



10 pages

COLBY FREE PRESS

75¢

Monday

December 7, 2009
Volume 120, Number 190
Serving Thomas County since 1888

Dem hopeful to stay in race despite lawsuit

TOPEKA (AP) — Prominent Kansas Democrats rallied Friday behind their presumed nominee for governor despite his recent settling of a lawsuit that led a top aide for the leading Republican hopeful to label him “a fraud.”

An adviser to Democratic candidate Tom Wiggans said the former pharmaceutical company executive would stay in the race. In an e-mail to supporters, Wiggans described U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback’s campaign as a “smear machine.”

Brownback is the presumed Republican nominee and his campaign has attacked Wiggans over a federal lawsuit filed by shareholders in Connetics Corp., a Palo Alto, Calif., firm Wiggans once led. In October, a judge approved a settlement in which Wiggans, the company and others agreed to pay nearly \$12.8 million, plus interest.

Documents filed in federal court in San Francisco said the settlement was not an admission of wrongdoing. The defendants denied the allegations, and Kansas Democrats suggested Friday that such lawsuits are not unusual for businesses.

“Tom is 100 percent committed to the governor’s race. No reconsideration,” Wiggans adviser Amy Jordan Wooden said in an e-mail.

Wiggans is the only Democrat actively campaigning for the party’s nomination in the August 2010 primary. Brownback faces only token opposition in the Re-

publican primary.

News reports about the lawsuit were first posted online Thursday, and Brownback’s campaign manager, David Kensinger, discussed it with reporters Friday. Connetics and executives, including Wiggans, were accused of misleading investors and making false statements in public and in federal regulatory filings.

“Tom Wiggans is a fraud,” Kensinger said. “His candidacy is a fraud. The Democratic Party is attempting to perpetrate a fraud on the people of Kansas.”

Asked whether Brownback would cite the lawsuit in television ads, Kensinger said, “Count on it.”

But Wooden said Brownback’s record on ethics is suspect. Among other things, she noted that in 2002, Brownback’s campaign was required to pay the federal government \$19,000 for over-the-limit campaign contributions.

“Sam Brownback’s campaign calling someone else a ‘fraud’ is like Britney Spears criticizing someone’s parenting skills,” she said.

Kensinger replied: “When you’re caught defrauding retired teachers and others out of 13 million bucks, I guess the best you can do is try and change the subject.”

Prominent Democrats said they don’t expect the lawsuit to stick as an issue.

See “GOVERNOR,” Page 3

Area painter takes first place at five-state show

By Vera Sloan

Colby Free Press
vsloan@nwkansan.com

When local artist Marj Brown saw all the beautiful watercolor paintings entered in the five-state art show in McCook, Neb., in October, she thought she didn’t have a chance to win anything.

“I was just awed at all the wonderful paintings,” Brown said, “and wondered why I had even bothered to enter mine.”

It must be that when you look at your own work for a while, you begin to see flaws that aren’t even there, because the judges certainly didn’t see any flaws. Brown was awarded first place among all the watercolor pieces from the five state competition.

“I couldn’t believe it,” she exclaimed, “and I was really thrilled.

It was a very nice honor to receive first place.”

Brown said the blue ribbon is beautiful. However the monetary award isn’t something the artist particularly aims for. Out of the \$100 prize money, she said it cost \$20 for the entry fee, \$40 for the required plexi-glass in place of real glass in the frame, plus three trips to McCook, so she thought she probably came out in the hole.

But what could be better than being named Best of Show amongst contestants from Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota?

The painting is of the Bob Gordon home at 375 W. Fifth St. in Colby. Brown said she took a photograph of the home in the daytime, then painted it as a night

See “PAINTER,” Page 3



Marj Brown



ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Crowd braves cold and snow for parade

The Colby Girl Scouts (above), along with everyone else participating in or watching the Colby Light Parade on Sunday, bundled up against the cold and the snow as they rode their float down Franklin Avenue. The scouts won second place in the best organization category, with the American Legion Riders taking first place. The Thomas County Fair royalty (right) rode a different kind of horse than they have in previous parades. Steve Molstad (below) lit up his old-time fire engine, which earned him second place in the best-lit vehicle category. Colby Fertilizer took first place in that category. Other winners were for best business: Colby Ag Center, first place, Ashley’s Dance Center, second place; for best religious entry, Trinity Lutheran; and for youth best-of-show, Nicole’s School of Dance, first place, Thomas County 4-H, second place.



Briefly

Food bank needs holiday helpers

Genesis-Thomas County needs volunteers to help fill food baskets at 7 p.m. Friday at the 4-H building at the Thomas County Fairgrounds. Anyone can come help. The baskets will given out from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday at the 4-H building. For information, call the Genesis office at 460-7930.

Fourth grade program Tuesday

The Colby Grade School fourth graders will hold a music program, “Twas one CRAZY Night Before Christmas,” at 2 p.m. and again at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the grade school auditorium. The programs are free and open to the public. For information, call the school at 460-5100.

Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, wid-

owed, divorced, separated or have partners in nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share; table service and beverage will be provided. The building has an elevator by the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

Lions to flap jacks Wednesday

The Gem Lions Club will have a pancake feed from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Gem Community Building. Lions will serve all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, eggs and pie. Donations will be accepted. For information, call Ken Poland at 462-7809.

Bible, lunch merge for Advent

The Thomas County Ministerial Association is sponsoring “Advent Brown Bags and Bible” from noon to 12:50 p.m. Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall of the Colby Presbyterian Church, 515 W. Fourth

St. The theme this year is “Joy to the World.” Pastors who plan to speak Steve Todd (College Drive Assembly of God) this week, Jarrod Spencer (Church of Christ) Dec. 16 and Larry Booth Dec. 23. Bring a sack lunch; dessert and beverage will be provided. For information, call 462-6342.

Heartland program next week

Heartland Christian School will present its annual Christmas program, featuring students in preschool through high school, at 7 p.m. Thursday. Preconcert music will start at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend the free “Our Reason for the Season” concert. Bring a canned food item for the Genesis-Thomas County food bank. For information, call the school at 460-6419.

Vocal concert Thursday night

The Colby Community College Vocal Music De-

partment’s annual winter concert is set for 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Cultural Arts Center on campus. It will feature the Concert Choir and Sunflower Singers, led by vocal music Director Dr. Phillip Shuman and accompanied by Pat Ziegelmeier. For information, call college spokesperson Debbie Schwanke at 460-5411.

Hospital auxiliary needs help

The Citizens Medical Center Auxiliary is looking for volunteers to greet visitors, operate the gift shop and help patients and their families, among other things. If you’d like to get involved, call Tama Unger at 460-1214 or Mary Smith at 462-3387.



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