



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Junior golfers practice

Colby junior golfers practice Thursday mornings at Meadow Lake Golf Course. Coach Sara Betz said this group from the 9-and-under class was practicing their putting. Marin King (above) was lined up for a shot, followed by (from right) sister Braely King, Peyton Wahlmeier, Bailey Craft and Carter Liudahl. Peyton's mom, Amanda, (right) watched as Marin and the gang lined up for another putt.

KATHRYN BALLARD
Colby Free Press



Time to Vote

Three GOP candidates to face party challenge

By Christina Beringer

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Voters will have some choices to make in the Republican primary election Aug. 7, as incumbents have challengers in three races for county office.

There also will be a race for the state Legislature, where Rep. Rick Billinger of Goodland, who has represented Colby, and Rep. Ward Cassidy of St. Francis were thrown into a single district covering the northwest corner of the state.

On the county ballot, there will be races for county clerk, district judge and county attorney.

Shelly Harms is running for re-election as Thomas County Clerk. Harms has held the spot since November 2004. She is being challenged in the primary by Colby resident Cindi Kriss.

Kriss and her husband owned CK Lumber in Colby for 13 years. She now is the accounts payable manager at Colby Community College.

She qualified as a certified public accountant in Texas and Kansas, but she does not hold a license to practice.

Running for re-election as register of deeds is Republican Lara Volk, who has held the job since 2009. Before that, she was the

deputy clerk from 2003 to 2009.

Republican incumbent Kevin Berens has opposition this year in a bid for re-election as county attorney. He will face Logan County Attorney Margaret Mahoney in the primary.

Berens has been a licensed attorney in Kansas and Colorado since 1999. He was appointed to the county position in March 2011 when Bruce Flipse resigned.

In addition, Berens serves on the Kansas Sentencing Commission in Topeka, has a private practice in Colby and St. Francis and is on the advisory board for the nurs-

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Thomas County ballot to have many unopposed

By Christina Beringer

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Voters in the Thomas County primary election Tuesday, Aug. 7, should have a few interesting races, though many candidates are running unopposed.

The deadline to file was Friday, June 1. Candidates can run a write-in campaign, but it's difficult to succeed.

Candidates for commissioner, sheriff, treasurer, register of deeds and magistrate judge have no opposition in the Republican primary. There is one Democratic candidate, for sheriff, so there will be a contest for that office in the fall.

Running for two seats on the Thomas County Commission are Paul Steele of Colby and Mike Baughn of Brewster, both Republicans.

Steele is running for re-election in District 2. A retired accountant, he has held the post since 2004. He also is running for Republican precinct committeeman for Colby Ward 4. He was the executive director of the Colby Housing Authority for 28 years before retiring in 2004.

He is unopposed in the primary, and since there is no Democrat on the ballot, should be unopposed in the general election this fall, as well.

Running to fill the vacancy in District 3 being left by Commission Chairman Ken Christiansen is Baughn, a former Thomas County sheriff and longtime mayor of Brewster.

Christiansen's last meeting will be Jan. 14, 2013, to swear in the new county officers.

Baughn has been the mayor in

Brewster for 34 years, but he said he will have to give up his position if he is elected to the commission. He also is unopposed both in August and in November and has started attending weekly commission meetings as a spectator.

He has served in law enforcement since 1994. Baughn said he went up the ranks in Thomas County, from deputy to undersheriff, and was the county sheriff from 2004 to 2008. In 2008, he lost an election to the current sheriff, Rod Taylor, after a sometimes-heated campaign.

Taylor is the Republican incumbent running for sheriff unopposed in the primary. In the fall, he will face Democrat David Rodriguez. Both live in Colby.

"I've been in law enforcement

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Panel officials reject few ballot challenges

By John Hanna

AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — A panel of top Kansas officials agreed Tuesday that the state was right to help dozens of legislative candidates adjust quickly after federal judges made last-minute, widespread changes to Kansas' political districts.

The decision came during a meeting of the state Objections Board, which hears challenges to secretary of state decisions affecting political candidates. The board is made up of Attorney General Derek Schmidt, Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer and Secretary of State Kris Kobach, all Republicans.

The board also refused a gay rights group's demand to remove a conservative Democratic lawmaker from the ballot, and it rejected an appeal from a Kansas House candidate who claimed he was left off the Aug. 7 primary ballot because the state lost his paperwork.

Most of Tuesday's crowded agenda was packed with cases linked to the judges' ruling earlier this month that adjusted boundaries for congressional, legislative and State Board of Education districts. The judges stepped in after

the Legislature failed to redraw the maps to account for population shifts in the last decade.

The judges ruled only days before candidates were required to file paperwork indicating they would run for office, making the final hours before the deadline unusually hectic. Secretary of State Kris Kobach assisted more than 80 candidates who had previously filed for office by having his staff reassign candidates to new districts if the changes in boundaries affected them.

"Obviously, this entire year is unusual in terms of the election process because of the failure of the Legislature to enact new maps," Schmidt said.

Fighting between conservative and moderate Republican lawmakers prevented any redistricting maps from being approved before the Legislature adjourned earlier this year.

The most contentious challenge before the board was from Scott Hesse, a Topeka attorney and former assistant attorney general who contends that Kobach didn't have the legal authority to reassign legislative candidates to new districts after the judges reset po-



MELISSA STRAMEL

Pattern designer Melissa Stramel of Colby attended the International Quilt Market in Kansas City last month, where she showed patterns from her company, Lilac Lane. Also available for the first time at market was her new book, "A Year of Making Life Beautiful."

Colby woman writes crafts book

By Christina Beringer

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Melissa Stramel of Colby is known for her pattern company, Lilac Lane, but she's broadening her horizons and sharing her insights into the sewing, crafting and cooking arenas as an author.

In her book, "A Year of Making Life Beautiful," Stramel demonstrates 45 projects to "bake, grow, craft and sew" from her small farm near Colby.

"I've used a month-by-month format, and each month has its own theme," she said. "For example, May is about remembering."

She said each month has a quilting project, a recipe, a craft and some other theme-related sewing project. She said the inspiration came from the wardrobe of her aunt Beth, who was known throughout the family for the many Hawaiian shirts she wore. After Beth passed away, Stramel said, relatives asked her to make a quilt of the bright prints, which they gave to her uncle.

"Chapter five tells how to make Aunt Beth's Quilt, my Grandma Margie's potato salad, a memory bag and May baskets," she said.

In chapter one, Stramel tells how to make barley, flax and wheat bread; provides a pattern for a "spinning scraps" quilt; details what can be done to start planning your garden and how to force tulips; and some ideas on how to scrapbook with fabric.

Chapter seven, for July, revolves around Independence Day with a Stars-and-Stripes quilt pattern, recipes for strawberry ice cream and salsa and instructions on how to arrange flowers.

Stramel said in addition to publishing her first book, she attended the International Quilt Market as a vendor for the first time this year, making her patterns and book available to stores worldwide. She said she has 14 pattern titles for sale, ranging from quilts and bags to children's clothing.

The 84-page book is available at the Prairie Museum of Art and History and at Colby Sew and Vac, where people can also see the finished product for each of the crafts and projects, except Aunt Beth's quilt.

The spiral-bound version retails for \$24.95 and the hard-cover book is \$29.95. It can also be purchased on Stramel's website, www.melissastramel.com.

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