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Gun rights, mental health on 2010 ballot

By John Milburn
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA—Gun rights and mental health advocates are leaving nothing to chance this fall as they push for passage of two amendments to the Kansas Constitution. One issue establishes that Kansans have an individual right to own a gun. The second removes language granting legislators the authority to deny voting rights to the mentally ill, though no laws currently exist. On first blush, it would seem their concerns are unfounded, given that legislators had little trouble over the past two years in securing a spot for the measures on the Nov. 2 ballot. But the advocates say they don't want voters to overlook either matter when they step forward to select from a slate of candidates for statewide and congressional offices.

"I personally consider this a no-brainer," said Patricia Stoneking, president of the Kansas Rifle Association. "Nobody seems to have a problem with this." The guns issue can be traced to a 1905 Kansas Supreme Court ruling in the case of City of Salina v. Blakesly, where the justices upheld that a man convicted of possessing a firearm did not have the individual right to own a gun. The court ruled that "the people's right" to bear arms was a collective right. Only militias were entitled to have firearms and only to be used in defense of the state. But for generations, Kansans have owned rifles, shotguns and handguns, used for hunting and personal protection. In 2006, legislators overrode Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' veto to make concealed carry legal.

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State wants to buy excess water rights

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The state Conservation Commission has money again this year to pay for the Water Right Retirement Program, which pays landowners to give up water rights in areas where the aquifer is "over appropriated," with more wells than can be sustained. The commission is accepting applications for some areas in Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Norton and Philips counties along the Prairie Dog Creek and three other areas in Thomas County: central Barrett Township, around Colby and around Menlo.

The Thomas County area includes land along the creek from north of Rexford to the Sheridan County line. Maps of eligible areas are available at www.scc.ks.gov. Steve Frost, water conservation program manager, said the commission and Groundwater Management District No. 4 in Colby analyzed the area and worked with landowners to find the best places for the program. "It is one of several tools they're using to slow down the depletion of the aquifer," he said. "Groundwater Management has also been able to get other federal dollars to

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KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Special Olympics bowling tourney here on Saturday

Special Olympics teams from as far away as Hays and WaKeeney came to Colby on Saturday for the West Region Bowling Tournament at Colby Bowl and Fun Center. The athletes play several games each for awards and prizes. The Colby-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau provided cookies and juice. The region will also have a bowling tournament for the southern counties this Saturday. The tournaments serve as a qualifier for November's state tournament.



KATHRYN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Ray Imhof and Doris Imhof Johnson have published four books. Doris wrote two herself and they collaborated on two, the latest of which will be the topic of Pioneer Memorial Library's *Booked For Lunch* program on Wednesday.

Sibling authors finish effort to bring mother's notes to life

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"Apron Strings and Other Ties," book No. 4 for the brother-sister team of Doris Imhof Johnson of Abilene, and Ray Imhof of Colby, has hit book stores. Their latest collaboration takes off where their first book, "As I Remember It," ended. The pair's mother, Esther Imhof, kept a journal of her life from an early age. She wrote notes about things that were happening in her life and about the community, Ray said. He said he and his sister loved hearing their mother's stories about the dirt storms of the 1930s and all the things their mother remembered about her early years growing up in western Kansas. In

an attempt to share her memories with other family members scattered across the country, they ended up compiling "As I Remember It." For the sequel, Ray said, he researched many of the things his mother had written down, and stories she had relayed personally to him, for historical accuracy. The first book, he said, was partly a compilation of her journals and notes. "Apron Strings and Other Ties" covers life in the Midwest in the World War II era, with the rationing of tires, sugar, and gasoline, and the struggle of trying to build a home and the difficulty of trying to find materials for construction, because everything was needed for the war effort. The story takes the reader across the country and back as the

family struggled to find its niche in the Midwest, and did whatever they could to make ends meet in a time when work was hard to find, medicine was primitive, jack rabbits were rounded up with clubs and families hung together. Ray said the other two books were written by Doris. "Gutsey Women," details 16 women who were influential in her life, and the children's book, "Cookie Crumb Trail," tells the story of a boy who takes a duckling with him on a flight to visit his grandmother. The brother-sister authors will review their latest publication of the life and times of a marriage that spanned six decades, of their struggles and triumphs from 1933 to 1996, at noon on Wednesday at Pioneer Memorial Library. The public is invited to attend. Lunch is by donation.

Briefly

Eastern Star chapters to join

The Colby and Atwood chapters of the Order of the Eastern Star will consolidate at a combined meeting at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Atwood Masonic Temple. The meeting had previously been scheduled for Sunday. For information, call Joyce Gatlin 460-3656.

Range paving to end this week

APAC Construction will continue milling and repaving South Range Avenue from near College Drive to just north of Interstate 70 this week. Drivers should watch for construction equipment and slow-moving vehicles and drive carefully, said city Public Works Director Chris Bieker. The work should finish up within a week. For information, call the Public Works Department at 460-4420.

Center offers dad program

The Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Cen-

ter is offering "24-7 Dad," a fatherhood program, starting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Redeeming Love Ministries, 345 N. Franklin in Colby. To register or for information, call Paige Campbell at 460-8177 or e-mail paigec@st-tel.net.

Hospital plans childbirth classes

Citizens Medical Center will offer a four weeks of childbirth classes from 7 to 10 p.m. Thursdays starting this week. Women due to deliver before February should attend with their labor support partner. The next classes will begin Jan. 6. For information or to register, call Jeanene Brown at the hospital Education Department at (785) 460-4850.

School to hold book fair Thursday

Sacred Heart School will hold its annual Scholastic Book Fair from 1:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m. to noon Friday. All proceeds go to the school

library. For information, call Principal Dave Evert at 460-2813.

Center to serve potatoes

The Senior Progress Center will have a potato bar fund raiser from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the center. For information, call Kaila DeBoer at 460-2901.

County to celebrate birthday

Thomas County's 125th Anniversary Celebration will kick off at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Community Building with judging of the beard and bonnet contest. The main ceremony will start at 10 a.m. For information, call the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce at 460-3401.

Have a student wash your pet

Colby Community College veterinary technology students will have a pet wash from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday at the Stanley Carr Agricultural Center on campus. Bring your dogs and cats. Cost for dogs will be \$8 to \$14, depending on weight. Cost for cats will be \$5 for a brush and \$10 for a bath. Money raised will go to the Student Veterinary Technology Association. For information, call Colleen Maison at 460-5462 or Jennifer Martin at 460-5466.

Scouts to gather food Saturday

The Colby Girl Scouts will "trick or treat" for nonperishable food for the Genesis-Thomas County food bank from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Leave food on the front porch. If the weather is bad, the Scouts will do the drive Sunday, Oct. 17. For information, call Elissa Zerr at 462-7489.



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