Calendar opens doors for Dighton woman

By STEPHANIE FARLEY
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The woman poses, showing off a bikini and looking straight into the camera.

On the surface, the photo—a picture of Cassie Rupp, a 2007 graduate of Garden City Community College and now a student at the University of Kansas—is the cover of the 2009 Women of KU Swimsuit Calendar.

But when Rupp’s mom, Maraline Clark, of Dighton, looks at the picture of her daughter posing in a bikini on the calendar’s front, she sees “the whole broad picture,” not just the surface.

Clark sees the opportunities the calendar job has brought Rupp, 22, who’s majoring in journalism and strategic communications at KU. According to Clark, being a part of the calendar has opened up a piece of the marketing world to Rupp.

“It’s unbelievable where it’s taking her,” Clark said of her daughter and the calendar.

Rupp and nine of the other Women of KU are set to be in Garden City at 8 p.m. Saturday at Sammy’s Spirits & Steakhouse to meet and mingle with the public and promote the calendar.

“I’m just happy for her,” Clark said of her daughter; adding she can’t walk out of her house in Dighton without hearing from someone about Rupp’s photos. “I think pretty much Dighton is proud of her.

“She has just gone in so many directions it’s amazing,” Clark said. “She’s doing something that she loves, so we’re happy for her.”

While the final photo shoot for the calendar was done in August, applying and being selected for the calendar, as well as preparing physically and mentally to be photographed was a spring- and summer-long process for Rupp.

After an application and interview process that looks not only at beauty and how the girls look in a bathing suit but also at their grade-point averages, majors, personalities and abilities to interact with the public, Rupp was selected to appear in the calendar.

The university doesn’t sanction or approve the calendar, but Rupp said she applied for the chance to be a calendar girl because “I’m an avid, avid KU fan.”

Rupp said she found out at the start of summer, about two weeks after the second and final interview, that she had been selected.

“I was shocked,” she said of when she received the first call saying she still was in the running, explaining that was further than she’d expected to get.

And to be selected, as well as be on the cover: It’s “completely surreal,” she said.

Actually, “it’s still surreal,” Rupp said of the experience. Currently, Rupp and the other Women of KU are busy promoting the calendar.

Rupp’s summer was spent doing test shoots and constantly working out, either at the gym or running, and watching what she ate.

“I hate looking at it, honestly,” Rupp said of herself in the calendar, saying she’s seen the photos so many times she notices “every little thing wrong.”

But, according to Dave Gillispie, photographer and owner of the calendar, there are 5,000 to 10,000 people who buy the calendar every year to look at the photos, adding it’s the longest-running university calendar.

Gillispie said Rupp has been an amazing addition to the calendar, explaining she is a “go-getter” and has a zest for life, which comes through when promoting the calendar.

Gillispie said the calendar also gives the women a chance to make lifelong friends and if they want to, step into the world of modeling.

But that isn’t where Rupp is planning to go with the calendar experience. On Wednesday, she said the experience has allowed her to throw herself more into the world of marketing, working more on the business side of the calendar. While she says she plans to audition for next year’s calendar, she’s OK if she ends up not getting it.

As for a career, she hopes to get into marketing, media planning or some other field within strategic communications.

But right now, Rupp’s enjoying the experience while she can, saying it’s still strange to be asked for an autograph.

“I’m just a college student,” she said, laughing, adding she still can’t really believe she’s in the calendar. “Wow, am I really getting this opportunity? ... Crazy.”

\[Photo courtesy of Dave Gillispie Photography.\]

Cassie Rupp, of Dighton, was chosen for the cover of the 2009 Women of KU Swimsuit Calendar.
The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2008 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar.

Graduate and undergraduate degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

David Christopher Bell, son of David and Debbie Bell, was among the graduates, with a degree in News and Information having received a Bachelor of Science in Journalism. Chris is a Kinsley High School graduate.
Joshua Lang obtains master’s degree

Joshua Lang, a former resident of Hoisington, graduated with honors on Dec. 12, from the University of Chicago, with a master’s degree in business administration.

Lang graduated from the University of Kansas with a Doctor of Pharmacy in 2000 and is also a graduate of Hoisington High School. He is employed as an associate director of scientific research for Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. He and his wife, Beth, live in Overland Park. He is the son of Jerome and Janelle Lang, of Hoisington.
University of Kansas graduates three area students in December

Three area students are among more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall semester at the University of Kansas:

Patrick W. Sweet, Colby, son of Robbie Dee Sweet, Master of Accounting, Rawlins County High School, Atwood.

Michael Lee Breeden, Quinter, son of Paul and Cathy Breeden, Bachelor of Arts in anthropology, Quinter High School.

Shaylyn R. Laufer, Ludell, daughter of Brian and Rhonda Laufer, Bachelor of Science in business and business administration, Rawlins High School, Atwood.

Degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 17. Five of KU's 13 colleges and schools conducted ceremonies last month to honor those graduating at the end of the semester.

The fall candidates represented 64 Kansas counties, 38 states and 28 countries around the world.
GEHS students use snails to study chemistry

Cutting-edge scientific research is being conducted in Jason Sutton’s science classrooms at Gardner Edgerton High School. Sutton and his students are studying a new class of chemicals called ionic liquids, a type of environmentally-friendly chemical that may one day be used to replace volatile organic compounds, known as VOCs.

VOCs are contained in most solvents, such as paint thinner and nail polish remover. During the evaporation process, solvents produce odors that pollute the air. Ionic liquids are odorless and non-polluting.

Last month, Claudia Bode, education coordinator for the University of Kansas Center for Environmentally Beneficial Catalysis (CEBC) and graduate student Sylvia Nwosu visited GEHS and spoke with students in Sutton’s science courses about their research on ionic liquids.

Nwosu told the students that ionic liquids have been around since the 1950s, but scientists have only been engaged in active research on their potential use since the ‘90s.

Last summer, Sutton spent six weeks at the CEBC studying the environmental effects of ionic liquids. While these chemicals do not evaporate and cause air pollution, little is known about how they will impact land and water resources. KU scientist Aaron Scerbo helped Sutton test the effects of ionic liquids on pond water snails. The work has been turned into an inexpensive and simple “ecotoxicology” lab activity for high school students.

With support from the CEBC, Sutton’s students have placed snails in varying concentrations of ionic liquids, and are monitoring the effects on the snails. The research, which is unique to the high school lab environment, may someday assist scientists and chemical companies to become better stewards of the environment by replacing VOCs with appropriate concentrations of ionic liquids.

According to Bode, many items people utilize on a daily basis contain chemicals, including cosmetics, plastic bottles, gasoline, cell phones and computers. Nearly 30 billion tons of waste is associated with the manufacture of these products, which costs $10 billion dollars to clean up each year.

The goal of green chemistry research is “no waste,” or converting waste into another usable product. At KU, for example, students are utilizing discarded cafeteria oils to create a cleaner-burning, biodiesel fuel for automobiles.

Bode also talked with the students about the Environmental Impact Factor (E-factor), which is a useful tool for calculating the amount of waste produced by the chemical industry when making products. The ultimate goal is an E-factor of zero. Students were surprised to learn that the petrochemical industry has a low E-factor (0.1); whereas the pharmaceutical industry has a much higher E-factor of 250. The students learned this is because the petrochemical industry is able to convert much of the byproducts it produces into asphalt and other usable products. By contrast, the pharmaceutical industry utilizes many steps and chemical reactions to create drugs of acceptable purity and quality, thereby producing much more waste, which is not as easily converted to other uses.

Sutton earned a degree in environmental science from the University of Kansas in 1992, and later obtained his teaching certificate and a master’s degree in biology from Emporia State University.
Faculty needed to train nurses for workforce

By Sarah Green
KHI News Service

TOPEKA — While clinics and hospitals clamor for more nurses, so too do the state’s nursing education programs.

Prompted by a projected nursing shortage, the Kansas Legislature in 2006 awarded $30 million over 10 years for grants to the state’s nursing programs. The funds are to be used to upgrade teaching equipment and facilities and provide scholarships for nurses to return to school for a higher degree. Those areas were considered the top three obstacles to training more nurses.

Nurses with advanced training are in particularly high demand, said Karen L. Miller, senior vice chancellor and dean of the University of Kansas School of Nursing, because they have a variety of options.

A nurse with a master’s degree could work as a nurse anesthetist; a nurse-midwife; a nurse practitioner; specialize in a field such as oncology, or become an instructor.

Miller said it is hard for nursing schools to compete with clinical settings in luring nurses to faculty positions. The schedule may be better but the pay may not.

“There is such a high demand for advanced practice nurses in hospitals and other clinical settings that there’s sometimes a pretty significant difference in compensation,” Miller said. “To encourage someone to go into teaching, they would have to consider the long-term financial implications as well.”

A 2005 study by the Kansas State Nurses Association found that nursing faculty with masters’ degrees earned between $44,947 and $60,000 — well below the $70,642 average salary of a masters-level nurse practicing in a clinic.

The study also found that 123 nursing faculty with a masters or Ph.D. would retire by 2014.

If the nursing programs can’t replace them, said Debbie Hackler, director of nursing at Hutchinson Community College, they won’t be able to take on more students.

“If we have 40 positions for new students each year, but not the faculty to take care of them, then I can only take 30 of them,” she said.

According to the Kansas Board of Regents’ 2007 Kansas Nursing Initiative Annual Report, 53 scholarships were awarded in the first year of the education program.

But that might not be enough, the authors wrote.

“The growing popularity of this service scholarship program has a very real potential to ease the nursing faculty shortage by assisting with the production of new nurse educators,” the report said. “This grant does not, however, address the disproportionate salary differences between nurse educators and practitioners, which has contributed greatly to the shortage of nursing faculty.”

The University of Kansas is “competitive” in its salaries for faculty members with advanced degrees, Miller said.

“I would not say that’s true everywhere, for every university,” she said.

Miller said she was pleased with the steps the regents and Legislature had taken to address the nursing workforce needs but was concerned about what the state’s troubled budget situation might mean for the nursing grant program.

“Even though the Board of Regents was progressive in their support of the nursing workforce, the current economic times may be a negative factor that they didn’t count on,” Miller said. “Hopefully, the downturn will be short-lived, and it won’t have a long-term impact on the number of nurses we can educate for the state and the region.”
GEHS students use snails to study chemistry

Cutting-edge scientific research is being conducted in Jason Sutton’s science classrooms at Gardner Edgerton High School. Sutton and his students are studying a new class of chemicals called ionic liquids, a type of environmentally-friendly chemical that may one day be used to replace volatile organic compounds, known as VOCs.

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KU announces fall 2008 candidates for degrees

KU confers graduate and undergraduate degrees in December based on work completed during the fall semester and conducts formal commencement ceremonies in May.

Area students receiving degrees were Philip M. Wolken, Beloit, son of Myron and Becky Wolken, Bachelor of General Studies/Psychology; and Renee J. Henke, Downs, daughter of Ronald and Jean Henke, Bachelor of Science in Education.
Program addresses mental health concerns for seniors

By ANDREW D. BROSIG
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Just a decade or so ago, providing age-specific mental health care geared toward older Americans was a fringe discipline at best, Dr. John White said.

Today, White's peers in the psychiatric community recognize the value of focusing on the specific issues and needs of senior citizens. It's a growing area of focus and, now, it's available at Girard Medical Center.

White serves as medical director for the new Senior Behavioral Health Services department. Beth Simpson is program director. She oversees the day-to-day operations of the department.

Developing a program to address the mental health needs of senior citizens has been in the works for almost two years, said Kenny Boyd, CEO of Girard Medical Center. Planning started in response to in-house surveys of the hospital's medical staff that identified the need, he said.

"Getting it open and providing a service that was missing in the community is what we were looking for," Boyd said. "This will give (local physicians) a service their patients need we didn't have locally."

The first patient was admitted to the program on Dec. 19, the first day it was accepting admissions. And that, Boyd said, emphasizes the need his medical staff knew was out there.

"Having an admission on our first day, and subsequent admissions since then, shows there's a need for the program," Boyd said. "It's a two-way street: We're providing a service to our community and that's the main goal. Hopefully it's going to prove to be beneficial to the organization as a whole as well."

White is a psychiatrist and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine who's been in practice in the southeast Kansas area for more than 22 years. Originally from Kansas City, he received his medical degree in Iowa and comple-
So new it doesn’t have a permanent sign, Dr. John White, left, is medical director, and Beth Simpson serves as program director for the Senior Behavioral Health Services wing at Girard Medical Center. The pair, along with hospital staff and administration, will host an open house Friday from 7 to 9 a.m. with a ribbon cutting scheduled for 7:45 a.m. (Andrew D. Brosig/The Girard Press)
SENIORS

From front page

ed his residency at the University of Missouri – Kansas City campus.

He’s on the faculty of the University of Kansas Medical School and is a staff physician at Girard Medical Center and Mt. Carmel Regional Medical Center in Pittsburg. For the past two years, he was working to set up a similar geriatric psychiatric service unit elsewhere.

Simpson works for Diamond Healthcare Corporation, a Richmond, Va., management company that specializes in the business end of departments similar to the GMC unit. Before coming to Girard, she worked in a similar position with a geriatric unit in Leavenworth.

She holds a master’s degree in exercise physiology and recreation therapy and has worked in the healthcare field for the past 25 years.

The Senior Behavioral Health Services Department is split into two separate programs: A 10-bed in-patient facility and a structured out-patient program. Patients will stay in the hospital for an average of 10 days in the in-patient program, during which they’re evaluated both medically and psychiatrically, to determine the best way to address their needs, Simpson said.

In addition to psychiatric services, patients in the in-patient program and their families will have access to a social worker, physical and occupational therapy specialists and the hospital dietician. The idea is to look at all aspects of a patient’s healthcare and lifestyle needs to determine if they’re able to return home or will have to go to an assisted living center or nursing home when they leave the hospital.

The out-patient program involves both individual and group therapy in what Simpson described as a “very intensive” program. Patients could spend as much as 11 hours per week in the program, she said.

The programs “help people develop coping skills and support from other people who share their common experiences,” White said. “How can we find ways to reduce stress in everyday life? Someone else in the (group) therapy setting may have experienced similar situations and can offer solutions.”

There are several issues specific to older Americans that are best addressed in a setting such as the new department, that can’t be addressed as effectively in a mixed-age setting, White said. Seniors respond differently when undergoing therapy with fellow patients half their age, for example.

“We try to address this group’s needs, because they have been underserved,” he said. “And there are other services available for younger patients that are having psychiatric illness.”

Simpson agreed: “Why here and why now? There was no place to get in-patient treatment without going to another state. When you have somebody who’s 70 years old, sent that far away from their family environment, they’re not going to have as much family involvement.”

Another major focus of the program will be treating individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease. While there’s currently no cure for the disease, recognizing symptoms early and working with the patients could improve their quality of life, White said.

“We’re not saying we have a fountain of youth,” White said. “But we’re very interested in catching people early so we have a better chance of maintaining their cognitive function or even improving their cognitive function.

“When we can encounter them with the early warning signs, maybe their symptoms won’t become as severe, as fast. We don’t have a cure, but maybe we can reduce the severity (of the disease) or lengthen the time they can stay at home.”

Working with other physicians in the area to help them become more aware of the special needs of their patient benefit of the program, White said. And, in the future, Girard Medical Center and the Senior Behavioral Health Services department could become a training ground for the next generation of healthcare providers.

“Our mission is to be a resource for earlier information to physicians,” White said. “And we have a component in association with a medical school, we’re going to have medical students and we hope residents involved in the program as part of their medical training.

“What’s happened in geriatric psychiatry is the needs of the older psychiatric patient are being focused on with more clarity than in the past. The difference is, now, we’re able to use the most modern aspects of medicine to serve the elderly.”
Area resident are KU graduates

Area residents earning degrees in December from the University of Kansas were:

Ryan Call, bachelor of science in education, James Eric Callahan, bachelor of general studies, and Jason Roe, master of arts, Iola; Scott Carlton Bird, bachelor of science in business, and Garrin Marc Kimmell, computer science doctor of philosophy, Le Roy.