Political speaker: Excitement still surrounds presidential race

By CLEON RICKE\Herald Senior Writer

Variety is the spice of life and it's done wonders for American politics these days, one Kansas political analyst says.

The wide variety of Democratic and Republican choices who were available during this presidential primary season drew huge numbers of new voters and injected new energy into the electoral process, Burdett Loomis, Kansas University political science professor, said.

Loomis is the speaker for the this year's Eggs & Issues breakfast, which will be 8:30 a.m. April 12 at Washburn Towers, Fifth and Main. Tickets are $10 and must be bought by April 10. Tickets are available from the Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce or members of the chamber's Legislative Action Committee, which sponsors the annual event.

Loomis was the first speaker for the inaugural Eggs & Issues.

Much of the political excitement has been among long-downtrodden Democrats, who face an unprecedented-ed choice between Barack Obama, a black man, and Hillary Clinton, a woman, for presidential nominee, he said.

Loomis said he attended the recent Democratic presidential caucus in Douglas County and was surprised and impressed by the number of new people taking part and their enthusiasm.

"It was kind of a big party... it was fun," Loomis said. "Yeah, I'm over 60. And I'm a cynic when it comes to politics."

"But it was great fun."

Although some experts, including Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburg, predict voters will be worn down by the long campaign and constant barrage of attack ads, Loomis thinks there will be a large number of people who feel they'll make a difference in what will be a pivotal election in American history.

Loomis said he believes one expert's prediction that the national turnout for this year's presidential election will be at least 63 percent.

"That doesn't sound that great but it's better than it's been," he said. Indeed, that would be the best turnout in 40 years, he said.

Loomis said he can't predict how the election will turn out.

Something may happen involving the economy, war or other issue that could completely upend the campaign, he said.

And there could be one of those YouTube moments featuring a candidate's past embarrassing indiscretion that could affect the campaign, he said.

One prediction Loomis could make — it's not likely that Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius would be tapped to be Obama's vice president.

Sebelius has had great national visibility because of her reply to President Bush's State of the Union speech and she's campaigned heavily on Obama's behalf.

However, she's from a state that probably won't have much effect on the presidential election.

"He won't win Kansas even if she's on the ticket," Loomis said.

Loomis said he's seen pundits' lists of top 12 likely Obama vice presidential picks and Sebelius isn't on them.

She might be offered a Cabinet-level job — if that would interest her, he said.

"She's got a day job," Loomis said. "I think she has a general ambition but she's not going to spend her time worrying about the next thing."
Sunday, March 30

Interfaith Alliance
Interfaith Alliance of Southeast Kansas will host a free public forum at 3 p.m. in the United Methodist Campus Ministry Center, 201 E. Williams. Title will be “Movies, Religion, Churches and Censorship.”

Panelists will include Stephen Teller, PhD, Pittsburg State University English professor, moderator; Don Viney, PhD, philosophy professor; Bobby Winters, PhD, mathematics professor; and Bill Sollner, Arma, teacher, M.A. in English and M.S. in education, University of Kansas, U.S. Navy pilot from 1945-1956, and puppetry practitioner.

Interfaith Alliance of Southeast Kansas is an organization dedicated to the proposition that America is a nation in which citizens of all religions and of none are welcome to participate freely and fully in all of America’s social and political functions.
Sigma Alpha Lambda is proud to announce that Kelsey Jo Simpson, Spring Hill, was recently recognized as a member of Sigma Alpha Lambda, national leadership and honors organization at the University of Kansas. Sigma Alpha Lambda is a national leadership and honors organization dedicated to promoting and rewarding academic achievement and providing members with opportunities for community service, personal development, and lifelong professional fulfillment.
Military and the media

CGSC, KU join forces in new classes

Melissa Bower | Staff Writer

If a reporter approaches Maj. Liz Casely with a tough question, she wants to be able to answer with more than "no comment."

Casely deploys to Iraq in November and plans to work in the communications field. Many Command and General Staff Officer Course students have already deployed and worked with media professionals, embedded or otherwise. But, like Casely, they want to be better prepared for interviews.

"Just being able to think through an answer, I think that's the most important," Casely said.

Casely is enrolled in an elective class "Bridging the Gap" between media and the military. She and other CGSOC students will report on news stories, talk to journalists and learn how media professionals think. Most importantly, they'll learn alongside students studying journalism at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan.

The KU class has been meeting since January, taught by professor Barbara Barnett. The KU students have heard from guest speakers, including Will Stebbins, bureau chief for Al Jazeera English; Kirsten Sharnberg, embedded journalist for The Chicago Tribune; and Ward Carroll, editor of Military.com. The KU students have also toured Fort Leavenworth and learned about the military culture.

Barnett said media and military professionals are often in the same position of helping the community. She said she wanted journalism students to get a clearer picture of how the military releases information.

"(Military) have their job to do and sometimes they can’t tell the whole story," she said.

The CGSOC portion of the class began meeting in March, beginning with a social hour with KU students. Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth Commander Lt. Gen. William Caldwell IV visited the meeting to thank KU students.

"I am thrilled you all are interested in doing this," Caldwell told KU students. "Even the fact you are still students, we can learn a lot more from you."

Maj. Nate Bollinger, CGSOC student, said he was eager to become more media savvy.

"If you tell the truth and don't hide anything, you have nothing to fear," he said.

Steve Kerrick and Jim Thomas are teaching the course on the CGSOC side. Kerrick and Thomas organized the class with Barnett and KU professor Tom Volek. The class is the first of a three-part phase funded by a $50,000 grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation. Other phases for the grant include a Journalism Boot Camp and a Media and the Military E-Journal project.

Kerrick said the focus of the course was to help military officers build relationships with journalists and learn to provide better information to the American public.

"We've done a lot of interaction with the media — for example, Northwest Missouri (State), KU and others come and act as embedded media," he said. "This is the first time we've done an academic endeavor with mid-grade officers."

Not all of the KU students are strangers to the military. Bryan Wheeler, a junior, served in the Air Force for four years. When military and media
students switched roles, Wheeler got a taste of what it’s like to be interviewed. Military students, playing the role of reporters, drilled him for details of a fictional shooting on post.

“This is really tough,” Wheeler said as he tried to share information without speaking hypothetically or speculating.

The “reporters,” all CGSOC students, have the next two weeks to complete their news story assignments. In the meantime, they’ll have to stay in touch with the KU students — their press contacts — to make sure their information is accurate. Barnett will act as their editor.

Kerrick will play the role of commanding officer of the KU students. He will put pressure on them as military public affairs officers.

Air Force Maj. Todd Hohn expects to have more contact with the media in the future.

“As we get higher in senior rank, the opportunities to work with the media are more numerous,” he said.

KU junior Kathleen Powers plans to have contact with the military in the future. She is interning with the Fort Riley, Kan., Public Affairs Office this summer. Powers said the guest speakers and case studies taught her new things about the tensions between media and the military.

“I think what we’re lacking on the media side is perspective,” she said.
Historian to speak on global warming

A leading historian of the American West will talk about the possible effects of global warming on the Great Plains in Salina on May 6.

Don Worster, professor of American History at the University of Kansas, will speak at the Salina Art Center at 7 p.m., as a guest of the North Central Chapter of the KU Alumni Association.

Worster is the Hall Distinguished Professor of American History at KU, and the author of several books, including “Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s.”

The event will start with complementary wine, hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar at 6:15 p.m.

Reservations should be made by May 1; for more information, or to make reservations, call the alumni association at 1-800-584-2957 or at www.kualumni.com.
Fighting fire with training

Open house: Event celebrates regional center.

By STEPHANIE FARLEY
sfarley@gctelegram.com

About 400 tiny, red fire hats were ordered for Sunday’s event in which representatives of Garden City Community College and the city of Garden City gathered for the opening of the Southwest Kansas Fire Training Center at the college.

GCCC Dean of Technical Education Judy Crymble and others had their hats on. But 5-year-old Wyatt Gigot didn’t need a fire hat compliments of GCCC — he already has one with “Wyatt” printed on it.

At this point, Wyatt wants to be a firefighter when he grows up.

He attended the training center open house with his mom and spoke between bites of cake about touring the building.

“I went all the way to the top,” Wyatt said of the four-story tower with accessible rooftop.

In addition to the tours, a ceremony, ribbon cutting and demonstrations of rappelling were part of the open house.

Where GCCC Fire Science Director Larry Pander sees the center fitting into the dreams of Wyatt and other aspiring firefighters, as well as those currently attending GCCC’s Fire Science program, is helping ensure they have the training to do their job right and stay safe while doing so.

During Sunday’s ceremony, Pander told the group gathered near the new tower, on the southwest corner of the GCCC campus, that he sees the tower and training center playing a role in decreasing the number of firefighter deaths related to lack of adequate training.

According to the college, the center, completed and opened in January, was built out of a partnership between the city and college.

The training center includes a two-story burn building attached to a four-story training tower topped off with a fifth-story open level.

The burn building includes burn rooms on both floors that can contain controlled fires of up to 600 degrees — each room is fitted with heat sensors that monitor the temperature from the outside.

The burn building also includes other rooms that can be set up to simulate home, office, factory and other conditions that provide lifelike fire scenarios for training.

The training tower is set up like a commercial stairwell and includes features such as rappelling anchors and replaceable sheetrock wall panels for escape exercises.

One of the exterior doors is reinforced with specialized hardware to allow forced-entry training.

The site of the tower and burn building also includes a separate one-story steel building with two large classrooms, storage areas and exterior access restrooms.

It’s the only facility of its kind in western Kansas. Pander, along with GCCC President Carol Ballantyne, said during the open house. Pander said the center allows them to create “virtually any firefighting scenario conceivable."

“This place is invaluable, because no one learning to be a firefighter is really ready to go to work until he’s faced the smoke and heat that you’ll find in an actual situation,” Pander said.

The center provides training for potential fire scenarios; rescue operations and procedures; rappelling; ventilation; forcible entry; use of self-contained breathing apparatus; fire department driver, operator, pumper and ladder truck operations; and emergency incident command and communications.

Ballantyne called the celebration of the tower’s completion “a great day in the realm of public safety.”

Without the cooperation of the college and city of Garden City, the training center would still be a dream, she said.

Garden City Fire Department Chief Allen Shelton said the training center had been a dream of his and the Garden City Fire Department’s for a long time.

Shelton and Pander saw that dream fully realized Sunday as Pander used a fire ax to cut caution tape positioned on the top of a wooden log.

Shelton said 13 Garden City firefighters employed with the department have graduated from the college’s fire science program. Jacob Gonzales and Luke Freeman will graduate from the program in May and recently were hired by the fire department.

Gonzales said the center gives them a place for hands-on training.

Before, they said, a burn trailer from the University of Kansas had to be brought in for fire scenario training.

Now, the training center with burn building is readily accessible on campus.

Ron Schwartz, a member of the GCCC Board of Trustees, said the training center was an example of the college reaching out to meet the needs of the city and community.

“If they can come to us with a need, we’re there for them,” he said of the college partnering with various entities.
Toward the end of Sunday’s open house, Wyatt Gigot was on top of the fire-training tower waving to his mom below.

He had his firefighter gear on and a hood to protect his ears from the cold.

Jackie Gigot said her son has loved firefighters and firefighting since age 2, saying the open house allowed him to see some of what goes into becoming a firefighter.
KU to honor top high school seniors from four counties
April 16 in Scott City

* LAWRENCE — Students from five Kansas high schools will be honored Wednesday, April 16, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

A total of 15 seniors from high schools in Greeley, Lane, Scott and Wichita counties will be recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a 6:30 p.m. dinner program at the Majestic Theater, 420 Main St., Scott City.

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. Honorees' names are listed at www.news.ku.edu/2008/april1/khpscottcity.shtml.

During the ceremony, each student will receive an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by Mike Davis, senior vice president for alumni programs at the KU Alumni Association.

William Crowe, special assistant to the dean of libraries, will speak to the students and their parents and guests.

Honored students will be guests of the alumni association and KU Endowment; parents and area alumni are welcome to attend at a cost of $15 each.

Community volunteers collect reservations, coordinate details and serve as local contacts for the event. Marsha Edwards of Scott City will be the site coordinator as well as county coordinator for Lane, Scott and Wichita counties. Dalene Moser of Tribune will be the county coordinator for Greeley County.

The Kansas Honors Program is made possible through KU Endowment and proceeds from the Jayhawk license plate program.

Honorees from Greeley County High School are Ethan Schiegel and Kaman Schneider. Honorees from other schools are Marit Ehmke and Corey Moomaw, Dighton High School; Shelbey Applegarth, Healy; Miles Doherty, Ethan Gechter, Tyrel George Scott, Ian Huck, Trace Kendrick, Cole Pearson, and Tawnia Smith Scott Community High School; Erin Gerstberger, Gage Ridder, and Aubrey Williams Wichita County High School.
Students from nine Kansas high schools will be honored Thursday, April 3, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment. A total of 40 seniors from high schools in Barber, Harper, Kingman and Pratt counties will be recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a 6:30 p.m. dinner program Park Hills Country Club, 337 Lake Road, Pratt.

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. Honorees’ names are listed at www.news.ku.edu/2008/march/19/khpratt.shtml.

During the ceremony, each student will receive an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by Sarah Blaney, assistant director of Kansas programs for the KU Alumni Association.

Hannah Love, a senior from Dodge City and KU’s student body president, will speak to the students and their parents and guests.

Honored students will be guests of the alumni association and KU Endowment; parents and area alumni are welcome to attend at a cost of $10 each.

Community volunteers collect reservations, coordinate details and serve as local contacts for the event. Cindy Keller and Marcia Suiter, both of Pratt, will be the site coordinators. County coordinators are Bob Slinkard of Medicine Lodge for Barber County; Debra Meisenheimer of Kingman and Charles Holcomb of Cunningham for Kingman County; and Ron Giesen of Anthony for Harper County.

The Kansas Honors Program is made possible through KU Endowment and proceeds from the Jayhawk license plate program.

Barber County students listed as follows:
Jacob Clarke, Medicine Lodge High School
Kristen Eck, Medicine Lodge High School
Rachel McDuff, Medicine Lodge High School
Brooke Mease, Medicine Lodge High School
Jordyn Rickard, Medicine Lodge High School
Mattie Sheldon, Medicine Lodge High School
Blake Koblitz, South Barber High School
Lori Yearout, South Barber High School
Basketball and civic engagement at FHSU

I have always thought that basketball referees are only right about half of the time. About half of the calls they make are wrong, and they probably miss about half of the things they should have called. Watching basketball on TV last weekend did not change my mind.

Of course, one might think that I am just whining about calls against the University of Kansas, but I am even willing to grant that calls made against Texas are sometimes wrong.

But when people get together to play some ball on the driveway or in the gym, we call our own fouls, we call our own traveling violations, and we probably even call palming the ball more often than the NCAA refs do.

We do better than they do all around.

Yet, when we call our own, we sometimes do get into disputes. I've been astonished by the times I thought it was an offensive foul on the other guy, and he thought I clearly fouled him.

As groups, then, we get assigned and paid referees so that their authority is not questioned and so that they get people with training and experience. When it is a game among strangers and when more hangs on the results of the game, then we cannot just call our own anymore.

But at the same time, if we had to have official refs just to play ball on the driveway, then not too much playing would get done. We would miss out on a lot.

In society in general, government as a whole and many specific government offices serve something of the function of the referee. They try to enforce some rules and keep things running...
They get some training and experience so they can do the job better, and they have authority.

But, of course, our motto should perhaps be “Governments R Us.” In a democracy, we are the sovereign power. So we are calling our own fouls.

The civic engagement efforts at Fort Hays State University are designed to do two things: We want to help people become refs, and we want to get people out there putting up the shots and calling the fouls themselves.

We aim at producing refs both through what we teach and through service and involvement outside of the classroom. In our curriculum, we have a number of departments — including but not limited to the Department of Political Science and the Department of Leadership Studies — that help develop the knowledge of some part of society, the skills necessary to serve society and bring people in society to work better with others, and the attitudes that bring about the improvement of society.

Outside of the classroom, we have the American Democracy Project, the Center for Civic Leadership, and Tigers in Service, among other efforts at fostering civic engagement. The extracurricular activities range from weekly community discussion to the production of a television show to hosting governmental officials to developing projects for community improvement to carrying out those improvements ourselves.

But these are not just for those who seek jobs in local, state or national government. In fact, they are intended to bring benefits to those who will become elementary teachers or bankers, who are fathers and mothers, who are community volunteers or members of organizations seeking to promote the good of others.

That is, civic engagement at FHSU is aimed just as much at enabling students to develop the knowledge, the skills and the values that will enable them to lead their church youth group or work productively for the Community Assistance Center as it is aimed helping people be city managers or members of the House of Representatives.

We need government officials, of course, and we need them to be well-educated and capable. But even more than that, we need citizens who are able to recognize needs and take action to meet those needs.

Just as we need both referees and people who will call their own fouls, so also as an organized community we need both the officials and the citizen-participants.

And that is why we at FHSU aim to engage our students in and with the community.
LAWRENCE (AP) — A University of Kansas researcher warns that deforestation in Mexico may ruin the fascinating migration of the monarch butterfly.

Ecology and evolutionary biology professor Chip Taylor said the 3,000-mile migration could rapidly come to an end, unless something is done to stop the destruction of the butterfly's source of food and shelter.

Taylor heads KU’s Monarch Watch, which studies research, conservation and education about the butterfly. The group monitors a 217-square-mile reserve in Mexico that is the winter home for millions of migrating butterflies from across North America.

Taylor says soaring lumber prices have led to illegal clear-cutting in Mexico. He blames the practice for millions of monarchs dying from exposure over the past two years.