



8 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Wednesday

January 12, 2011

Volume 122, Number 6

Serving Thomas County since 1888

Arizona congresswoman has Colby roots

By Vera Sloan
Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkans.com

Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, the victim of a shooting in Tucson last week, has roots in Colby.

Her mother, Gloria Fraser Giffords, graduated in 1956 from Colby High School. The family owns farmland near Colby and the elder Giffords returns here to attend the high school reunion from time to time.

Delores Depe, wife of Alvin Depe, who rents some of the family's land, said on Tuesday



Gloria Fraser in 1956 photo.

that their family and the Giffords family have been friends for years.

"They had just returned from the swearing in ceremony in Washington," Depe said. "I haven't heard from Gloria yet, but I know her time is taken up with the events of last week, and she doesn't have time right now to sit down and reply to e-mails from friends while Gabby is in her present condition."

"The family is being remembered through prayer chains and we're keeping our fingers crossed for the best."

Gloria Fraser Giffords has en-

joyed a career in Mexican Folk Art research, collecting and restoration. Her book, "Mexican Folk Retablos; Masterpieces on Tin," can be checked out from the Pioneer Memorial Library.

The family's Thomas County roots go back to the John Ackard family, early-day residents of Colby. Ackard was the great uncle of Gloria Giffords, and great-great uncle of the congresswoman. He will be remembered as the father of the late McCleta Fryback, and the owner of Ackard Oil Co. in the 1930s. John Schroeder of Brewster is a cousin to Gloria Giffords.

Victim still in critical condition

An Arizona congresswoman remains in critical condition after an assassination attempt Saturday.

Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head before a man with a handgun sprayed bullets into a small crowd gathered to talk with her at a Tucson supermarket. She had been holding her first meeting with constituents of the new year. Giffords, a Democrat, had been sworn in for her third term earlier in the week.

The Associated Press reported that the gunman emptied one 30-round magazine, but was tackled by two men from the crowd as he reloaded. A woman grabbed his spare magazine

before he could jam it in his gun.

Jared Loughner, 22, was arrested following the shooting and is being held without bail. He had his first appearance in federal court Monday.

Six people were killed in the shooting, including 9-year-old Christina Taylor Green and John Roll, Arizona's chief federal judge. Fourteen were wounded. The first memorial services were Tuesday.

Giffords was rushed to University Medical Center, where doctors reported she was respon-

See "GIFFORDS," Page 3

Snow removal continues



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Despite sunny skies Tuesday and today, temperatures below freezing this week meant there was still plenty of snow to clear around Colby this morning, such as in the Sonic parking lot on South Range Avenue.

Miss Teen Rodeo plans party here

By Kevin Bottrell
Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkans.com

The newest Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas will have a crowning celebration in her hometown at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at the American Legion.

Colby's Katera Harter, 17, took over the reins Jan. 1. A junior at Colby High School, she is a member of the Colby Comets 4-H Club. Katera is the daughter of Lowell and Sue Harter.

The crowning celebration will include supper and an auction, which is the main fund raiser for her year as miss teen rodeo.

Harter won her crown at a four-day pageant in Dodge City, competing in speech, modeling, horsemanship and a series of interviews. She said the horsemanship was the most difficult because she was on an unfamiliar horse. Contestants draw a random horse during the event, she said.

Harter competed against McKayla Bainter from Hoxie,

Katera was 2007 Thomas County Rodeo Princess and 2010 Thomas County Rodeo Queen.



Katera Harter

She said this was her first pageant other than the fair competitions.

"This is a step up for sure," she said.

As Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas, Harter said, she will appear as a goodwill ambassador at rodeos around Kansas and a few outside the state.

Last year's winner was Jade Kruse of Oakley.

Kansas Legislature begins new session

By John Milburn
The Associated Press

TOPEKA — Kansas legislators opened the 2011 session Monday with a new, larger Republican majority taking its seats in the House, where fixing the sagging economy is the focus.

House Speaker Mike O'Neal opened the 90-day session telling the chamber that voters were looking for legislators to follow through on the election and respond to concerns about the economy.

"The taxpayers and constituents are watching us and counting on us," said O'Neal, a Hutchinson Republican who begins his second term as speaker. "I believe we are due for a permanent reset of state government."

Republicans hold a 92-33 margin over Democrats after the November elections. The personnel changes are reflected in the chamber's ideology, which shifted dramatically to the right. There are 35 new House members, with two vacancies yet to be filled.

That shift was evident in the filing of a bill to regulate late-term abortions and to repeal a state law granting in-state tuition to some children of immigrants.

Legislators face a projected budget deficit of \$550 million in the fiscal year that begins July 1. House Republicans said the focus this session would be on cutting spending and finding ways to put more Kansans to work.

Rep. Charlotte O'Hara, a fresh-

See "SESSION," Page 3

Governor to highlight economy in first speech

By John Hanna
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA — Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback will use his first State of the State address to lay out initiatives for improving the state's economy even as he gives legislators the first hints of how he proposes to eliminate its projected budget shortfall without raising taxes.

Brownback is scheduled to give the annual speech this evening,

during a joint session of the Legislature in the House chamber. Many fellow Republicans are eager for the details of his legislative agenda, anticipating he'll lead a push for less government, less regulation and lower taxes.

The new governor, who took office Monday, dropped a few hints in the weeks leading up to his inauguration. He's said he's working on a plan to lure people from other states to Kansas counties with declining population by exempt-

ing them from state income taxes for 10 years. He's said his staff is discussing overhauling Medicaid, the state-federal welfare program which covers health care for the poor and disabled.

Brownback also has said he wants to review the state's tax system to make it more fair, with a long-term goal of reducing individual income taxes. He's said he wants to start a discussion about how the state allocates money to its public schools, and his secre-

tary of administration will target laws and regulations for repeal.

He's also pointed to the "Road Map for Kansas" platform from his successful campaign. It listed goals of creating new private-sector jobs, boosting Kansans' personal income, reducing poverty among children, improving fourth-graders' reading scores and making sure more high school graduates are ready for college or

See "SPEECH," Page 3

Briefly

Have a chance at a free meal

The Thomas County Coalition, which aims to reduce drug and alcohol abuse among teens, will meet a noon Thursday at El Dos de Oros restaurant at the Quality Inn. Come win a free lunch. For information, call Paige Campbell at 460-8177.

Blood-sugar class postponed

Because of the snow, Citizens Medical Center has postponed Journey for Control, a class about monitoring blood sugar for diabetics which had been scheduled for Tuesday, until Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the hospital. There is no charge for the class. For information or to register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849 or education co-ordinator Jeanene Brown at (785) 460-4850.

Cooking class for kids starting up

Signups are open for "Kids-a-Cookin'," a free

program put on by the Colby Recreation Department and Thomas County Extension to teach nutrition and food preparation in a fun atmosphere. The class will meet right after school until 5 p.m. in the basement of the Colby Community Building on Thursdays starting this week. To sign up, call the department at 460-4440.

Scouts selling spaghetti at game

Boy Scout Troop 141 will have a spaghetti supper at 5 p.m. Friday at the Community Building before the Colby High School girls basketball game against Ulysses. Proceeds will go to the troop. For information, call Alan Sager at 443-1625.

Brewster fund raiser Saturday

The Northwest Kansas Heritage Center Library and Museum of Brewster will have its annual meeting and potluck dinner at noon Saturday at Hunter

Hall. The Brewster Grade School music department and the girls from Victory House will provide entertainment. For information, call the museum at 694-2891.

Soup benefit to help heart patient

A benefit soup supper for Alex Rosales will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church basement. Rosales had quadruple bypass surgery Nov. 26 and since has had two heart attacks. Money raised will help him pay medical and transport expenses. For information, call the church at 460-7167.

Chronic disease topic of series

Citizens Medical Center will hold the next sessions of the Kansans Optimizing Health Program, a six-week chronic disease support workshop, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. on Mondays from next week through

Feb. 21, in the hospital's conference room. The free class will meet for 2 1/2 hours once a week. The hospital encourages a \$30 donation to cover materials. Enrollment is limited. To register, call dietitian Courtney McCarty at (785) 460-4849.

Conservation group to meet

The Local Work Group, experts who provide guidance to Kansas Technical Committee of the Natural Resources Conservation Service on conservation issues, will meet at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 27, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture office, 915 W. Walnut St. For information, call Debbie Potter at the Thomas County Conservation District at 462-7482.



8 0 4 8 7 9 1 3 8 9 8 3