

## COLBY FREE PRESS

10 pages



# 'Hard 50' law to be tested

By John Milburn  
Associated Press

TOPEKA – Attorneys and state officials said Thursday it was difficult to predict whether changes to the "Hard 50" sentence law will be applied to cases retroactively based on previous Kansas Supreme Court rulings.

Legislators on Wednesday sent Republican Gov. Sam Brownback a bill revising the law, which al-

lows 50-year prison terms in certain murder cases. They wrapped up work on the measure – passing it 122-0 in the House and 40-0 in the Senate – over a two-day special session called by Brownback.

The governor plans to sign the legislation in the coming weeks. It was passed in response to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June in a Virginia case that said juries, not judges, should determine such extended prison sentences. Leg-

islators expect to know within the next nine to 15 months – when the first of the 16 appeals is decided by the Kansas Supreme Court – whether the changes they made were acceptable.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lance Kinzer said Thursday that legislators could not wait until the 2014 legislative session in January to act on the law if they wanted to have any chance of saving the cases already

in the pipeline.

"We know with 100 percent certainty that if we had waited we would have had no hope," said Kinzer, an Olathe Republican.

The bill was drafted over the past several weeks by Attorney General Derek Schmidt, key legislators and other legal staff to comply with the federal ruling. While the changes in the law will

See "HARD 50," Page 2



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Kendra Fager practiced flying a 56-inch Flo-Tail kite today at the ballfields. Her husband Curt Giebler is planning a festival next week with some much bigger kites.

## Flying festival promises fun

A kite festival is coming to Colby High School next week.

"The kites that we manufacture are anything from \$5 to about \$2,000," said Curt Giebler, owner of the retail vendor Stuff. "You can't go downtown and get this stuff."

Giebler is helping to organize "Winging it on the Plains," from 11 a.m. until dark on Saturday, Sept. 14, north of the Colby High School parking lot. The festival will include products from the company Premier Kites and Designs, which makes kites, toys, gifts and lawn and garden products.

The festival will feature the 50-by-10 foot WindTurbine, which is

lifted in the air by another kite, the 75 foot long, 15 foot wide Reilet Foil. Giebler said he is working on getting a local organization to operate a concession stand at the festival.

Giebler had recently had a festival in Scottsbluff, Neb., when he got the idea to come here from his daughter Nicole Weigel, who owns Nicole's School of Dance. There are plenty of big kite festivals on the coasts that he has heard of, and he is trying to bring festivals to the Midwest. He said he wants people to feel like they own the festivals in their communities, so the name that reflects the Colby motto, "Oasis on the Plains."

## Representative dies

TOPEKA (AP) – House Speaker Ray Merrick's office says southeast Kansas Rep. Ed Bideau has died at his home in Chanute a day after the Legislature ended a two-day special session.

Rachel Witten, spokeswoman for the speaker, said today that the

62-year-old Bideau died Thursday. She declined to give a cause of death, citing family privacy.

Funeral service times were not available today.

Bideau was an attorney in Chanute and was elected to the House in 2012.

## Six hospitalized

A five-vehicle pileup Thursday morning west of Goodland resulted from one driver pulling in front of another as he entered a construction zone on Interstate 70.

The Kansas Highway Patrol worked the accident that happened at 10:10 a.m. Thursday. The patrol reported that Frank N. Lewis, 81, of Linn Valley, was driving east and merging into the construction lane just east of Kanarado 1.8 miles from the state line.

Lewis pulled his 2002 Monte Carlo Chevrolet in front of a 2006 Ford pickup driven by Dustin Lee Bragg, 29, Wichita, who ran into the back of Lewis's car. They both crossed into the westbound lane after they collided and both hit westbound vehicles.

Lewis' car hit a 2001 Chrysler Jeep Liberty driven by Marie C. Jeffries-Farquhar, 21, Longmont, Colo., and a 2013 Buick Le Sa-

bre driven by Brett E. Johnson, 52, Chenoa Ill. Bragg's pickup hit a 2000 Buick Century driven by Damarys E. Cooper, Imperial, Neb.

Bragg was uninjured, and his pickup stopped in the median. The other four vehicles ended up in the ditch on the north side of the highway.

Frank Lewis and his passenger Ursula Lewis, 73, also of Linn Valley, both went to Goodland Regional Medical Center. No information on their condition was available by press time.

Brett Johnson and his passenger Bjorn Johnson went to Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital in Burlington, along with Jeffries-Farquhar and Cooper. Officials at the hospital said they were no longer there, and would not say where they had been sent.

The patrol did not report whether Bjorn Johnson was wearing a seatbelt, but said everyone else involved in the accident was.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Rodney Zimmerman, grounds maintenance supervisor at the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, put labels on various specimens in the extension gardens at the Wednesday afternoon (top). The garden is surrounded by trees such as evergreen, maple, pear and oak. It includes a number of potted plants (above), and some that you do not often see in northwest Kansas, like this banana tree (right).

# Aquaponics on for field day

By Ann Miner  
Thomas County Master Gardeners  
aminer@st-tel.net

Anyone with a flower garden, vegetable patch or lawn can find new ideas and answers to questions at the Horticulture Field Day at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Northwest Research-Extension Center.

Kansas State University specialists will offer a series of four half-hour talks. In addition to the educational sessions, visitors will have an opportunity to view the variety

of flowers and plants growing at the center. The event is free and open to all.

Leading off this year's sessions at 6 p.m. will be a talk on the emerging field of "Aquaponics."

"These greenhouse systems allow us to grow edible fish species like tilapia and trout as well as ornamental species like goldfish in water that is used to fertilize vegetables," said Rodney Zimmerman, who will join Alice Hill of Atwood to discuss the aquaponics systems each has developed at home. Zimmerman, grounds maintenance supervisor at

the center for the past 13 years, is coordinating the program.

At 6:30 Jared Hoyle, K-State turfgrass specialist, will discuss "Turfgrass Care and Problem-Solving," followed at 7 p.m. by Cary Rivard, K-State vegetable and fruit crop specialist, who will speak on "Vegetable Garden Care and Problem-Solving."

The final session, at 7:30 p.m., will be at the flower trials bed where Alan Stevens will no doubt once again find occasion to

See "AQUAPONICS," Page 2

