Kansas University graduate finds new fruit bat species

LAWRENCE, Kan. — University of Kansas graduate student Jake Esselstyn was collecting bat species in 2006 with a research team in the forests of the Philippines when a guide told him about an unusual fruit bat he'd seen.

The man described a bat with orange fur, white stripes on its face and a black beard on its throat. Its facial features resembled that of a fox, and its wing span was about two feet.

"I didn't believe his description. I thought he was a prankster," Esselstyn, 33, said. "And then a few days later we caught one."

Although the "flying fox" bat had been known to Filipinos and bat hunters for a long time, he said, a specimen had never been captured.

Esselstyn said the Filipino government announced the discovery of the bat and "word spread." Since then, he has been interviewed by National Geographic and other media.

"It's a nice example of how little we know about the animals in the world," he said.

Esselstyn, who grew up in Oregon, moved to Lawrence in the fall of 2004 to work on his Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology. His dissertation, he said, explores "genetic variations across geography."

In the past three years, Esselstyn has made six trips to the Philippines to collect specimens. The island country already was familiar to him because he had served as a Peace Corps volunteer there from 1998 to 2001, doing biodiversity and inventory.

He said little is known about the flora and fauna on the island, so finding a new mammal species is "not as uncommon as you might believe."

Esselstyn said the researchers set up nets on farms, in forests and over streams to catch the bats while they were flying. Sometimes, they sought out the bats in caves.

"They get tangled up in the nets and getting them out is time-consuming," he said.

The researchers have caught as many as a thousand bats in one night, he said.

"There are 75 to 80 (known) species of bats in the Philippines," he said. "Some are common and then there's others that are rare."

The researchers determine which bats they want to euthanize and export to KU to study. Once the animals are at KU, he cleans some of the skulls and skeletons and preserves some of the bat bodies in jars filled with a preservative. The specimens are then catalogued in order to secure the data.

"I'm interested in how animals diversify, colonize a new area and evolve into a new species," he said.

When the KU researchers are done studying the specimens, one-half is sent to the Philippine National Museum in Manila; the other half remains in the collection at KU's Natural History Museum.

Esselstyn said the flying fox fruit bat is "the flagship species for conservation in the Philippines" because its appearance is so appealing it has the potential to change the way people think about bats.

On the island, many legends about bats flourish, he said. A popular legend involves a half-man who has wings and enters people's homes to drink their blood and steal their bodies.

"It's difficult for one species to overcome that legend," he said, "but if we give the government a reason to protect a patch of forest it's found in, that's great."

Esselstyn's research is supported by small grants from the KU Natural History Museum Endowment Fund, American Philosophical Society, American Society of Mammalogists, American Society of Systematic Biologists and National Science Foundation.

Esselstyn and a herpetology student from KU returned to the Philippines earlier this month. At some point, he hopes to collect samples from Malaysia.

Eventually, Esselstyn would like to work as a curator at a university-based museum.
Esselstyn shows photos of a new species of flying fox or fruit bat that he helped discover on an island south of Manila, Philippines.

Jake Esselstyn, a 33-year-old Kansas University graduate student, looks through a specimen drawer in Lawrence.
The skull of a Mindoro stripe-faced fruit bat is shown in Lawrence. (AP Wirephotos)
Arm general talks with KU students

LAWRENCE — At the height of an unpopular war, student protesters at the University of Kansas burned their student union. The National Guard was called out.

Now, at the height of the latest unpopular war, about 150 students sat down Thursday with a three-star general in that same building, asking him about Iraq, the military and U.S. foreign policy.

Taking questions from students on a variety of topics for more than an hour, Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, commander of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, seemed at ease as he discussed the challenges facing the United States and the military in Iraq, Africa and other regions.

"I would love to come back again, if KU would allow me," Caldwell said.

He said he was impressed with the questions the students asked.

"They asked tough, intellectual questions. I really thought they would ask me more about life in the military," Caldwell said. "But they had some tough political questions. I mean, they were well-prepared, thought-out, tough questions that you would take and talk about for hours in a classroom environment."
More than 900 students received degrees from the University of Kansas after the summer session. Derby students named were: Janel Rae Harting, internal medicine prof 1 certificate; Kathryn Leigh Morrison, daughter of Ken and Carolyn Morrison, bachelor of general studies; Natasha Lauren Starbird, daughter of Cliff Starbird, bachelor of arts; Stacey Anna Nicholson, internal medicine prof 1 certificate.
Area high school seniors named Kansas Honor Scholars

Students from four Montgomery County high schools were honored Wednesday, Nov. 14, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment. A total of 40 seniors from Caney Valley, Cherryvale, Independence and Field Kindley-Coffeyville high schools were recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at the Coffeyville Country Club.

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971 and has honored more than 100,000 students. Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher-education goals.

During the ceremony, each student received an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by Jennifer Alderdice, director for student programs at the KU Alumni Association.

Among the honored seniors are:

- Field Kindley-Coffeyville High School: Yusif Abudu, Elizabeth Bell, Von Bentley, Micha Brown, Kari Buetow, Diana Cook, Kristen Davenport, Sarah Graham, Mary Kate Nicholson, Torwin Smart, Austin Thompson and Katie Wright.
High school seniors from Montgomery County were named Kansas Honor Scholars by the University of Kansas Alumni Association during a banquet on Wednesday night in Coffeyville. Kansas Honor Scholars represent the top 10 percent of high school seniors in Kansas. Students from Caney Valley High School (left photo) who were named Kansas Honor Scholars were (left to right) Abigail Walls, Gabrielle Rodriguez, Molly Robbins, Jessica Holeman, Allie Abilez and Paige Testerman. Students from Cherryvale High School (right photo) who were given the scholar titles include (seated, left to right) Caleb Siebel and Adam Blaes, (standing left to right) Mitchell Hucke, Augusta Stidham, Katie DeTar and Amanda Stidham. (Photos by Andy Taylor)
Pharmacy school aims to reverse rural drain

Sarah Kessinger
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — There’s satisfaction in the voice of Salina pharmacist Jeff Denton when he tells of a former pharmacy student who once trained at his business.

After graduation from the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy, she moved to Osborne with plans to purchase the local drug store.

“That community’s going to be well served,” Denton said.

But such situations are rare, says the long-time owner of B&K Prescription Shop.

“Our biggest problem is finding people to come out to rural Kansas and work.”

While Salina’s got an adequate supply of pharmacists, Denton said, there are communities within a 50-mile radius without a one.

Much of rural Kansas today faces the challenge of looking for physicians, dentists and, increasingly, pharmacists.

Seven counties across the state have no drug stores and 32 have just one. With retirement age approaching for many rural pharmacists, that shortage will be compounded unless things change, said the dean of KU’s pharmacy school, Ken Audus.

Seeking to get a handle on the decline, the school is seeking nearly $50 million in new state funds to expand its facilities in Lawrence and add a satellite location in Wichita.

Right now, KU’s six-year program graduates 105 students each year. It isn’t enough to fill the rural void, Audus said, hoping to add some 45 more slots in Lawrence and 40 more at the medical school’s teaching site in Wichita.

With additional space, the school could perhaps start to marshal the forces needed to keep small-town pharmacies going and help maintain communities as attractive places to live.

“If people have to not only drive to get medicine, but to get advice and recommendations on how to use it safely, it’s a real inconvenience,” Denton notes. “People do use pharmacists for health information as much as doctors sometimes.”

“It’s a very real dilemma,” agreed Rep. Don Hill, R-Emporia, a pharmacist and owner of two local Medicine Shoppe franchises.

Neighboring Chase and Wabaunsee counties have no pharmacy, Hill said. Nearby Greenwood County just watched one close, leaving only one left.

Even in Emporia, Hill knows of at least three vacancies at local drug stores and the hospital.

The state Board of Regents, which oversees state universities, soon will consider whether to send a request to the 2008 Legislature, which convenes in January, for state funds to expand the state’s only pharmacy school.

Advocates hope to combine private fund-raising, tuition and state tax revenues for the project. Along with the expansion, they hope to sell small-town living to more students, who nowadays often tend toward urban jobs.

Both Denton and Audus say there is something special about owners of small-town drug stores.

“They have a certain standing in the community,” Audus said.

“A lot of pharmacists out here are in towns where you’re not dealing with customers, you’re dealing with your neighbors and that’s a different type of situation,” Denton said. “That takes a special type of person to do that.”

Audus said the school takes students on tours of the state’s various regions, including rural towns. They also promote a program that places students with professional pharmacists during two summers of their studies.

Those who go to rural communities “have their eyes opened,” said Audus, a former “drug store rat” himself, who spent his high school years stocking shelves for his hometown pharmacist.

“They get a little different view of what goes on in small towns, the very nice living conditions, a good place to raise a family. That gives them a little different feeling rather than just reading about it or hearing about it.”

Audus said the school’s expansion is critical to continuing that work.

“We turn away 335 students per year,” he said. “The most difficult letters I have to write are those saying, ’You’re fully qualified but we don’t have the space.’”
Twenty-three choral students from Chanute High School and one band student (with a second chosen as alternate) were selected Nov. 3 for the Southeast District Honor Choir and Band. More than 1,000 students from 15 counties auditioned in the event, hosted by Chanute High School.

The student musicians will participate in an all-day mini-convention at LCHS Saturday, Dec. 1 to rehearse as a group. An evening performance for the public will follow. The choral clinician will be William Eash, Ed.D., from Bethel College. The band clinician will be Tom Stidham, assistant director of bands, University of Kansas.

The choral performances will include Handel’s “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around” and Mozart’s “Laudate Pueri.”

The following CHS students are among the choir members of just more than 170:

**Sopranos** — Christine Woodard, Blair Watkins, Maggie Sigler, Rhiannon Zinuticz, Jillian Taylor and Megan Lester

**Altos** — Rachel Wilson, Abigail Lind, Cara Oliphant, Taylor Vallier, Ashton Triplett, Caylee Cooper and Ashley Gericke

**Tenors** — Andrew Rutter, Donnie Rucker, Peter Fairchild, Aaron Westerman, Dwayne Tenpenny and Tyler Allen

**Basses** — John Tripp, Shane Becher, Caleb Wood and Matthew Bollig

The CHS band students are Mark Dennis and Mark Stich (alternate).

These students are also eligible for selection into the State Honor Choir and Band. Preliminary auditions for this occurred at the same time, but final selections will be made after the District performance and announced later in December.
No-gun signs to go up at college

By BRUCE SYMES
Register Reporter

Signs depicting a prohibition on handguns will be erected at Allen County Community College campus, although they are not really necessary.

Trustees, meeting last night in the ACCC Student Center, directed President John Masterson to hang signs at residence halls and the main academic building. Their decision followed a couple months of deliberation about the need for the signs and an interpretation of Kansas law last night by Sheriff Tom Williams, whom the board had invited to discuss the matter.

The Legislature has approved concealed carry but has a list of places where guns are banned, regardless of whether an individual is licensed to carry them. That includes schools.

"There is a law on the books that says you can't bring a firearm on campus," Masterson said, adding he'd surveyed other schools and found some have signs, some don't and some are still undecided.

Williams was to-the-point in his assessment of the law.

"It would be a violation of state law as soon as they crossed the threshold of your buildings, and I wouldn't hesitate to arrest them even if a sign wasn't present. I'd do it in a heartbeat," he said. "However, it doesn't cover your parking lots, your grounds; I'm not even sure your dorms are covered."

The statutes pertaining to concealed carry require businesses, homeowners and any others wishing guns left behind to post commonly recognized signs — a circled handgun with a slash through it — banning them on the premises. Certain institutions like schools, government offices and churches are includ...
ed in the law as having permanent prohibitions of guns, but Williams noted the courthouse and sheriff's office has elected to hang them.

"You're being duplicitous by hanging signs on your building, but it doesn't hurt," the sheriff said. "Good people don't need to see them anyway. It's like locking your car or locking the door of your house. Honest people don't require it, and it won't matter to criminals."

Trustee Loren Korte echoed that observation.

"Anyone who comes in with bad intentions isn't going to pay attention to signs, but to me it would make sense to put them on the dorms."

"I would have no problem hanging signs anywhere, on the main building as well as the residence halls. It's better to err on the side of caution," Trustee Spencer Ambler said.

With that, Masterson said he would get the signs.

ALUMNI OF ACCC are performing well at transfer schools, Allene Knedlik, vice president for academic and student affairs, told trustees.

In reports from Kansas State and Emporia State universities, graduates of the Iola-based college had cumulative grade point averages of 2.96 and 3.10, respectively, on a 4-point scale. The figures exceeded those of students who had not transferred but rather attended the four-year schools directly from high schools. At K-State, the "native" GPA was 2.7; ESU's was 3.02.

"We've exceeded the native Kansas State students' GPA and we've exceeded the native ESU students' GPA, as well," Knedlik said, adding reports were expected next month from Fort Hays, Pittsburg State and Wichita State universities.

The University of Kansas does not report cumulative GPA comparisons, she noted.
KU grad finds new bat

By JAN BILES
Topeka Capital-Journal

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — University of Kansas graduate student Jake Esselstyn was collecting bat species in 2006 with a research team in the forests of the Philippines when a guide told him about an unusual fruit bat he'd seen.

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Officer to discuss strategies

LAWRENCE — Military officers and social science professors plan to meet this week to discuss how to help U.S. troops better understand the people in the countries they go to.

The two-day military-social science roundtable discussion is scheduled for Thursday and Friday at the Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

The event starts at 9 a.m. Thursday with an opening speech by the commander of Fort Leavenworth.

The first day of discussions will focus on subjects researched by teams of two — a professor along with a military officer who has been deployed to a world trouble spot.

The second day of the roundtable will include presentations by foreign liaison officers.
Kansas families use reusable diapers to help environment

By Mindie Paget
Lawrence Journal-World

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Sandy Beverly sometimes feels like Ma Ingalls from "Little House on the Prairie."

When she’s putting out her son’s cloth diapers to dry in the backyard, it occurs to her that mothers have been performing roughly the same ritual for centuries.

“I feel a connection to women in the past,” said Beverly, a Lawrence mother of two. “But I don’t have to wash them by hand. That’s nice.”

What’s also nice, Beverly says, is that she feels like she’s doing her part to protect the planet by using cloth diapers.

She’s not alone. An abundance of Web sites and bustling message boards, as well as two national organizations devoted to cloth diapering — the Real Diaper Association and the National Association of Diaper Services — suggest a slow resurgence in the practice.

That growing interest seems to be reflected in Lawrence, where Amber Lehrman and her husband recently sold the city’s only diaper service — which they opened three years ago — because business was getting too brisk.

“At one point we were washing 500 diapers a week,” Lehrman said. “That was about a dozen families.”

And that doesn’t account for parents who wash diapers at home.

“Anymore, I see people all the time with cloth diapers out and about,” said Lehrman, who used cloth diapers for her two children.

“I think it really is a growing market.”

Still, the practice is far from mainstream, even in liberal Lawrence.

That’s why Lehrman, Beverly and two other local mothers are playing host to an information session about cloth diapering at the Lawrence Public Library.

“The reason I didn’t do cloth diapers with my first son is because I didn’t have any examples. It seemed intimidating to me,” Beverly said. “I want people to have an opportunity to learn about it and see some moms who do it.”

Beverly used disposable diapers with her first son, Simon, now 4 years old, because she thought cloth would be a hassle. But by the time she had her second son, the Lehrmans had opened Express Diapers and Beverly gave cloth a try.

“Eventually I found out it was not overwhelming to wash them myself,” she said.

Cloth diapers are generally made from cotton. The most basic styles are secured using safety pins or hook-and-loop fasteners. A waterproof cover goes over the diaper to prevent leaks.

Cloth diapers are bulkier than disposables. Most single-use diapers contain a chemical called sodium polyacrylate, which absorbs up to 100 times its weight in water and allows manufacturers to streamline their product. Cloth diapers get absorbency from additional layers of fabric. Beverly has learned to accommodate that extra bulk.

“I tend to use one-piece clothes instead of pants,” she said. “When I use pants, I’ve been getting bigger ones and rolling them up or cutting them off.”

Some diaper covers incorporate Velcro and snaps. There are even all-in-one models, which can cost up to $18 each, that combine diaper and cover, making changes as simple as with disposables.

And with diaper services — which Lehrman said costs a few cents more per diaper than buying disposables — parents can toss soiled diapers into a pail without even rinsing them, put them by the curb once a week and wait for new diapers to arrive.

The bonus, Lehrman says, is that cloth-diapered babies tend to
potty train up to a year earlier than those who wear disposable diapers. That more than pays for the extra expense of a diaper service, she said.

Although routines vary by household and a baby’s age,

Beverly said she washes a load of cloth diapers every other day and hangs them to dry. She believes the amount of water and other resources involved in that process pales in comparison to the energy consumed in the production and distribution of disposable diapers.

“I know there is some controversy about that,” Beverly said. “I suspect that the cloth diaper proponents exaggerate their case a little and the disposable diaper proponents exaggerate their case a little.”

Indeed, there are passionate advocates on both sides of the debate, which apparently escalated in 1990, the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. Many states were considering taxing or banning sales of disposable diapers. Industry leader Proctor & Gamble commissioned a study on the environmental impact of its product that found laundering a cloth diaper over the course of its lifetime consumed up to six times the water used to manufacture a single-use diaper and produced nearly 10 times the water pollution.

Cloth diaper proponents cite reports that say 18 billion single-use diapers are thrown in landfills each year, taking as many as 500 years to decompose and commonly containing untreated sewage. They also say it takes upwards of 82,000 tons of plastic and 1.3 million tons of wood pulp to manufacture the disposable diapers used in the United States.

Cloth diaper proponents also have concerns with chemicals used in disposable diapers and say diaper rashes occur less frequently with cloth.

Karl Brooks, a professor in Kansas University’s environmental studies program, hasn’t researched any scientific studies about the environmental impacts of cloth versus disposable diapers. But as a parent of two children during the disposable era — and someone who has thought a lot about environmental policy — Brooks believes cloth diapers will remain a minority choice.

“American families seem to have very little ‘disposable time’ to pick up the intensive responsibilities of using cloth,” he said.