veterans organizations, the bill would add $17 million in new college aid for student veterans in Kansas.

It is competing with a scaled-down version promoted by Sen. John McCain, R-Arizona, and GOP supporters. President Bush opposes the budget bill containing the expansion based on other aspects of the measure, including controls on his authority over the Iraq War.

First District U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, a Hays Republican, said he supports the enhancements as well, but was disappointed that House Democratic leaders added billions in unnecessary spending to the bill, including tax hikes on small businesses.

“The tax surcharge used to pay for items in this bill appears to be targeted at millionaires,” Moran said, “but it will also have a direct impact on more than 75 percent of small businesses that pay business taxes at the individual level.”

Parker, now 25, joined the Marines 10 days after graduation from McPherson High School. College wasn’t on his radar at the time. He expected a future in uniform.

For five years, from 2000 to 2005, he served as an intelligence officer in northern Iraq with a year-long interlude among U.S. troops seeking to restore order in the long-running Liberian conflict.

After returning to Iraq, Parker’s vision of the future changed.

“I thought I’d like to see the civilian side of things.”

He soon finished his tour and headed to KU. He expects to graduate in December – too late to benefit much from a GI Bill expansion. The current law covers about 60 percent of veteran students’ college costs.

But he hopes a more-generous version is there for student-veterans who follow.

“I have more appreciation for the opportunity to get an education now,” he said.

With 80 percent of college costs covered, Parker faces a good chunk of expenses and state universities are continuing to hike tuition.

Boyda, whose father served in World War II, said her family directly benefited from a GI Bill that once paid the full cost to attend a public university. Some 4,300 Kansas vets use their education benefits today.

Under the proposal pending in Congress:

Veterans who have served three years on active duty would gain benefits to cover a four-year public university education at the level of the most expensive in-state public school. For Kansans, that presently would be $6,153 each year.

A stipend for housing, books and other expenses is included. In Kansas, the average will be $885 per month for living expenses and $1,000 per month for books.

Benefits would be available for 15 years, rather than the current 10.

Troops who have served at least three months of active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, including National Guard and Reserves, would be eligible for education benefits.
Ashley Unruh to graduate from University of Kansas

LAWRENCE - The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring - representing 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states, and the District of Columbia, and 44 other countries - have been announced by the University Registrar.

KU’s Class of 2008 numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 18, for the university’s 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2008 are expected to participate.

Faculty and candidates for degrees will assemble about 2:00 p.m. along Memorial Drive for the procession, which begins at 2:30 p.m. The program begins about 3:30 p.m. In case of inclement weather, participants should call KU info (785-864-3506) or listen to local radio and television stations to learn the exact time of the commencement ceremony. Commencement information and an up-to-date schedule of events are available online at www.commencement.ku.edu.

Among students scheduled to graduate is Ashley Suzanne Unruh, daughter of Susan and Gene Unruh of Gypsum, Bachelor of Science in Business management.
Several area students to graduate from the University of Kansas on May 18

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Among students scheduled to graduate are Matthew Scott Achenbach, son of Scott and Susan Achenbach of Lindsborg; Bachelor of Social Work; Betty Ann Amos of Lindsborg, PhD in Philosophy/Education/Special Education; Anthony Scott Bargen, son of Dan and Deb Fricke of Lindsborg; Bachelor of General Studies/Political Science; Anastasia Rose Nuss, daughter of Lawton Nuss and Jo Montgomery, Bachelor of Science in Occupations Studies; Erich H. Ohlde, son of Mark and Nancy Ohlde of Lindsborg, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering; Andrew Michael Palmer, son of Patty Palmer-Casebeer of Lindsborg, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering; and Amber Nicole Pihl, daughter of Ronald and Susan Pihl of Lindsborg, Doctor of Pharmacy.
To graduate from KU

KU’s Class of 2008 numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007.

Of those graduating from the area are: Christina Ann Lovin, Bachelor of Science in Biology, daughter of Marc and Coleen Lovin, Sylvan Grove; Alisha Ann Ridgley, Bachelor of Arts, International Studies and Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, daughter of Brad and Beth Zweifel, Waldo.
Profiles Miss Kansas

Miss Butler
County: Butler
Jennifer Jones

- Age: 22
- Hometown: Salina
- School: University of Kansas
  - Talent: Vocal
  - Platform issue: Child Abuse Prevention

A senior atmospheric science major, Jennifer Jones is a storm chaser during severe weather season. Her ambition is to become chief meteorologist on the FOX News Network in New York City.

A more immediate goal is to educate the public on child abuse and prevention. She has created an interactive website where children can learn about personal safety and has worked with Child Abuse Prevention Service in Salina for 10 years and for the past year at Sunflower House of Shawnee.

She is a featured twirler for the Marching Jayhawks.

Miss Wooded Hills
County: Hills
Hannah Hendricks

- Age: 21
- Hometown: El Dorado
- School: Wichita State University
  - Talent: Color guard
  - Platform issue: Everyone Can Be Someone's Star

From her experience working at YMCA, Hannah Hendricks learned that a single person could become the reason a child wants to get up in the morning. Children are looking for stars in their lives and everyone has the potential to be a star.

A senior as Wichita State University, she is an assistant customer service manager for a bank, an adjunct instructor at Butler Community College, coach of the El Dorado YMCA pre-swim team league and assistant manager at the El Dorado pool.
McPherson High grad lobbies for GI Bill

Restored bill would fund four-year college education for veterans

By SARAH KESSINGER
Harris News Service

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See BILL, Page A
Bill / Contains billions in spending, tax hikes

FROM PAGE A1

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It will add tax raises

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After returning to Iraq, Parker's vision of the future changed.

"I thought I'd like to see the civilian side of things," he said.

Won't see much benefit

He soon finished his tour and headed to KU. He expects to graduate in December — too late to benefit much from a GI Bill expansion. The current law covers about 60 percent of veteran students' college costs.

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Dan Parker
McPherson High graduate, veteran and student at the University of Kansas


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KU News

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From St. John will be Casey Elizabeth Cornwell with Bachelor of Arts/American Studies & Bachelor of Arts/Sociology American Studies. Her parents are Rick and Gayle Cornwell.

Bradley Joe Newell, Stafford, with Doctor of Pharmacy. His parents are Don and Deb Newell.