



MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press

Nearly 100 people turned out to tune up their knowledge on sprayer calibration on a workshop led by Robert Klein Feb. 12.

Farmers and professionals upgrade sprayer knowledge

Ninety-seven area producers and commercial applicators attended the Sprayer Calibration Workshop on Feb. 12 at the Thomas County 4-H Building. The program was offered by the Thomas and Rawlins County Extension Council with help from area sponsors Farm Implement and Supply, American Implement, Colby Ag Center, Lang Diesel Inc., BASF and the K-State Northwest Area Office.

Robert Klein, University of Nebraska Cropping Systems Specialist was the featured speaker. Klein discussed sprayer calibration, nozzle selection, spray particle size and doing a professional job of pesticide application. He involved the audience through hands-on interaction with sprayer tip kits, sprayer tip

booklets and also use of the "clicker system" where participants could buzz in on answers to multiple choice questions.

Klein also utilized a sprayer tip table and strobe light to demonstrate the various types of nozzle patterns and particle sizes.

The overall evaluations from the meeting were positive, with most of those attending saying they will implement something from the meeting on their operation, from replacing sprayer nozzles to more frequent calibration of sprayers.

In addition, nearly everyone said the meeting was a good value for their time.

Kansas school-funding change approved by Senate Wednesday

By John Hanna
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA - Conservative Republicans pushed a proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution on education funding through the state Senate on Wednesday in hopes of blocking the courts from deciding disputes over how much the state spends on its public schools.

The Senate's 27-13 vote came with a lawsuit pending before the Kansas Supreme Court and six weeks after a lower court ruled that legislators aren't fulfilling their constitutional duty to adequately fund schools. All of the votes for the measure came from GOP conservatives, who have exactly the two-thirds majority in the Senate necessary to adopt a constitutional change.

The measure adds a new sentence to the state constitution's article on education, declaring that the Legislature has the exclusive power to determine how much the state will spend on schools. That article now requires the Legislature to "make suitable provision" for financing the state's "educational interests" and the Supreme Court has said it means lawmakers must finance a suitable education for every child.

The Senate's action sent the proposal to the House, where its future is uncertain because conservative Republicans - while a majority - don't have a two-thirds advantage, or 84 of 125 votes. If both chambers adopted the measure, it would go on the ballot in the August 2014 primary election, where approval by a simple ma-

majority of voters would change the constitution.

Critics said the change would eliminate any check on the Legislature if it chronically underfunded schools. But supporters argued that they're trying to make sure elected legislators make decisions about state spending instead of unelected judges, saying that's what was envisioned by the state's founders and the drafters of the education article.

"We have in our system now, or before us, what is truly a constitutional crisis," said Senate Majority Leader Terry Bruce, a conservative Hutchinson Republican and an attorney. "Our constituents would like us to resolve it once and for all."

The Senate moved quickly to adopt the proposed amendment. It debated the measure only a day after its Education Committee endorsed it and eliminated the standard day's delay before a final vote so that members could leave Topeka ahead of a winter storm.

Bruce and other conservatives contend the courts overstepped their constitutional authority by attempting to determine the proper amount of money to spend on schools. A similar backlash arose in 2005 and 2006, when the Supreme Court issued rulings in a previous lawsuit requiring legislators to increase spending on schools, though conservatives didn't have enough support to get a proposed constitutional change on the ballot then.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Jeff King, a conservative Independence Republican, said one goal of fellow supporters

of this year's proposal is to stop "appropriation by litigation" and "this endless cycle of litigation."

"The people of the state of Kansas ultimately decide what level of school funding is necessary," said King, who's also an attorney.

The latest litigation was filed in October 2010 after the state backed away from promises made under its 2005 and 2006 school finance laws. The state is being sued by the parents and guardians of 32 public school students and the Dodge City, Hutchinson, Wichita and Kansas City, Kan., school districts.

Last month, a three-judge panel in Shawnee County District Court ruled against the state and ordered lawmakers to boost annual spending on schools by at least \$440 million to hit previously promised levels.

And, in a move that some conservative GOP legislators found particularly irritating, the judges chided legislators for saying they did as much as they could for education while approving massive income tax cuts last year. Those cuts are worth nearly \$850 million during the fiscal year that begins in July.

"We don't have a constitutional crisis. Any crisis - this is a self-inflicted deal," said Sen. Tom Holland, a Baldwin City Democrat who voted against the proposed amendment. "We need to step up and call it like it is: We need to pay our dues."

Great new novels cover widely ranging interests

OK, I've held out long enough. I really try to mix up what I write, but with such great fiction items coming in so often, I just have to give you the news; I need to tell you about some new fiction books we have added.

The first book is "The Third Bullet," by Stephen Hunter. This is book eight in the *Bob Lee Swagger* series. In this thriller, protagonist Bob Lee Swagger delves into fresh forensic information from the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

As a sniper and forensic specialist, he is bound and determined to figure out just why the third bullet exploded in Kennedy's skull. Countless investigators and government committee members of the Warren Commission never discovered this truth.

Read as Stephen Hunter produces an intense scenario that will keep you on the edge of your seat. As you consider the above book, we have others such as "Killing Lincoln" and "Killing Kennedy," by Bill O'Reilly. I have been told they are also excellent reads.

Another new novel is "Lincoln's Dressmaker," by Jennifer Chiaverini. This book gives intimate details about former slave, now seamstress, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Keckley. She is one of the few in Mary Todd Lincoln's life that has true intimate knowledge of the president and his wife. Chiaverini writes some interesting accounts of this seamstress who adds a bit to history.

The next book is "The Wrath of Angels," by John Connolly. This is book 11 of the *Charlie Parker* series. In this piece, Charlie is fighting to save the world around him from the evil with its heart set on killing women, children and any other person worthy of slaughter. He seeks the serial killer known



Melany Wilks

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as the Collector. Discover how he defeats the masterful evil plots.

Now, if you hate to go to bed at night reading evil, then consider the book "Saturday Night Widows: The Adventures of Six Friends Remaking Their Lives," by Becky Aikman. This story personally affected the author. Losing her husband to cancer at the early age of 40, she struggles to find her equilibrium. She finds six other widows who too are struggling to live through tragedy and loss. Together they meet once a month and begin healing through laughter, shared griefs, talks and just walking together. You will enjoy this book of women sharing their precious lives together.

Another interesting book that really deserves an article all its own will make you consider life differently is "Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife," by Eben Alexander. The author is a neurosurgeon who became brain dead through a meningitis attack on his neocortex. The loss of this portion of the brain can leave a person in a coma for years without any function.

He experienced this and during the time he was gone he experienced a dimension of existence that I would call the spiritual or soul portion of your life. He describes experiences in this dimension that many people who say they have seen visions or may have walked in the Spirit in a moment with the Lord may be able to identify.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

President Anita Thiel conducted the meeting of the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Jan. 30 at the post.

Thanks from the Chamber of Commerce for donating to Santa City were read.

The Legislative report concerned a bill in Congress about education tuition rates for out-of-state veterans attending school on the G.I. bill.

Publicity reported the item for the December meeting in the *Col-*

by *Free Press*. Thiel reported 40 kids at the post Christmas party.

The Ninth District had 543 pair of briefs for veterans in the hospital from the Tightly Whitey project.

The Fort Dodge Soldier's Home has 62 residents, Leavenworth Veterans Administration hospital has 250, Topeka Veterans Administration hospital has 150, the Wichita Hospital has 90 and the Winfield Veterans Home has 100.

Run for the Wall will be in Goodland Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19.

This year's Patriotic Pen theme will be "What patriotism means to me."

The Voice of Democracy theme will be "Why I'm optimistic about our nation's future."

The spring convention will be Sunday, April 28, in Goodland.

The next meeting was to be Feb. 13 at the post.

Maple syrup grade change may sweeten sales

By Dave Gram
Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. - Would fancy grade maple syrup by any other name taste as sweet?

Vermont lawmakers are pondering that question as they consider whether to drop the state's traditional maple labeling system in favor of an international one.

The change pits tradition versus a desire to be a bigger player in world markets. Vermont is the No. 1 maple syrup producer in the U.S., but its unique labeling standards put it at odds with the other big producers, including Canada.

The state Senate last week passed and sent to the House a measure to drop fancy, grade A medium amber, dark amber and grade B. (Fancy is the lightest and mildest, while grade B is the darkest and has the strongest maple

flavor.) In their place would be several types sharing a grade A label, with descriptive phrases following.

Sen. Kevin Mullin, R-Rutland, initially argued against the measure before going along.

"We should not be following everyone else in lockstep and ... giving them the ability to try to pretend that syrup made in another state is anywhere near as good ...," he said.

Mullin later said he was mollified by assurances that the changes would be phased in and producers wouldn't have to throw out existing labels.

Thanks to improvements in technology and growing interest by landowners, Vermont's syrup production has roughly doubled in the past decade, Ross said.

"What's become clear is that

the majority of syrup produced in the state of Vermont is sold in national and international markets," Ross said.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

Markets

Quotes as of close of previous business day

Hi-Plains Co-op	
Wheat (bushel)	\$7.32
Corn (bushel)	\$7.05
Milo (hundredweight)	\$11.95
Soybeans (bushel)	\$13.95

The family of Thurman Cox wishes him a Big Happy 92nd Birthday on February 20th!

Birthday wishes can be sent to:
P.O. Box 464
Colby, KS 67701

Colby American Legion Post 363

BREAKFAST FEED

When: Sat. Jan. 19
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Where: 1850 W. 4th St.

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Scrambled Eggs

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• A burglary occurs every 14.6 seconds.¹

• 1 out of every 5 homes will experience a break-in or home invasion.²

• A home without a security system is 3 times more likely to be burglarized.³

• 85% of Police Officials surveyed believe home alarms deter burglary attempts.⁴

1. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008 National Crime Report http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2009/june/uc_stats06109 2. <http://fbs.ips.usdaj.gov/contentpub/press/vdhrp.cfm> 3. FBI, 2008 National Crime Report http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2009/june/uc_stats06109 4. <http://www.beyondidentitythet.com/home-security-statistics.html>

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