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Empty houses taking toll on Valley

With upkeep difficult, vacancies hurt neighbors, market

By Catherine Reagor
The Arizona Republic

On a typical block in metro Phoenix, there's at least one empty home, often several.

Overbuilding during the housing boom, record foreclosures during the subse-

quent crash and a significant drop in population growth have led to more than 100,000 vacant homes across the region, five times what was once considered normal.

With an average of three people per residence, the swath of vacant homes is equivalent to a city bigger

than Chandler sitting empty.

An empty house — or a row of them — changes the character of a neighborhood and the way residents feel about where they live.

Vacancy even has a direct effect on the house itself.

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VALLEY HOME VALUES

The real-estate market remains vulnerable. Plus, your guide to price trends. **Business D1-5**



FIESTA UNDER FIRE

Junker built bowl, legacy

Reputation now tarnished by scandal, observers say

By Doug Haller and Jeff Metcalfe
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CHAIRMAN'S VIEW: The head of the Fiesta Bowl's board assesses the group's "valuable, if painful, lesson." **Viewpoints, B11**

TUCSON TRAGEDY: THREE MONTHS LATER

PUBLIC FACES, PRIVATE PAIN

Giffords' rescuer tries to move on with life, says little about fateful day



Since coming to Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' aid during the Jan. 8 shooting, Daniel Hernandez has found himself in the limelight, including meeting with President Barack Obama at a UA memorial. JEWEL SAMAD/GETTY IMAGES

By Daniel González
The Arizona Republic

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Nearly everywhere he goes, people recognize Daniel Hernandez as the burly, soft-spoken intern who helped save Gabrielle Giffords' life the day the congresswoman was shot in the head in January.

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See **HILEMAN**, Page A9



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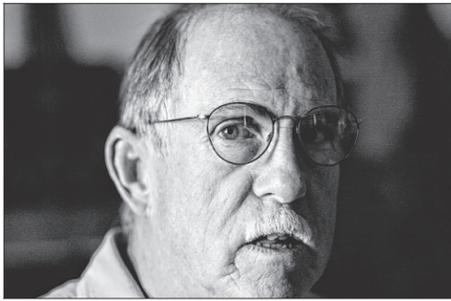
Hero waits for day when life returns to normal

By Dennis Wagner
The Arizona Republic

Three months after he helped wrestle a gunman to the ground, Roger Salzgeber keeps hoping his life will return to normal.

"I'm kind of wishing that a lot of this would just go away," said the retired nursery wholesaler. "I'm not a person who seeks the spotlight."

But Salzgeber and his wife, Faith, realize that anonymity and escape may be impossible for a while. They were just 8 feet from U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords when authorities say Jared Loughner opened fire on Jan. 8, killing six people and wounding 13, including Giffords. Somehow, the shots missed the couple.



Roger Salzgeber downplays his bravery during the shooting: "Six people are dead and (13) are injured, and it's hard for me to get my head around it all."

NICK OZA/
THE REPUBLIC

Today, reporters still call them when something develops in the case against Loughner, who is charged with 49 counts in the shooting in a Safeway parking lot north of Tucson.

As volunteers for Giffords' last

congressional campaign, the couple get regular e-mails from her staff about the three-term Democrat's recuperation.

Because they are crime victims, they receive updates on the case and visits from a federal prosecu-

tor, anticipating the day they may have to testify.

And they are invited to events honoring the fallen, the wounded and those who risked their lives to prevent greater bloodshed. Last month, Salzgeber was among 20 finalists for the Congressional Medal of Honor. He admits ambivalence at not being selected.

"There's a part of me that is glad someone else more deserving got it," he said. "The more I reflect on this and the more that term 'hero' keeps getting tossed around, I look back and six people are dead and (13) are injured, and it's hard for me to get my head around it all."

Salzgeber understands that the shooting and the instinctive effort to stop a killer have become part of his identity. While trying to move

forward, he and Faith focus on the positives: The shared tragedy helped forge close friendships with some of the other victims.

It also brought them to a benefit concert for civility and respect. Salzgeber said he and his wife finally met Susan Hileman, a victim whom Faith had aided at the shooting scene. "It was emotional," he said. "The last time we saw her she was being carried away with my wife's jacket wrapped around her."

Meanwhile, he and Faith are doing OK. They take their Australian shepherds on daily walks, avoiding news coverage of Loughner's case — especially the mug shots.

"I can't look at that (expletive's) face," Salzgeber said. "I want justice to be served, but I can't emotionally follow it all the time."

RESCUER TRIES TO MOVE ON

HERNANDEZ
Continued from A1

the State of the Union address. He set up a website to handle the constant requests for interviews.

But even as he continues to accept speaking engagements and make public appearances to talk about the shooting, the typically open and outgoing Hernandez has withdrawn emotionally from those closest to him, say his family and friends. His friends and family worry that in packing his schedule so full — leaving little time for rest — Hernandez is hiding from the emotions he has kept bottled up since a gunman shot 19 people, killing six, outside a Safeway on Jan. 8.

Although Hernandez was not physically wounded, he experienced something horrific that crisp Saturday morning. The tranquil shopping center near Tucson was transformed into a scene resembling a battlefield. Thirteen wounded people were bleeding. Six people were slain. Among the dead was Christina-Taylor Green, a 9-year-old girl.

In disregard for his own safety, Hernandez rushed to Giffords' side, holding her head up so she could breathe and covering her gunshot wound with his hand. He stayed with her until help arrived and then rode with her in the ambulance to the hospital.

"I worry about him all the time," said his sister, Consuelo, 18. "Psychologically, I know he has changed. Things like that you will never forget."

Horrible trauma is very difficult for the brain to process, said Dr. Gabrielle Lawrence, a psychologist in Scottsdale. She said many people subsequently struggle with severe grief and post-traumatic stress disorder.

People, especially men, often get "really busy" to avoid thinking about what they experienced, said Lawrence, who does not know Hernandez.

While normal, she said, such behavior can be a sign that Hernandez needs help.

Hernandez said he is getting the help he needs, meeting with a grief counselor.

"I'm doing as well as can be expected," he said. "It was very difficult, as you can imagine, everything that happened on that day."

Exceptionally smart

Hernandez, the oldest of three children, grew up in a modest home in a mostly Hispanic neighborhood on the south side of Tucson. The family spoke English and Spanish at home.

His father, also named Daniel Hernandez, grew up in California and is of Mexican descent. He made a living as a construction worker and a handyman until he fell off a dumpster a year ago on a job and shattered his left ankle. He hasn't worked since.

Daniel's mother, Consuelo Hernandez, an immigrant from Nogales, Sonora, stayed home to raise the children. She is known for the beautiful cakes she bakes.

As a child, Hernandez was "superdotado," Spanish for exceptionally smart, his father said.

"He was scary when he was 5 or 6 years old," the elder Hernandez said. "The things he would come up with. He would just blow us away."

When Daniel was about 5, he decided he wanted to become a doctor, like two of his uncles in Mexico.

"We were always telling him about his uncles and how being a doctor is one of the best ways you can help people," his father said.

Hernandez graduated from Sunnyside High School in Tucson in 2008. During his junior and senior years, he participated in Health Occupations Students of America, a national program that prepares students for careers in the health-care field.

Cathy Monroe, a registered nurse who has taught at Sunnyside since 1992, remembers Hernandez as one of the brightest students she has ever had.



Daniel Hernandez hugs his campaign staff, Monica Ruiz (left) and Brittany Steinke, while they wait for election results in March. Hernandez ran for UA student-body president. NICK OZA/THE REPUBLIC

On his own, Hernandez learned the techniques for drawing blood and testing urine and then took top honors in statewide and national laboratory-skills tests.

In the program, Hernandez also learned first-aid skills that he put to use when Giffords was shot, applying pressure to her wound to stop the bleeding and helping her to sit upright so she wouldn't choke on the blood.

"I think the important thing, he also was talking to her," said Monroe, who spoke with Hernandez in February when he was honored by the Sunnyside Unified School District Board. "He cared about her. He was asking her: 'Can you squeeze my hand? Can you hear me?' So in a certain way, he was keeping her aware of what was going on so that he could give good information to the paramedics when they arrived."

Political-career hopes

After high school, Hernandez enrolled at UA intending to study medicine. But that summer, he volunteered for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. The experience changed his life and set him on a new course, one that would lead him to Giffords' side the morning of the shooting.

"I realized I loved talking to people and learning how campaigning worked," said Hernandez, a political-science major who plans to pursue a career in public service after he graduates in 2012.

This semester, instead of attending classes, he is getting full-time credit by working as an intern in Giffords' office and for the Arizona Students' Association, a governmental organization that lobbies on behalf of students attending the state's three public universities.

And he is hoping to continue his nascent political career. He and another candidate for student-body president were disqualified in March for having an excessive number of campaigning violations. Appeals are being heard by the student government's supreme court.

Hernandez has managed several political campaigns on campus. Last year, he also ran the successful re-election campaign for state Rep. Steve Farley, a Democrat from Tucson.

Farley, whose district covers downtown Tucson and abuts the university, wanted a student to run his campaign. Someone suggested Hernandez.

Farley remembers how impressed he was with Hernandez during the job interview.

"I hired him on the spot," Farley said. "I saw in him the kind of responsibility and trustworthiness I knew was going to be very impor-

“Throughout the campaign, it became very clear his work ethic was incredible and (so was) his selflessness. You know walking door to door in Tucson in July is not an easy thing to do.”

STATE REP. STEVE FARLEY ON DANIEL HERNANDEZ

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As a member of the Arizona Students' Association, Hernandez also researched, drafted and testified in support of a bill in the state Legislature aimed at getting more students to vote by requiring colleges and universities to provide more information on campus about voter registration and elections.

"A lot of people might have some trepidation," said state Rep. Matt Heinz, D-Tucson, who sponsored the measure. "He did not."

The legislation was adopted in 2010.

As he managed Farley's campaign and worked on the legislation, Hernandez also began volunteering on Giffords' re-election campaign, going door to door in Tucson to help drum up votes. In November, she narrowly won.

After that, Hernandez was hired to work as an intern in her Tucson office. On Jan. 2, the day before he started, he tweeted: "Excited for my first day at the @Rep_Giffords office tomorrow for my internship!"

'Mom, I'm all right'

On the morning of Jan. 8, a Saturday, Giffords was holding one of her frequent "Congress on Your Corner" events. It was scheduled for 10 a.m. at a Safeway in an upscale strip mall on Oracle Road.

Hernandez volunteered to help at the event, which provided a chance for the public to ask the congresswoman questions in an informal setting. Hernandez planned to meet Giffords and other staff members at the Safeway.

But first he promised to swing by his parents' house in south Tucson to pick up his younger sister, Consuelo, who wanted to tag along. Consuelo was waiting for him that morning, but he overslept and didn't show up.

A little after 10 a.m. the phone rang. Mrs. Hernandez answered. It was Daniel.

"Mom," he said. "I'm all right. Something's happened to Gabrielle. But I'm all right."

Then he hung up. His parents didn't know what to

make of the call. His father started flipping through channels on the TV. That is when they learned that Giffords had been shot at the Safeway and several other people had been wounded. But details were sketchy.

"I was clicking through every channel, back and forth, back and forth, trying to get more information," his father said.

They tried calling, but Hernandez didn't answer his cellphone.

His mother became hysterical. "To put it mildly, she was upset. Her voice was louder. There were tears in her eyes," his father said as he recounted her panicked reaction: "You know how Daniel is. He could be shot, and he's not telling us."

Covered in blood

Hernandez made one other call that morning, reaching Farley, a close friend of Giffords, as he drove with his wife and daughters. They were on their way to an event at Kartchner Caverns when Farley took the call on the car's speaker phone.

Farley recalled saying something cheerful like: "How ya doing, Daniel? What's up?" Hernandez cut him off. "Steve. Gabby's been shot. We need to get a hold of the family. Get to the hospital as soon as you can."

Farley learned later that Hernandez had called from the ambulance as he was holding Giffords' head.

Farley, just a few miles from home, headed directly to University Medical Center. As he pulled up, he saw Hernandez standing near the driveway of the ambulance bay, wearing a dark argyle sweater.

"He was just standing there alone, covered head to toe in blood," Farley said.

Farley walked up to Hernandez and gave him a big hug. Then Farley whispered in his ear.

"Daniel," Farley said. "You've got to take care of yourself. This is something really big."

Yet to open up

The night of the shooting, Hernandez went to his parents' house instead of his apartment near campus after spending the day at the hospital. It was about 2 in the morn-

ing when he arrived. His parents were waiting for him.

But Hernandez didn't want to talk. "He said, 'Mom, I'm tired. I just want to go to bed,'" his father recalled.

The next morning, Hernandez didn't want to talk either.

Three months have passed, and Hernandez has yet to open up to anyone in his family. That is unusual, his parents say, because Hernandez calls home every day, sometimes several times a day, just to check in. His parents are afraid to bring it up.

"I would say mentally he has changed quite a bit," his father said one recent evening, sitting in a restaurant near downtown Tucson with his wife at his side. "No, we don't go back to that day. It didn't happen."

Downplays being a hero

The day after the shooting, newspapers and radio and television stations from all over the world were calling Hernandez for interviews. Farley's wife, Kelly Paisley, went to Hernandez's house to help him handle all of the requests. Paisley took the Hernandez family to a hotel for a week to avoid reporters knocking on their door. Just in the first week, Hernandez gave more than 260 interviews, Paisley said.

Many of the requests came from Spanish newspapers and television stations in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. In the Spanish media, Hernandez became known as "el héroe hispano," the Hispanic hero.

But over and over, Hernandez has downplayed his own actions, shunning the label. Instead, he has turned the spotlight on the paramedics and doctors, calling them the real heroes.

In much the same way, Hernandez also downplays concerns about himself.

He said he has not experienced nightmares or insomnia, but he has noticed he wakes up tired and feels extremely exhausted.

Hernandez has many friends who offered their support after the shooting, said David Martinez III, a close friend and governmental-affairs director for the Arizona Students' Association.

He also is a "very strong person," Martinez said.

Still, Martinez said, Hernandez does not talk about the shooting.

And friends have noticed how busy Hernandez has become, though they say it's hard to tell the difference because Hernandez always has kept busy. They realize, though, that he has been through a horrible experience.

"He's coping well, but I do worry about him a lot," said Elma Delic, 21, a senior.

While visiting the Capitol in February for the ASA's annual lobby day, Hernandez ran into Tom Chabin, a Democratic state representative from Flagstaff.

Chabin, who has known Hernandez for several years, asked how he was doing.

"I'm doing fine," Hernandez said, clearly uncomfortable with the question.

Chabin looked directly into Hernandez's eyes, put his hand on his shoulder and told him he needed to take care of himself.

Chabin said later that he also worries about Hernandez.

"My concerns really weren't directed at Daniel but to a human being that witnessed and participated heroically in a very traumatic event where he saw his boss, a U.S. rep who he admires greatly, shot in the head and witnessed the death of others, including a small child," Chabin said.

Hernandez brushed aside the suggestion that he has kept himself so busy since the shooting to avoid coping with the trauma.

"It's not healthy to just ignore what happened, so I am not keeping busy to just ignore it," he said. "I'm just keeping busy for having to catch up with all I've missed."

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Valley 101 **B14**

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TUCSON TRAGEDY: THREE MONTHS LATER

Hileman

Continued from A1

ing spaces and people again are loading bags into their cars, is where a gunman opened fire that sunny morning, killing six people and wounding 13 others. One of the wounded was U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, shot in the head while hosting one of her favorite events, a "Congress on Your Corner" meet-and-greet for her constituents.

This is where Hileman and her 9-year-old friend, Christina-Taylor Green, stood in line holding hands, so excited about meeting a real-life congresswoman.

And it is where they fell. It is where, bleeding from three gunshot wounds, Hileman lay side by side on the asphalt with Christina-Taylor, watching helplessly as the little girl died from the bullet in her chest, her big brown eyes locked on Hileman's face.

It is hard to see it all now. The screaming and the sirens and the chaos are gone. There are no bloodstains on the pavement. It looks so ordinary.

Hileman sits back in her seat. She doesn't find anything from that day. No terror. No sadness.

"It is just a space," she says matter-of-factly.

And when a young woman strolls out through the store's automatic doors wearing black lace-up boots, a shiny flowered skirt 4 feet in diameter, and pink sunglasses with black polka dots, Hileman laughs. It is a happy sound, here in the parking lot where there was so much pain.

As Hileman heals, so does her city, though neither will ever be the same. There were funerals, and the kind of national spotlight no city wants, and a somber presidential visit. There is grieving and physical therapy and nightmares, still.

On the way out of the parking lot, Hileman spots six plain white wooden crosses pounded into the dirt across Ina Road. Six dead. Six crosses. And now the tears come.

Three months after she was shot, Hileman will take her first real steps, putting all of her weight on her reconstructed hip for the first time in her doctor's office on Monday.

Hileman, 59, hasn't taken any pain medication in a month. She's sore still, but she can stand it. And she doesn't need to be knocked out at night. She's not afraid anymore to lie awake in the dark with her thoughts.

There are many triumphs. Hileman can get out of bed now without help. She can reach her clothes, pull open the refrigerator and rinse dishes. She planted purple pansies in pots on the front porch: "I so needed to muck around in dirt." And she can focus enough now to read things longer than Dear Abby or the three-page chapters in James Patterson's books.

"Part of me goes to a quiet place when I read. In that quiet place my mind wandered, and I would find myself standing there in the parking lot at Safeway," Hileman says.

But she can't get used to the scars that crisscross her body. They are a surprise every time she undresses. Three bullets went in, one missing her heart by an inch. Only two bullets came out. Even doctors aren't sure where the third one is. A thick scar runs from below her belly button up to her chest, where they cut her open to search for the bullet and check her organs for damage. The scar on her chest is the size of a dime, and violet. There are more—on her right leg, her back and her behind. They are a constant reminder.

"Every time I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, there it is," Hileman says.

She has worked hard to take care of her body. Before the shooting, she was at the gym daily. Now, at least, her body is beginning to feel familiar again.

And as she heals physically, she finds herself dealing more emotionally with what happened.

"Without the pain to distract me, and without the drugs, there is so much time to think," she says.



Suzi Hileman (left) and Roxanna Green hug Friday before a Tucson ballfield is dedicated to Green's daughter and Hileman's friend, Christina-Taylor Green. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

“It will never go away, but it can't be everything I have to go forward.”

SUSAN "SUZI" HILEMAN

Survivor of the Jan. 8 shooting rampage near Tucson that killed her young friend, Christina-Taylor Green

It's true for her husband, Bill Hileman, 61, too. He came too close to losing the woman he has loved for more than 40 years, ever since he picked her up hitchhiking outside Cornell University, where they both were students. Now that she is safe and healing, he dreams that he should have been there, with his Suzi and Christina-Taylor. He imagines he would have noticed something amiss. Maybe he could have protected them both.

After the shooting, Hileman, who never even used to look both ways before she crossed the street, found herself anxious about leaving the house. Her heart would pound whenever a young man crossed the path of her wheelchair. She doesn't like being afraid. It is not very Suzi Hileman.

So when the defendant in the shooting, Jared Loughner, appeared in federal court in Tucson for the first time on March 9 to hear the 49 felony charges against him and enter a plea, Hileman was in the front row, clutching her husband's hand. She is Counts 38 and 39.

It is the People of the United States vs. Jared Loughner, and the Hilemans wanted to be there to represent the victims who could not.

Hileman began to tremble when Loughner came in, shackled and smirking. Only a small, wooden barrier separated her from the man accused of shooting her and killing her young friend. She studied his skinny neck and long sideburns. He did not look at her.

"I was in the presence of evil," Hileman says. "I was prepared to be physically afraid. I wasn't. He's a scrawny pipsqueak."

She does not fear him anymore. She will testify against him.

Hileman used to have strong feelings about the death penalty but now doesn't know what to think. She must decide, because along with other victims and their families, she has been asked by the U.S. attorney general whether to seek the death penalty in this case.

Her questions swirl: What kind of person would shoot innocent people? What kind of person kills a child? And what kind of per-

son would she be if she wanted him dead, too?

"Is that the kind of person I want to be? Am I a person who would say someone else should die?" she asks. "It's ugly, and I don't like to have to think about it."

She does think about that day in the parking lot, however. All the time.

Some parts of it are missing, shoved out of her memory from shock, or maybe hidden by her psyche to protect her heart.

She remembers standing in line, and running, and then being on the ground, and then watching Christina-Taylor die. But she turns it over and over in her mind, and yearns to know exactly what happened. How long did it take her to run? Did she shield Christina with her arm, or with her whole body? Did she miss a safe spot, a place they could have hidden?

At the courthouse that day, Hileman asked the FBI agents if she was on the store's security surveillance videotape, the one prosecutors say caught some of the deadly shooting rampage. An agent told her no. She and Christina-Taylor are not on the tape. Security cameras captured only still photographs of the two of them afterward, side by

side on the ground.

Hileman doesn't need to see those pictures. She remembers that.

At the Hilemans' home, someone presses the doorbell and it sounds funny, as though it is worn out from all the use in the last three months. This time, a neighbor is dropping off two big zip-top bags of green bean feta cheese salad and chicken breasts.

"It really does help," Hileman tells the woman as she reaches up to hug her. "We are so enveloped by the love."

Bill thanks her too. He gets recognized wherever he goes — the store, the gym. "Oh, you're the guy with the wife," people say, and they want to know how she is faring and what they can do to help. Staff from the Omni Tucson National Resort volunteered to clean their house and tidy the yard. The guy at Subway won't let Bill pay for sandwiches.

The Hilemans moved from California in July 2006, after searching two years for the perfect place to retire. They love Tucson, its landscape and its diverse mix of people. This is the house they bought to grow old in, so the passages are wide enough for a wheelchair. And this is where they will heal.

But the shooting didn't happen just to the Hilemans, or to the other victims and their families. It shattered the entire city.

"People need to feel connected," Bill says.

And to that effect, Hileman has become a celebrity of sorts in her beloved city, where people delight in details of her steady recovery, the sight of her at her favorite restaurant, Wildflower Grill on Oracle Road, and the chance to get their arms around her. They need the hugs as much as she does.

Hileman has attended almost every walk, run, benefit concert, dedication ceremony, tree planting, memorial, and candlelight vigil since the Jan. 8 shooting. She says yes to just about every invitation to speak, paint wooden flowers with fellow woman bloggers, and listen to Bonnie Levine's kindergartners read aloud their stories about kindness.

"It's hard, because every time you go to one, it opens it up again," Hileman says. But she goes for herself,

and she goes for her city, taking the walker instead of the wheelchair even though the wheelchair would make it easier to get around: "Tucson doesn't need to see me sitting down," she says.

Hileman takes the walker to J. Gilbert Footwear, next to Wildflower Grill, where she orders new cowboy boots to replace the ones she was wearing when she was shot: "Cowboy boots are what I wear when I'm not wearing flip flops."

The FBI offered to send back Hileman's boots, but she didn't want them. Nor her wallet, or the clothes the paramedics cut off her. The only thing that she lost that day that she wants back is Christina-Taylor.

"The Band-Aids are peeling off. The wounds are healing over, but the scars will always be there," Hileman says. "It will never go away, but it can't be everything. I have to go forward."

In February, Hileman was asked to help judge a children's photography contest at Prince Elementary School. With a borrowed camera, the winner, a 9-year-old boy named Juan, shot elegantly composed pictures of his neighborhood, including his mailbox, covered with graffiti.

Juan hugged Hileman that day. And when she went back to give him a camera of his own, Juan told her, "I know I could never fill the hole in your heart. You will always have memories of Christina. But I was thinking that maybe we could do things together and put new memories next to hers."

Hileman fell in love. As soon as she can drive, she and Juan are going to the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona. His mother already said it was all right.

That same day, kindergarten teacher Bonnie Levine invited Hileman to her class across the hall, and soon, Hileman had 25 more young friends. And then the gym teacher invited Hileman to Field Day, where she was introduced as the school's "Official Adopted Grandmother."

"I was floating," Hileman says. "I have been looking for someplace little enough where I could make a difference."

"I get joy out of it." She needed a child to love. She got an entire school.

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AN ARIZONA REPUBLIC EXCLUSIVE | INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

Inside a Houston hospital, an Arizona congresswoman learns to walk again.

She wants to climb a mountain.

Her astronaut husband says, "I know I'm going to have this sense of wanting to get back, just to be with her."



Astronaut Mark Kelly reads a letter aloud to his wife, Gabrielle Giffords, the Arizona congresswoman who was wounded in a shooting attack in January. Until now, her experience in intensive rehabilitation has been largely hidden from the rest of the world. PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

Longing for home

The congresswoman, the survivor

By **Jaimee Rose**
©The Arizona Republic

HOUSTON — Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is left-handed now. Her handwriting looks different in the letter she recently wrote to her husband, astronaut Mark Kelly, than it did the last time he went into space. Giffords' mother helped her pen the traditional NASA sendoff note two weeks ago. She wrote to her "sweetie pie," and that part — those words — were the same.

Many other things are different since Giffords' brain was pierced by a bullet during the shootings near Tucson on Jan. 8. Her hair is short, maybe 2 inches long, says Pia Carusone, her chief of staff, so there are scars on her scalp that show through. Eventually, her hair will cover them. A thin scar across the top of her forehead is healing well and fading, and her face, though sometimes swollen, is oth-

Continued on A18

The commander, the husband

By **Jaimee Rose and Shaun McKinnon**
©The Arizona Republic

HOUSTON — He is bound for a place where gravity cannot contain him, but even in space, Mark Kelly will feel an inescapable pull toward home. Gabby. The pull brings him each morning to a room decorated with balloons and cards, desert scenes and family photos. He arrives, Star-

bucks cup in hand, to read the newspaper with his wife. They begin every day this way, at the rehabilitation hospital where she is recovering from the moment that changed their world Jan. 8. The pull brings him back each night, long after dark. Another day's progress, another day closer. In the hours between visits, there is another pull. Kelly, a space-shuttle astronaut,

Continued on A20

WHO WILL PLAY IN THE MLB ALL-STAR GAME?

Fans get set to pick teams for classic in Phoenix

By **Bob McManaman**
The Arizona Republic

For the first time, Major League Baseball's midsummer classic, the All-Star Game, is being played in Phoenix, bringing the game's best talent together for one night under the Chase Field roof. On Tuesday, the process of decid-

ing which stars will take the field July 12 gets under way with the start of fan voting. From then until final rosters are announced on July 3, one of baseball's most endearing, and argued-over, rituals will unfold like a well-paced, dramatic game.

See **ALL-STAR**, Page A8



Albert Pujols (left) and Alex Rodriguez, two All-Stars likely to be in Phoenix.

WHO'S COMING TO PHOENIX? SEE THE REPUBLIC'S PICKS FOR ALL-STAR LINEUPS AT DBACKS.AZCENTRAL.COM.

SLIPPING AWAY: ARIZONA'S MIDDLE CLASS IN DECLINE

Financial dreams take a hit for many younger workers

By **Russ Wiles and Jahna Berry**
The Arizona Republic

The deep recession and slow recovery have caused financial stress for Arizonans of all ages. But in many ways, the downturn has hit young adults — many of whom came of age during almost 20 years of unprecedented U.S. prosperity — the hardest. A tough job market,

daunting student-loan balances, misuse of credit cards, the housing-market crash and reduced workplace benefits are among the challenges that have put many people under age 40 in a bind.

Will they be able to match the standard of living attained by their parents? Time, of course, is on their side, but for many, the

See **YOUNG**, Page A16

VALLEY & STATE

BCS panel hears Fiesta Bowl plea

Fighting to stay in college football's prestigious Bowl Championship Series, the Fiesta Bowl presents its case to a BCS task force in Chicago, promising to clean up its financial mismanagement, potentially illegal conduct and lax board oversight. **B1**



SPORTS

Offense dominates ASU spring game

ASU's offense looks spectacular but the defense looks defenseless as a passing attack led by quarterback Brock Osweiler dominates the team's annual spring game. Receiver J.J. Holliday (left) hauls in a pass for the offense, which tallied 92 points against the defense. **C1**

NATION & WORLD

Syrian forces attack funerals: A day after the deadliest crackdown in the Syrian uprising, the two-day death toll climbs to 120 after forces fire at large funeral processions. **A3**

VIEWPOINTS

Brewer not switching sides: Gov. Jan Brewer's decision to veto a pair of high-profile measures passed by her fellow Republicans in the Legislature does not portend an ideological shift. **B10**

BUSINESS

Top Ariz. companies are hiring: The Republic's annual survey of the state's largest 100 companies indicates that, with the recession over, a majority are expanding their workforce again. **D1**

High 85 Low 64
Partly cloudy, slightly breezy. **B12**

Astrology **E6** Dear Abby **E6** Opinions . . . **B9-11**
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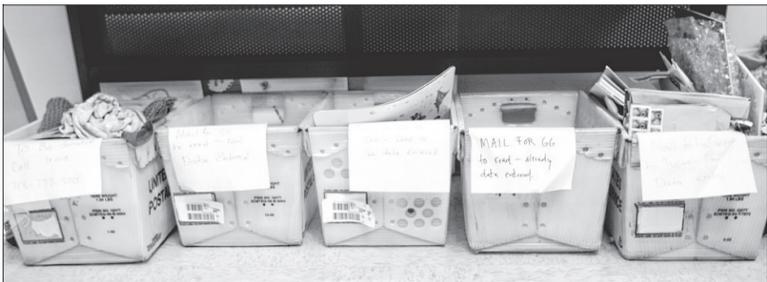
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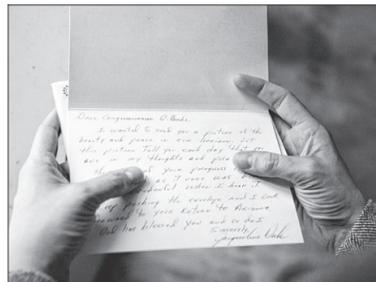
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INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS



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CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC

Mail for Gabrielle Giffords that streams into her Houston hospital is sorted in a long line of bins in her room. Letters from Arizonans, like the one above, join gifts from celebrities like Las Vegas' Siegfried and Roy. Two of her staffers, communications director C.J. Karamargin and chief of staff Pia Carusone, work to run her office and protect her privacy.



No one except hospital personnel and a close circle of friends, staffers and relatives has been allowed inside Giffords' Houston hospital room. Photos of the room that appear here were taken for the newspaper by her chief of staff, Pia Carusone, using a Republic camera. PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

Continued from A1

erwise the same as before, Carusone says. Giffords speaks most often in a single word or declarative phrase: "love you," "awesome," even "get out" to doctors in her room at the end of a taxing day. She longs to leave the rehab center, repeating "I miss Tucson" and wheeling herself to the doors at the end of the hall to peer out. When that day comes, Giffords told her nurse, she plans to "walk a mountain."

Longer sentences frustrate Giffords. She must search her brain for the words she wants, which feels like trying to pull out the name of a familiar face you can't quite place, her doctors say. Once she builds the sentence in her mind, she speaks clearly and at a normal rate, and can offer as many words as she has the patience to string together. The doctor overseeing her rehabilitation places her in the top 5 percent of patients recovering from this injury.

So many people long to understand how she's doing. There have been suggestions and impressions, but mostly questions, because she has been so invisible. Only slivers have been shared: a Facebook photo of her hands here, a Twitter message there. She wants toast, or she's doing well. Headlines hang on small details.

Giffords has not spoken publicly since the shooting.

But a series of exclusive Republic interviews over the past week with those closest to her captured a more complete understanding of her condition than anyone outside her closely kept circle has seen. Her doctors, staff, husband and a nurse shared Giffords' struggles, triumphs and path forward, and details about how she looks, acts, speaks and thinks.

Early buzz about her insinuated everything from exaggerated optimism to expectations of a Senate campaign in 2012. There are rumors of a \$200,000 reward should paparazzi capture a current photo, Carusone says. Staff and family have faced the difficult task of balancing intense public interest with the privacy of a woman who still is working to communicate and process complex thoughts. They think she should release her own photo, and only when she's ready.

The details of Giffords at week 15 of her recovery are a snapshot, those close to her say, and it is important to understand that this snapshot changes.

"I can't say I notice improvement every day," says Kelly, her husband, "but I can every few days."

Almost every 72 hours, she resembles more closely the woman she was before.

Her staff is pressed for definitions, schedules, firm prognoses.

"It's unfair to set expectations on her in any way," Carusone says. "We all want the best. We want her to make the best recovery. Would a triumphant return be amazing? Yes. But first of all, her close friends and family will take anything."

They remember to be grateful that she lived.

Gabrielle Giffords does rehabilitation with a bowling ball and a grocery cart.

At the end of week 15, she can stand on her own and walk a little but is working to improve her gait, says Dr. Gerard Francisco, the physiatrist and chief medical officer at TIRR Memorial Hermann who works with Giffords five days a week.

Use of her right arm and leg is limited but improving, he says — a common effect of a bullet wound on the left side of the brain. She pushes a grocery cart up and down the hospital halls as therapy, focusing on using the correct muscles, says nurse Kristy Poteet, who has worked with Giffords since she arrived in Houston on Jan. 21. More therapy comes from games of bowling and indoor golf, Poteet says. Giffords used to be right-handed. Maybe she will be again. That answer, like so many others, will come long after week 15.

The change makes everything harder — writing, dressing, eating — but she tries.

The doctors want to make sure she doesn't develop bad muscular habits on her left side while compensating for her right, which could mean new problems later.

"Her left side is perfect," Carusone says. "She can do whatever you can do."

Like before, Giffords has opinions and she makes them known — which medications she'll agree to take, which University of Arizona T-shirts she'll stretch over her head for her workout sessions, and what she thinks about her options for breakfast.

"She's the boss," Kelly says. Even in her wheelchair, Giffords has stringent posture, Carusone says: tall, tight, strong — like always.

"She shows a lot more independence right now — that's what's emerging," Dr. Francisco says, and it's an important sign. "She's her own person."

She lets everyone know when she's tired — even her husband, who called Carusone the other night to report, "Gabby just kicked me out of her room. She said, 'Go home. Love you. Bye-bye.'"

Kelly loved it. Headstrong, determined. That's the congresswoman. That's his wife.

Something else to know about Gabrielle Giffords: Her first word was not "toast."

When news spread that she was speaking, her staffers remarked that for a recent breakfast in Houston, Giffords had requested toast. Somehow, it was adopted as the first evidence of her speech. (She is mailed "toast" T-shirts from fans still.) Her staff and family aren't sure what the exact word was. Nurses who cared for her at University Medical Center in Tucson believe they saw her mouthing messages even then.

It seems like her first words might have been "thank you," Kelly says, or maybe not. Also, she currently prefers granola.

In the early days at TIRR, nurse Poteet says, Giffords said something else: "What is happening to me?" — a phrase she repeated



PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

It is important, doctors and her husband say, to understand that her condition changes. "I can't say I notice improvement every day," says Mark Kelly, "but I can every few days."

over and over.

It was a good phrase, doctors told the usual crew of family, friends and staffers gathered in Giffords' room. It meant she had become aware of herself and of her limitations.

There were hopeful language signs even on the March day that Giffords learned about the people killed on Jan. 8. She had been told there were more bullets, Kelly says, but she didn't yet know that there were deaths. He was reading aloud to her from the *New York Times* — a story about Giffords herself. She followed with her eyes over his shoulder, noticed that he skipped a paragraph, and grabbed the paper out of his hand. He hadn't realized how well she could read.

The paragraph told of six dead, many more wounded. Kelly comforted Giffords while she cried. Her grief spread over days and weeks.

"So many people, so many people," Giffords repeated.

Her nurse Poteet would find Giffords with heavy looks on her face, repeating "no-no-no-no-no."

"She was thinking of it like she couldn't be-

lieve it," Poteet says. "She kept saying, 'I want so bad,' and she was trying to talk about it. But it was too many thoughts in one."

For that reason, Kelly hasn't told Giffords that the shooting victims included her friends and colleagues Gabe Zimmerman and Judge John Roll, or a 9-year-old girl, and three others, the kind of older constituents she loves to help.

That news will spark a wave of complex, layered questions, and Kelly wants her to be able to process the emotions without fighting so hard for the words.

"The challenge is she knows what she wants to say, and she knows everything that's going on around her," Carusone says, but can't always express it. "It's frustrating for her. She'll sigh out of exasperation."

Her husband reminds Giffords to be easy on herself.

"We have all the time in the world, there's no rush, I tell her. I have a lot of patience, so just take your time."

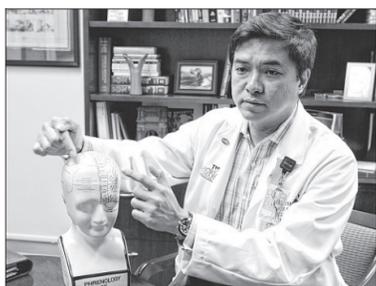
Her staff reminds her of how far she's

Continued on A19

INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS



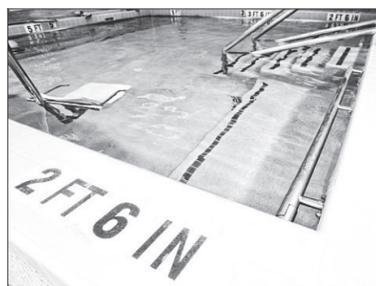
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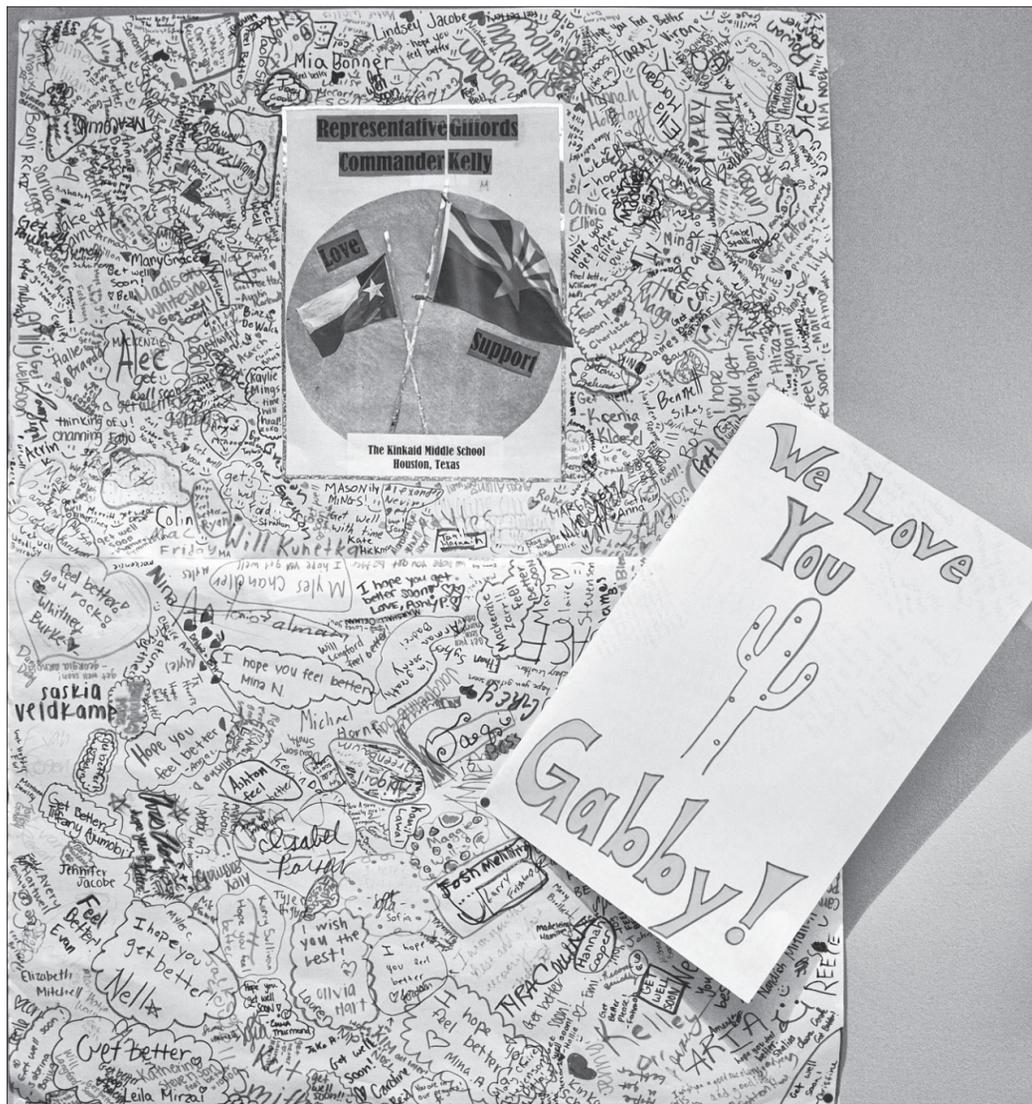


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A helmet to protect Gabrielle Giffords after her head injury is decorated with the Arizona flag. Dr. Gerard Francisco, chief medical officer at TIRR Memorial Hermann, explains the effects of the injury. Nurse Kristy Poteet has developed a special connection with Giffords. Therapy can mean time in the swimming pool or on a weight set or playing Scrabble.



PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

Continued from A18

come. "We tell her, 'When you arrived here, this is what you were able to do — which is not as much as you are today,'" Carusone says. Her nurse reminds her of where she has been. "She gets up every morning, and she has her therapies, and we say, 'You didn't get to be congresswoman by lying around.'"

» » »

Gabrielle Giffords keeps a rock from Arizona near her hospital bed. It reminds her of home. To protect her privacy and security, Giffords sleeps and recuperates in an area of the hospital guarded by Capitol Police, Carusone says. Officers have been with Giffords continuously since the days after the shooting. A uniformed security guard takes visitor names in the lobby of TIRR, where there is also a traditional information desk. The guard arrived when she did. Only selected hospital staffers work with Giffords, and they have been checking their cellphones in at the door before shifts, Carusone said. So far, their efforts to shield her from cameras and \$200,000 bounties have worked, and loneliness is kept at bay because Giffords is hardly alone.

Her room is filled with family — almost always her parents, Gloria and Spencer, who have rarely left their daughter since she was shot. There is a string of visitors from Washington, D.C., and Tucson — including her friend Raoul Erickson, who covered the walls with poster-size photos of Giffords' happy moments: at her wedding, hiking the Grand Canyon, working underneath her old Chevy Corvair. Her memory clear, she still knows and loves these things, doctors say. Piles of flowers and cards and mail stream into TIRR. The packages are checked by security before they're brought to Giffords' room, where a long row of post-office bins lines the floor. The letters make her happy, Carusone says. She has a stress squeezer in the shape of the Capitol dome, even a family of giant stuffed white tigers sent from Las Vegas by Siegfried and Roy. The pair took up the cause of brain injuries after Roy Horn was bit in the neck by a tiger in 2003, resulting in a stroke and partial paralysis.

At TIRR, rehab in one of the three workout rooms could mean therapy in the swimming pool, on a weight set, or on a machine that tracks arm movements to show patients if they're engaging the right muscles. The sound of weights clanging and rubber balls bouncing drift from the gym into the corridors. The halls are all fluorescent lighting and linoleum. In the garden out front, hot-pink roses keep company with boxwood hedges and a bronze sculpture of Prometheus Unbound. It depicts a man in triumph, freed from the chains that held him back. Most often, Giffords works out privately, but "it's not because she wouldn't want to be with other people," says Carusone, because the Gabby she knows would for sure.

At TIRR, patients' family members linger in the gym — and they don't have to check their cameras at the door.

Kelly asked Giffords what they could all do to help her feel more like herself in rehab. "I want to work," she said, and so her staff brings her articles and office memos about the work they are doing. That's therapy, too — it helps her reading comprehension. Coming soon, Carusone says: printouts of simple House of Representatives resolutions.

Kelly comes to TIRR in the morning with coffee and the newspaper, heads to work at NASA, and returns to Giffords at night to talk through their days. Sometimes, he takes a nap with his wife in her hospital bed. It's a twin-size mattress, and so he holds her close. When he comes into the room, Giffords breaks into an oversized smile, nurse Poteet says, reaching out her good arm to beckon him to her side, give him a half-hug. Sometimes, Giffords and Kelly play Scrabble. It helps Giffords work on her spelling, even when Kelly makes up words, like o-x-e-as "another spelling of 'ox,'" he insisted, which made Giffords laugh.

She will miss him while he's in space, Poteet says. Kelly spent a string of days in Florida recently preparing for the launch. Poteet could see his absence on Giffords' face.

» » »

Gabrielle Giffords is beginning week 16, which brings her husband's shuttle launch, which brings its own set of questions.

Will she go?

Yes, Kelly says, pending doctors' OK.

Is it safe?

Yes to that, too, doctors say — even though a piece of her skull is still missing. She won't need a specially pressurized plane, and the hospital will send nurse Poteet and any other necessary staff along with her, says Dr. Dong Kim, the neurosurgeon at Memorial Hermann who oversees Giffords' care. "We're very comfortable with her traveling."

Is it wise?

She is ready, Dr. Kim says, and outings from TIRR help doctors measure patients in their real worlds. Giffords' happens to include Kennedy Space Center.

"It's an opportunity for us to find out what else we need to work on," Dr. Francisco, the psychiatrist, says. "It's not a break."

What will be hard for her?

"There will be more movement required," Dr. Francisco says, and new people for her to react to, though Kelly has asked his NASA

crew to treat his wife with care. She will watch the launch from a private location — a NASA tradition for all the crew families. They are kept from the public eye in case of a public tragedy.

Does she want to go?

That answer has always been clear. "Yes," she says, anytime anyone asks her.

Giffords overheard Kelly talking about cutting her activities there short — maybe just a few hours at the traditional pre-launch beach barbecue, for example. He didn't want her to get tired.

"No," she told him. "Whole thing."

Yes to all of it.

» » »

Once, Gabrielle Giffords felt her doctor's bald spot.

He was lingering in her room, the way the hospital staff tends to do. She told him to get out, and they laughed together.

To tease him further, she reached up and gave his head a rub.

Injuries like Giffords' can bring depression, personality change, behavior problems, trouble relating to others. Giffords' doctors say she seems to have escaped all of those things.

At the hospital, people want to be near her — and that's something to understand about Giffords that never changed: her tendency toward joy, sensitivity for others, and her ability to make others care immediately about her. That's charisma — the intangible force that drew people to polls to vote for her, to Congress on Your Corner at Safeway to talk to her, to the hospital in Tucson to leave flowers on the lawn and pray for her.

By all accounts, that's the woman in this hospital room.

Sometimes, nurse Poteet gets nervous. She was nervous the first time she met her patient, but the worry went away "right when I saw her, right when she looked at me. She grabbed my hand and rubbed my arm."

Giffords is compassionate, Poteet says, listening to her motherhood woes.

"You see it in her eyes — the way she looks at you. She just really attentively listens."

Poteet was nervous for this interview, told Giffords what she was doing.

"Practice, practice," Giffords told her. "And then she kept telling me I was smart — 'smart, smart.'"

"She's more beautiful than any of those pictures, and all the nurses have said that — that big beautiful smile that's always there."

The women understand one another, each 40.

"She can't really say much," Poteet says, but "a couple weeks ago she grabbed my hand and she looked at me and she said, 'sisters.'"

» » »

When Gabrielle Giffords' neurologist talks about his hope for her future, he makes a fist and thumps his heart.

"I feel it here," Dr. Kim says. "She's still got a ways to go. I think she's going to get there. I keep saying that."

He compares progress to the Giffords of week one, and even day one: bleeding on a sidewalk, in surgery at University Medical Center, where doctors weren't sure she would live. On that day, some of the public, and even her husband, heard false reports that she had already died.

"For somebody with that kind of injury, we start with, 'Are they even going to come out of the coma,'" Dr. Kim says, "much less 'what are they going to be doing later?'"

But Giffords "is maybe in the top 1 percent of patients in terms of how far she's come, and how quickly she's gotten there. I think the question, then, becomes, how far is she going to go?"

The only concrete answer: farther.

Most of the physical and speech recovery happens within nine to 12 months, Dr. Kim says, but judgment, how well a patient can think — those recoveries continue for years. Small things crop up down the road that patients need to improve.

Giffords' communications director, C.J. Karamargin, says he imagines that his tenacious boss will always be trying to get better at something.

There will be large milestones to come: "Walking independently," Dr. Kim says, "and she's pretty close to that."

He wants her to have more efficient speech.

In May, he will repair her skull with a cranial implant — computer-generated to fill in where Giffords' bone used to be. The portion removed by Tucson doctors — a piece just larger than a man's palm, Dr. Kim says — was frozen and preserved, but is partially contaminated. The bullet dragged in germs.

Kelly is lobbying Dr. Kim to do the surgery without shaving off Giffords' hair. Her 2 new inches took all 15 weeks to grow.

"There has to be a way," Kelly says.

At the hospital in Tucson, even before her eyes were open, nurses saw Giffords reach her hand up to touch her head, processing the sensation of a bare scalp where there was blond hair before.

Out-patient rehab is far off, Dr. Kim says.

After the cranioplasty, there will be therapy for reading, problem solving, and sessions on using a Blackberry.

"At some point, just living your life is rehab," Dr. Kim says.

The goal is Giffords, version Jan. 7, 2011.

"You cannot be a good rehabilitation professional if you're not optimistic," Dr. Francisco says. "Our goal is to try to bring the person back to where she was. Sometimes we're successful, many times we're not."

How far is she going to go?

"Maybe," says Carusone, "we'll know something at Christmas."

» » »

Some days, Gabrielle Giffords believes that she is never going to get better.

Her staffers tell her she won't talk like this forever, or walk like this forever, "and she thinks we're blowing smoke," Carusone says.

Some days, Gabrielle Giffords believes that she will recover, after all.

"When I tell her that she's not going to be in a wheelchair forever, she believes that," says Kelly, her husband. "Right now she gets up and takes a couple steps. I think she'll probably use a wheelchair for, I don't know, maybe another three months."

"She knows she's going to be a lot better."

They talk about it, he says — "how she's improving all the time."

"I talk to her about where she wants to go, but because it's difficult for her to articulate certain things, I'm not sure," Kelly says.

His own questions hang in the back of his mind: worries about weeks 17, 18, 19, 20.

"What is her recovery going to look like?" he wonders.

"Where is she going to be in a year?"

"Where is she going to be in two years?"

It looks good, he says. Promising.

"But I don't think anybody knows."

Kelly has a space trip ahead of him, but he might be more excited for the moment he returns and finds his wife.

He'll get to absorb two weeks of milestones all at once.

That's enough, for now, he says — "just to see her get better."

Samantha Valtierra Bush, Karen Schmidt and Kiali Wong contributed to this article.

"Would a triumphant return be amazing?" says Pia Carusone, her chief of staff. "Yes. But first of all, her close friends and family will take anything."

AN ARIZONA REPUBLIC EXCLUSIVE | INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

Inside a Houston hospital, an Arizona congresswoman learns to walk again.

She wants to climb a mountain.

Her astronaut husband says, "I know I'm going to have this sense of wanting to get back, just to be with her."



Astronaut Mark Kelly reads a letter aloud to his wife, Gabrielle Giffords, the Arizona congresswoman who was wounded in a shooting attack in January. Until now, her experience in intensive rehabilitation has been largely hidden from the rest of the world. PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

Longing for home

The congresswoman, the survivor

By **Jaimee Rose**
©The Arizona Republic

HOUSTON — Rep. Gabrielle Giffords is left-handed now.

Her handwriting looks different in the letter she recently wrote to her husband, astronaut Mark Kelly, than it did the last time he went into space. Giffords' mother helped her pen the traditional NASA sendoff note two weeks ago. She wrote to her "sweetie pie," and that part — those words — were the same.

Many other things are different since Giffords' brain was pierced by a bullet during the shootings near Tucson on Jan. 8. Her hair is short, maybe 2 inches long, says Pia Carusone, her chief of staff, so there are scars on her scalp that show through. Eventually, her hair will cover them. A thin scar across the top of her forehead is healing well and fading, and her face, though sometimes swollen, is oth-

Continued on A18

The commander, the husband

By **Jaimee Rose and Shaun McKinnon**
©The Arizona Republic

HOUSTON — He is bound for a place where gravity cannot contain him, but even in space, Mark Kelly will feel an inescapable pull toward home.

Gabby. The pull brings him each morning to a room decorated with balloons and cards, desert scenes and family photos. He arrives, Star-

bucks cup in hand, to read the newspaper with his wife.

They begin every day this way, at the rehabilitation hospital where she is recovering from the moment that changed their world Jan. 8. The pull brings him back each night, long after dark. Another day's progress, another day closer.

In the hours between visits, there is another pull.

Kelly, a space-shuttle astronaut,

Continued on A20

WHO WILL PLAY IN THE MLB ALL-STAR GAME?

Fans get set to pick teams for classic in Phoenix

By **Bob McManaman**
The Arizona Republic

For the first time, Major League Baseball's midsummer classic, the All-Star Game, is being played in Phoenix, bringing the game's best talent together for one night under the Chase Field roof.

On Tuesday, the process of decid-

ing which stars will take the field July 12 gets under way with the start of fan voting. From then until final rosters are announced on July 3, one of baseball's most endearing, and argued-over, rituals will unfold like a well-paced, dramatic game.

See **ALL-STAR**, Page A8



Albert Pujols (left) and Alex Rodriguez, two All-Stars likely to be in Phoenix.

SLIPPING AWAY: ARIZONA'S MIDDLE CLASS IN DECLINE

Financial dreams take a hit for many younger workers

By **Russ Wiles and Jahna Berry**
The Arizona Republic

The deep recession and slow recovery have caused financial stress for Arizonans of all ages. But in many ways, the downturn has hit young adults — many of whom came of age during almost 20 years of unprecedented U.S. prosperity — the hardest.

A tough job market,

daunting student-loan balances, misuse of credit cards, the housing-market crash and reduced workplace benefits are among the challenges that have put many people under age 40 in a bind.

Will they be able to match the standard of living attained by their parents? Time, of course, is on their side, but for many, the

See **YOUNG**, Page A16

VALLEY & STATE

BCS panel hears Fiesta Bowl plea

Fighting to stay in college football's prestigious Bowl Championship Series, the Fiesta Bowl presents its case to a BCS task force in Chicago, promising to clean up its financial mismanagement, potentially illegal conduct and lax board oversight. **B1**



SPORTS

Offense dominates ASU spring game

ASU's offense looks spectacular but the defense looks defenseless as a passing attack led by quarterback Brock Osweiler dominates the team's annual spring game. Receiver J.J. Holliday (left) hauls in a pass for the offense, which tallied 92 points against the defense. **C1**

NATION & WORLD

Syrian forces attack funerals: A day after the deadliest crackdown in the Syrian uprising, the two-day death toll climbs to 120 after forces fire at large funeral processions. **A3**

VIEWPOINTS

Brewer not switching sides: Gov. Jan Brewer's decision to veto a pair of high-profile measures passed by her fellow Republicans in the Legislature does not portend an ideological shift. **B10**

BUSINESS

Top Ariz. companies are hiring: The Republic's annual survey of the state's largest 100 companies indicates that, with the recession over, a majority are expanding their workforce again. **D1**

High 85 Low 64
Partly cloudy, slightly breezy. **B12**

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INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

Continued from A1

paces a clock that is counting down to launch day. On Friday, he and his crew will lift off aboard Endeavour for the second-to-last shuttle flight.

As they run through the training they will depend on to stay alive in space, the count-down continues. Another day closer.

Kelly has been to space before. But the job "will be a little bit harder this time, just because I want to look out for her," Kelly said, speaking to *The Arizona Republic* in an exclusive interview after spending a day in training and an evening at his wife's side.

Kelly says launch mornings are tightly focused. Hurried, but precise to the second, the tension broken only by a preflight poker game. The astronauts think only about the launch.

This time, he says, will be different. "I know I'm going to have this sense of wanting to get back, just to be with her," he said.

NASA tells the astronauts they would have been safer rushing the beaches of Normandy. Tragedy has claimed a shuttle twice in the past. The chances are one in 57 that an astronaut will die.

Kelly's wife, Arizona's Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, has outrun long odds of her own, her doctors say. She survived the bullet that traveled through her brain when she was shot outside a grocery store near Tucson.

In the days after her shooting, Kelly wondered whether he could lead the mission. He was being pulled to Gabby.

Then he watched his wife begin her recovery. Somewhere among her words, in their moments together, was a clear message for her husband, one that eased the struggle against the pull. It was the same answer astronauts wait to hear in the long buildup to a launch, after the risks and the rewards have been assessed. It was the answer, in NASA-speak, to the question "Go or no-go?"

The answer was go.

» » »

Morning at Giffords' hospital room brings husband Kelly, carrying a brightly colored paper cup and a copy of the *New York Times*.

Since she was moved to TIRR Memorial Hermann in Houston in late January, she has worked on her recovery full time, while Kelly trains at Johnson Space Center nearby.

Kelly visits her about 7 a.m. for 15 minutes, maybe 30, as many as he can squeeze in before work.

He takes her drink order each night before. "It's either a non-fat latte with two raw sugars, or tea," he says. "And I always ask her if she wants a doughnut, because once she said yes."

At his usual Starbucks, workers make the order with specially decorated cups.

While he waits in line for the coffee, he scans the front page of the *Times* and chooses a story he can read aloud to her. He finds stories he knows she would like, the ones about Congress, the budget or people doing good things.

It was from a *Times* story they were reading together that Giffords first learned that six people died in the shooting that wounded her. Kelly tried to skip a couple of lines in a story, but Giffords, following along, caught him. When she realized the truth, she began to cry.

Lately, the conversation has turned to his launch. Giffords wants to go to Florida to see the liftoff, something she makes clear to him. They are awaiting her doctors' OK.

Kelly the astronaut wants her in Florida. "I wouldn't want her to be there if she wasn't ready to do this," Kelly said. "She's one of the biggest supporters in Congress of what we do at NASA."

But as her husband, he says, he wants the best thing for her recovery. If she weren't there, he says, "it wouldn't be the end of the world either."

» » »

In the hours and days after the Tucson tragedy, Kelly wasn't sure he would ever be where he is now.

He rushed to his wife's side after hearing the news: A lone gunman had opened fire at one of Giffords' trademark meet-and-greet events. Six people died, including a federal judge, a 9-year-old girl and one of Giffords' staff members. Thirteen others were wounded.

Kelly had already been preparing for his shuttle mission. It would be his fourth, his second as commander. It carried special meaning as one of the last flights in the shuttle's often-turbulent history.

Then Giffords' chief of staff had called him with the incomprehensible news. Gabby had been shot.

In those seconds, he wondered if he had dreamed the phone call. Then, he says, he found himself wishing his wife had lost her re-election race.

The race had been close, so close the results weren't known for days. The result could have gone the other way.

"That doesn't mean that this wouldn't have happened," he said. "I mean I don't ... you don't know this guy's motivation, but I think there's a chance it would not have happened. Probably, I think there's a good chance that if she would have lost, this would not have happened."

For days, the question hung over Tucson and then Houston: Would Kelly fly the mission or would he remain with his wife?

Television commentators, columnists and bloggers all disagreed about what was right. He has a duty to his crew, some argued. He has a duty to his wife, others said.

Kelly talked about the dilemma with Peter Rhee, the trauma surgeon at University Medical Center in Tucson, where Giffords was taken after the shooting.

"He has been working on this mission for over two years," Rhee said in an interview with *The Republic*. "He had been the consummate husband and wanted to cancel that mission. He wanted to give the best opportunity for his crew to have a concentrated commander on that mission."

Rhee tried to reassure Kelly that Giffords

would be fine, and he was touched by Kelly's deep concern. "I think that he is one of the nicest men I ever met," Rhee said.

Kelly talked with his twin brother, Scott, who is also an astronaut. Scott was aboard the International Space Station on the day of the shooting.

"Certainly it would be a tough decision for anyone," Scott said. "I think we just discussed the two options. In NASA-speak, the 'risk traits' of doing anything."

Given Mark's experience, Scott said, "It's something he can manage."

Kelly also talked to his wife.

"Her reaction," he says, "was just like kind of confusion that I would even consider giving up the opportunity to command this last flight of Endeavour."

At every step, he says, the answer is the same.

"I've asked a number of times, 'Are you OK with me doing this?'" he says. "She'll say, 'Yes.'"

» » »

At NASA in Houston, Kelly jogs down the hallway, his crew speed-walking behind him.

The flight session is at 8 a.m. For Kelly, 8 means 8, not 8:01.

"Up, up, we're late," he says, waving his arm and herding them up the stairs into the shuttle-flight simulator, where they strap into a replica of the shuttle's cockpit. The crew members wear blue rubber bracelets that read: "Peace, Love, Gabby." They don't ask how she is doing, and Kelly doesn't bring

it up.

They run through every step of the mission, down to the violent shaking they feel upon ascent and even the moment that they pause to take photographs of Earth.

Before each practice launch, pilot Gregory H. "Boxy" Johnson reaches his hand behind him, palm up, and wiggles his fingers for fist bumps from mission specialists Roberto Vittori and Michael Fincke. He calls them "Ricky Bobby" and "Spanky."

Kelly sits to Johnson's left. He doesn't have a nickname.

"That's how he rolls," Johnson said.

And he doesn't fist-bump in the simulator.

"I'll probably get one out of him," Johnson said, "and I don't want to waste it."

For the simulator flights, a NASA team writes training exercises, creating unexpected events to test the crew and Mission Control.

Today, during one of their final simulations, their trainers make things fall apart.

The crew and controllers must work together to diagnose the malfunctions — failed engines, loss of communication — and preserve the mission.

"One failure goes wrong in the ascent — a crew failure away from going hot," a crew member says.

They make it to space.

In real life, Kelly says, they'd maybe have one problem.

After the simulation, during the debriefing, they talk about risk and worth, if that flight should have been aborted "to keep us alive," Johnson said.



CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC



CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC

Each morning, Mark Kelly, astronaut and husband of Gabrielle Giffords, brings his wife coffee or tea from Starbucks and a newspaper to read to her. The Starbucks baristas use cups decorated for Giffords by elementary-school students.



While his wife has defied the odds in her recovery from a bullet through the brain, Kelly must also fight chance as commander of the space shuttle Endeavour, citing a 1-in-57 likelihood of an astronaut dying. CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC

"There's a lot of stuff that can go wrong with the space shuttle, but there's a lot of stuff that we have control over," Kelly says.

"And then there's stuff completely out of our control."

He questioned Mission Control: "You see what we're getting at? We want to be intact."

» » »

For all the emotional weight Endeavour will carry into space, its true payload is a \$1.5 billion experiment that many scientists believe could help unlock the mysteries of what makes up our universe.

The alpha magnetic spectrometer will be mounted to the space station and, if all goes well, will collect data for the next decade or longer, analyzing bits of cosmic material, looking for clues about the big bang and the dark matter that makes up most of space. It has been compared in importance to the Hubble Space Telescope.

"That's unique," Kelly said. "It's the only large sensor that goes on the outside of the space station. It's more expensive than Hubble, the most expensive thing ever flown in the space shuttle."

The experiment is the work of nearly 600 scientists and researchers from 16 countries and 60 different institutions.

"We're going to be able to follow the science over the next years and next decades and see what comes out of this," he said. "Knowing that you're a part of that makes this flight compared to my other three pretty special."

The spectrometer almost didn't make a flight. After the shuttle Columbia blew up on re-entry in 2003, NASA dropped the experiment from its newly shortened sched-

Continued on A21

INSIDE THE RECOVERY OF GABRIELLE GIFFORDS



TERRY RENNA/ASSOCIATED PRESS



TERRY RENNA/ASSOCIATED PRESS



CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC

Kelly, commander of space shuttle Endeavour's final mission, arrives (left) in Cape Canaveral, Fla., last month for a practice countdown. Alongside pilot Greg Johnson (center), Kelly and the rest of the shuttle crew spend their days back in Houston preparing for Friday's launch. At night, Kelly just looks forward to seeing his wife.



After each workday, Kelly returns to Giffords' hospital room at TIRR Memorial Hermann. Instead of talking about the issues he's dealing with, he says, he focuses on her recovery and watches for improvement. PIA CARUSONE/FOR THE REPUBLIC

Continued from A20

ule. But the Nobel-winning scientist behind the project lobbied Congress, and NASA finally ordered an extra flight to carry the experiment aloft.

» » »

Mark Kelly is playing a kind of game. Write down a number on a piece of paper, he tells a reporter, a number between one and 57.

"I'm not going to look," he says. "Write it down. I'm looking over here. Have you written it down?" Kelly's game is a way of illustrating the odds NASA puts on an astronaut dying — one in 57.

Kelly was accepted into the space program in 1996, 10 years after the first shuttle tragedy, when Challenger exploded shortly after liftoff. He flew his first mission in 2001 and his second in 2006, before and after the Columbia disaster.

He knows the risks. When Giffords tells him she's worried, he says, "I would tell her that there's a lot of stuff that can go wrong with the space shuttle, but there's a lot of stuff that we have control over. There are a lot of things I can do to intervene and make the situation a lot better. And then there's stuff completely out of our control." The number is written on the piece of paper. Now, Kelly tries to guess it. "Thirty-seven," he says, with a hint of glee.

The number on the paper is 34. Kelly's grin broadens. "See, I won," he says.

So what happens if the number had been 37?

"I would have said, 'I'm dead.'"

» » »

On the morning of the launch, Kelly will leave four handwritten letters on his desk in crew quarters.

He will write letters to each of his daughters, Claudia and Claire, a "long list of things" for his brother and a message more tender for his wife.

The letters will be delivered only if tragedy intervenes. His brother will be in charge of handing them out.

The writing is not a pleasant exercise: "I don't like to do it," Kelly said.

Like most astronaut spouses, Giffords has written her own letters to Kelly, to be read once he reaches orbit.

The last time was in 2008. For that launch, she talked about the letters in an interview with *The Republic*.

"I told him how much I love him and how proud I am of him," she said at the time.

She also said that on an earlier flight, she had cheated. She opened the letter he wrote her.

"I did," she said. "I will again."

» » »

STS-134 is Kelly's last shuttle mission, Endeavour's last and NASA's second-to-last. With American space travel in budgetary peril, Kelly can't be sure he'll return to space.

When Endeavour returns to Earth in May, Kelly will face decisions about his future. They will not be the regimented decisions of an astronaut in training. The future is not a question of go or no-go.

"I've been so focused on helping Gabby and getting ready for this flight," he said. "I know when I get back I'll take my time and figure out what's next for me."

With so much time and so many political pundits to speculate, there have been suggestions he might run for office, perhaps taking his wife's place if she chooses not to run again someday.

He spends little time with such ideas.

"Run for what?" he said. "I'm registered to vote in Texas. I have no idea what my future is going to be. I've got this flight that I've got to successfully execute, and then I'll think about what's next."

What's next is focusing on Gabby. Her future is as unwritten as his. Her doctors and her friends and associates talk about her recovery in terms of weeks, months. They refuse to commit her to any schedule that isn't of her own doing.

She could continue her recovery in Texas or in Washington or back home, where she used to wind through the Catalina foothills on her bike.

For now, they focus on the space flight ahead.

Kelly can call Giffords 38 hours into the mission, when the shuttle docks at the International Space Station and the hatch is opened. There will be a long delay on the line, but for a few minutes each day there will be each other's voice, transcending the atmosphere.

The conversations "will be different now than they were on my last flight,"

said Kelly, who commanded the shuttle Discovery in 2008. On "one of my last calls to her from space, she was walking from the Capitol back over to Rayburn (House Office Building) with Miles O'Brien from CNN."

Now, he will ask her "how things are going and how she's doing and what's her day like," he said.

They have a particular phone goodbye, the rote of a married couple, he says.

"But that's a secret."

» » »

The end of the workday brings Kelly back to the hospital room. It is past dark.

He watches for small signs of improvement, to see that something has changed, something new that wasn't there a day earlier.

Most days, he says, he is rewarded. If this were a previous mission, he would be talking to her about the preparations.

"I'd talk to her about all the crap I gotta deal with and all the issues I have to deal with," he says. "I'm not doing that so much anymore. I mean I could; I just don't really want to burden her with my problems. I try to focus more on what she's having to deal with."

The first time they felt a connection after the tragedy came in a different hospital room, one in Tucson, just hours after she was shot.

She found his hand with hers and reached for his wedding ring. Kelly will never forget it.

"She pulled my ring off my finger," he says, "and started flipping it from one finger to the next."

This week, the connection will come from her wedding ring.

He will carry it with him into space, just as he did the last flight, tucked into a pocket of his jumpsuit. The ring is inscribed: "You're the closest to heaven that I'll ever be."

He worries about what she'll do at night while he's gone.

"It's just she'll be sad that I'm not there anymore every night," he says. "I mean, it's just that."

At night, in Houston, he simply looks forward to seeing his wife. Before he leaves for the night, he sometimes crawls into bed alongside her — close, once again, to his center of gravity.

Republic reporters Ken Alltucker and John Faherty contributed to this article.

More coverage



See more exclusive photos from the lives of Giffords and Kelly at news.azcentral.com.

Coming Monday: The shuttle launch this week will be a reunion for Tucson's victims and heroes from the Jan. 8 shooting.

All week in *The Republic* and at azcentral.com: Complete coverage of preparations and the launch.

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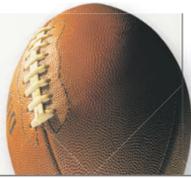
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TUCSON TRAGEDY
AN ARIZONA REPUBLIC SPECIAL REPORT



Once a heart has broken, it can only mend a little at a time. Since Jan. 8's Tucson-area shooting, the world has moved on. But the loss is still sinking in for the family of **Christina-Taylor Green**.

BY KARINA BLAND
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Roxanna Green finds it easier to think that her 9-year-old daughter, Christina-Taylor, was killed in a car accident. She's not in denial about what really happened. She took the phone call that said to come to the hospital, quickly. She talked to police officers from the scene. She found herself trying to comfort the crying surgeon who hadn't been able to save her daughter's life.

It was international news, after all. The president came.

But it's easier to live with the thought that Christina-Taylor died in a car accident. Because what really happened is so unbelievably mad, so impossible to accept.

Christina-Taylor was just a little girl. And in all the scenarios a mother imagines when she thinks about keep-

ing her children safe — *look both ways, buckle up, take that out of your mouth, please* — no thought is ever given to *what if someone pulls out a gun in a grocery-store parking lot on a sunny Saturday and starts shooting.*

It was unimaginable. Until it happened.

See **FAMILY, Page A16**



Roxanna Green says of her daughter, Christina-Taylor, who died in the Jan. 8 mass shooting: "There will always be a hole in my heart." CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC
TOP PHOTO: GREEN FAMILY

Irene soaks East Coast

Hurricane raises fears of flooding; 6 killed

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A weakening but still dangerous Hurricane Irene shut down New York and menaced other cities more accustomed to snowstorms than tropical storms as it steamed up the East Coast on Saturday, unloading a foot of rain on North Carolina and Virginia and knocking out power to nearly 1.9 million homes and businesses. At least six people were killed.

New York emptied its streets and subways and waited with an eerie quiet. Washington braced for the onslaught, too, as did Philadelphia, the New Jersey shore and the Boston metropolitan area. Packing wind gusts of 115 mph, the hurricane had an enormous wingspan — 500 miles — and threatened a swath of the nation inhabited

See **HURRICANE, Page A3**

IRENE'S IMPACT

Big cities brace: New York's bustle goes quiet; Washington awaits nature's latest test. **A4**

Air travel disrupted: More than 9,000 flights throughout the East Coast are canceled. **A5**

Splintered market is real-estate conundrum

By Catherine Reagor
The Arizona Republic

Recent reports say foreclosures are declining in metro Phoenix and large numbers of homes are selling.

But many homeowners feel trapped in houses they can't sell.

Some real-estate agents can't find enough new listings to keep up with demand from buyers.

But others say there aren't enough buyers, and homes are selling too slowly.

The housing market in metro Phoenix may never have been as confusing as it is today.

Nearly five years after the beginning of the housing crash, the region's market has fractured into countless different niches.

Each niche is defined by who's selling, what kind of home is for sale and where the home is located.

And each niche has become a market of its own.

Some — such as the market for small central Phoenix foreclosure homes being sold at auction — are booming, with prices rising and a huge demand from buyers.

See **HOUSING, Page A6**

VIEWPOINTS

Memo to the next mayor of Phoenix

With Phoenix voters poised to select a new mayor on Tuesday, former Mayor Terry Goddard offers the city's next leader five pieces of advice. **B10**

Endorsements: The Republic's recommendations for Tuesday's election. **B9**

SPORTS

D-Backs make it 5 straight wins

The Diamondbacks get seven strong innings from pitcher Joe Saunders (right) and a two-run homer from Chris Young as they beat the Padres, 3-1, to stretch their winning streak to five and maintain a three-game lead over the San Francisco Giants. **C1**



NATION & WORLD

Strike kills al-Qaida's No. 2 leader: U.S. and Pakistani officials say a high-priority target, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, the terror group's second in command, was killed Monday in a missile strike. **A8**

VALLEY & STATE

Use of funds questioned: While Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu has sought donations to help battle drug cartels, his office used \$53,000 to fund a weeklong trip to St. Louis. **B1**

A&E

Fall Arts Preview: Are you interested in the symphony, the art museum or the opera but don't know where to begin? This year's Fall Arts Preview is designed for the first-timer. **AE1**

High 111 Low 90
Mostly sunny skies; excessive heat. **B12**

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Painful memories amid healing

FAMILY

Continued from A1

Jan. 8, 2011.

Two Saturdays before, it had been Christmas, and Christina-Taylor had spent two weeks with her parents, 11-year-old brother, and Nana and Pop-Pop in the Turks and Caicos Islands for the holidays. Santa had brought her an iPod Touch.

She already was back in school, excited to see her friends after winter break.

And this Saturday promised fun as well, as Christina-Taylor stood hand-in-hand in a Safeway parking lot near Tucson with her friend and neighbor, 59-year-old Suzi Hileman, as they waited to meet U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. They were silly with excitement and had plans to get their nails done afterward.

When the shooting started, they ran together, still holding hands.

To the gunman, they probably looked about the same size — Hileman, tiny at not quite 5 feet, and Christina-Taylor, the tallest kid in third grade. Maybe he didn't know he was shooting a child. It doesn't matter. He did.

Hileman was hit three times trying to shield her young charge. Christina-Taylor was shot once. The two fell to the pavement next to each other, bleeding. Hileman looked into the little girl's eyes and, in her best mom voice, admonished, "Don't you leave me, Christina-Taylor Green. Don't you die on me."

But the 9-year-old was one of six people killed that day. Their names are written on six white wooden crosses that stand in memorial across Ina Road from the Safeway. Christina-Taylor's name is on the fifth one. Thirteen other people, including Hileman and Giffords, were shot and lived.

Today, Roxanna Green is picking at a salad at a cafe that shares the parking lot of the Safeway where her daughter died. It is not a scary place for her, though it is a little haunting.

Nancy Bowman, a nurse who was on the scene that day, later assured Green that Christina-Taylor died quickly, with no time to hurt or be scared.

"That's what every mother wants to hear," Green says. "She was peaceful, and she went straight up to heaven like an angel."

Green can talk about Jan. 8, but it's hard. She is a private person by nature, first, and second, telling the story hurts as much as if it all happened yesterday.

Many details are well-known now: Hileman coming over to pick up Christina-Taylor, her mom sending the girl back inside the house for a sweatshirt — she chose the pink one with the peace sign — Green waving them out of the driveway before taking son Dallas to karate.

Green and Dallas were back home when the phone rang. It was Hileman's husband, Bill, telling Green to get to the hospital. Quickly. Something had happened, he said. He didn't know any details.

What Green, a nurse, kept to herself before now is that in that frozen moment, with the phone still in her hand, she knew a dire truth: Phone calls from a hospital when everyone is all right go something like this: "Your daughter is fine, but she was in an accident." When the person is not going to be all right, they say, "Come quickly."

And Green the mother knew another dire truth. Something catastrophic must have happened for Suzi Hileman not to have called. "She would have found a way," Green says.

But Hileman was already in surgery, unable to talk to anyone. Of the three bullets she took, one shattered her hip, one was somewhere in her leg, and the third missed her heart by an inch. Her condition was critical.

Green called her husband, John. He didn't answer. She called again. No answer. Not the third time either. So she left him a message, saying to meet her at the hospital. And she hurried Dallas to the car.

"I didn't know what had happened, but I knew it was bad," Green says.

As she drove, she pictured a car accident. Hileman's little white car, rear-ended hard, maybe.

"I was just trying to be very real," she says. She wanted to be ready for whatever they would tell her at the hospital.

Her heart pounded.

Tucson's University Medical Center — a Level 1 trauma center, the only one in southern Arizona — is about 7 miles south of the Oracle and Ina intersection, where the Safeway sits. Roxanna Green's quickest route would take her straight to the intersection, where she would turn south.

But from half a mile away, she could see flashing red and blue lights, and then police cars. Her dread grew. She made a right onto a side street to go around the commotion ahead and then looked back over her left shoulder. The parking lot was webbed with yellow and black police tape.

"My heart just —" and she gives a thumb down and sinks it into her thigh.

The possibilities in her mind worsened. Now she was picturing Hileman's little white car sliding under a semitruck, maybe, or flipping over and over again.

Green told Dallas, "Just pray. Just pray for Christina and Miss Suzi."

Dallas, his eyes wide, answered, "I am. I am."

The hospital parking lot was packed, and the entrance to the emergency room was blocked off by police. News crews were setting up cameras on tripods.

"I knew something *really* bad had happened," Green says. The sentence is the refrain of her story because it became the ever-worsening refrain of her day.

A police officer escorted her into the emergency room. At the information desk, Green asked the woman for her daughter, Christina-Taylor. The woman's face turned white.

Hospitals follow protocol for breaking



Shown after her First Communion, Christina-Taylor Green (second from left) was close friends with Suzi Hileman (far right). The two spent a lot of time together, playing games and going on outings, including to see Gabrielle Giffords. GREEN FAMILY PHOTOS

HOW TO HELP

CHRISTINA-TAYLOR GREEN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Volunteer

Help install the new playground at Mesa Verde Elementary School, 1661 W. Sage St., Tucson, between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Sept. 17. Builders must be at least 18. RSVP to 520-696-6090.

Donate

By PayPal or credit card on the website, or send a check to the CTG Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 65000, Tucson, AZ 85728.

Buy merchandise

CTG iron-on patches and pins, \$5, and bracelets, \$3. Special pricing for fundraisers for teams, schools and groups. Also available, handcrafted ceramic butterflies, \$25-\$40.

Details: www.christina-taylorgreen.org or e-mail christina_taylorgreen@yahoo.com

“Losing a child really is the worst thing that could ever happen to you. People say that, all the time, but when it happens, it really is the worst thing that could ever happen to you.”

ROXANNA GREEN

Mother of Christina-Taylor Green, who was killed in the Jan. 8 mass shooting near Tucson



Roxanna Green, husband John and children Christina-Taylor, 9, and Dallas, now 12, celebrated Christmas in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

bad news, out of respect. One guideline, for instance, is that information should not come from a receptionist at the information desk but from a person in authority, who can answer difficult questions.

"Where is she?" Green asked. "Is she all right?"

The woman didn't answer. She picked up the phone and turned away.

"It kept getting worse and worse and worse," Green says. And then she stopped asking questions.

Green and Dallas were taken to an empty waiting room, where maybe 15 minutes went by, though to Green, it felt like hours. A woman came and asked if she could bring them anything.

Green focused on Dallas.

Did he want something to eat? No. Juice? No.

And then she asked to use the restroom, and the woman stayed with Dallas.

Alone for the first time since the phone call, her mind whirling in the darkest of places, Green fell to her knees on the tile in the empty restroom and prayed. "If she's really, really bad, if she's suffering, please just take her. I don't want her to hurt."

The waiting room had begun to fill with people, all with badges or IDs of some sort. Police. Social workers. Hospital personnel.

Coming back in, Green asked Dallas if he was all right, and he nodded. There was a Bible on a side table, and she picked it up and opened it on her lap. Then she prayed that her daughter would be all right.

She didn't cry.

"I was trying to be hopeful," Green says.

"And I didn't want to scare Dallas."

She crossed her right arm across her stomach and pinched the inside of her left arm. Hard. *This had to be a bad dream.*

But the pinch hurt. She could feel it.

"Do you want to wait for your husband?" a police officer asked. No.

"The seconds, the minutes seemed like hours," Green says. "I couldn't wait anymore."

And the officer started to tell her what had happened that day. He said that her daughter had been shot, one of many at the gathering for Giffords.

Shot?

What?

The words made no sense. Who would shoot a little girl?

A surgeon entered then, trailed by three nurses. He was crying, and so were the nurses, and then Green knew for sure. The

surgeon sat next to her and said, "We tried the best we could." His voice caught, and he choked out: "We tried the best we could. Your daughter passed away."

Green pinched her arm again and again. It still hurt. But this wasn't real. It couldn't be real.

"This is the worst dream ever," she thought.

And yet, ever the mother, ever the nurse, Green thanked the surgeon, repeating his words: "I know you tried your best. It's OK. Thank you."

She looked into the face of her son sitting beside her, his eyes searching her face.

"Can we see Christina now?" Dallas asked.

He had heard the police officer, and the surgeon, but maybe he needed to hear the words from his mother for them to be true.

"Christina is in heaven, Dallas," Green told him, and then she cried, holding her tearful son.

Her husband was in the doorway then, an officer telling him what happened. Green watched as Christina-Taylor's dad leaned against the wall and cried.

And then someone said they could take them to their little girl.

Christina-Taylor lay under a clean white sheet. She was so still, her mother said. Even when she was sleeping, Christina-Taylor had never been so still.

Father Bart Hutcherson, a Catholic priest from the university's Newman Center who had been called after the shootings to help, gave last rites to the child who had just taken her First Communion a year earlier.

John, Roxanna and Dallas prayed together there with Christina-Taylor before they said goodbye. There are no words to describe that moment, John Green says. It was the worst. And something no little boy should ever have to experience.

Roxanna Green kissed her daughter for the last time and said, "I love you." And then there was nothing left to do except to leave her there, alone.

It was 2 p.m.

Christina-Taylor had the house at 9:45 a.m.

As they walked out of the hospital, Green was surprised to find that her legs still moved, her lungs still took in air. She could feel her husband holding one hand and her son's fingers laced through her other.

Hileman was still in surgery but was

expected to live.

And the Greens had just given permission to donate Christina-Taylor's organs.

Many 9-year-olds wouldn't know much about organ donation. But Christina-Taylor and Dallas had both decided they wanted to be organ donors like their maternal grandma, who died in 2009. At the time, Green remembers, she told them, "You don't have to worry about that for a very long time." She'd said they could sign up when they turned 16 and got their driver's licenses.

Outside the hospital, a memorial was already growing. People from the community were leaving notes, flowers, teddy bears and candles for the victims. The family's path was more than a walk from a building back to their cars. It was also a passage out of the quiet, private rooms they'd just left into an explosion of people, phone calls, text messages, e-mail, cards, food and flower deliveries.

And a world without their daughter in it.

In some ways, when your child is killed in such a shocking and public manner, she stops belonging only to you.

Roxanna Green is a soft-spoken woman who did little more than join the PTA to draw attention to herself. And then at the most vulnerable time in her life, she found herself on display, mourning with a world audience.

A major news story tramples some of the ordinary rules of privacy. News crews converge in your driveway. The governor comes to town, and so does the president of the United States, and the Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tucson flies home from Jerusalem for your daughter's funeral.

And four days after your sweet, funny 9-year-old was killed, an estimated 26,000 people converge on the University of Arizona campus, all mourning too. With a picture of Christina-Taylor towering overhead on a huge video screen, President Barack Obama hailed her as a symbol of hope, saying, "I want America to be as good as she imagined it."

And because your daughter was born on Sept. 11, 2001, even the National 9/11 flag — the largest American flag salvaged from the Twin Towers' wreckage — is on display at her funeral, after being flown out of JFK during a snow emergency in which thousands of flights were canceled.

Continued on Page A17



Dallas and Christina-Taylor with their dad, John, while hiking in Sedona. Dallas recently celebrated his 12th birthday, but it wasn't the same without his little sister. GREEN FAMILY PHOTOS



Young dancer Christina-Taylor, with best friend Shea Garrett, told her mother she would be a star. "We had all these dreams, all these plans," her mother says.

Continued from A16

"She would have been very happy," Green says. "It was like a funeral for a princess."

What is ironic is that the Greens thought at first that their daughter might be forgotten. The others who died that day were adults, including a federal judge and a congressional staff member.

"She was so young. We were sure she wasn't going to be remembered," Green says.

The attention was a comfort but also an intrusion. When all a grieving mother wanted to do was curl up on her bed and cry, she felt she should go to candlelight vigils and public tributes.

"It was exhausting to do all the things that we had to do," she says, especially right afterward, but it seemed ungrateful and selfish to refuse.

She simply didn't have the energy for every event, so she went to the ones that her daughter would have enjoyed. Christina-Taylor would have loved to have met President Obama, or seen a Little League field named after her.

"You just have to step up when life gives you the unexpected. You just have to do what you have to do," Green says.

"I think women are very, very strong."

For days, maybe weeks after Christina-Taylor died, Green couldn't sleep: "I heard her calling me."

At first, she could barely drag herself out of bed and into the shower, and some days, she didn't. Some days, it was hard to move from one room to the next.

"This pain, I can't even describe it," Green says.

She is so grateful for the meals that kept coming from people at school and church, strangers, and local restaurants. She had no strength to cook, let alone go to the grocery store.

"It is hard work when you can barely get out of bed," she says, smiling almost apologetically. She ate, but only because there were pans of lasagna, cheesy potato casseroles and cakes in the kitchen.

"I know why they call it 'comfort food' because it did, for me, in the moment," Green says. Grimacing, she says she gained 15 pounds.

Her girlfriends came over, even when she said she didn't need them, sometimes just lying next to her and watching TV in silence. And Green would sit with her husband and son at the wooden table just off the kitchen at dinner, so something would seem the same.

"I was doing what it took to get through each day," Green says.

Because it wasn't until after the family returned from Washington, D.C., where they were guests of President Obama's for the State of the Union address on Jan. 24, and Green sat next to the first lady and again faced the cameras, that she was able to really mourn her loss.

With Dallas back in school and John on the road again for work, she finally just spent three days in the same pair of sweat-

pants and let her heart break.

Green is now a mother of two with only one child. She is figuring out what that means and where she fits in a world that seems to be able to go on with no Christina-Taylor in it.

"I have Dallas. I have to get up every day and put on a brave face for him," Green says. "You have to be strong for your child."

She has tried to keep things much like they used to be, with dinner together every night, church on Sundays and baseball. John Green, a baseball scout for the Los Angeles Dodgers, is working. Fall Little League will start soon, and Dallas has started middle school.

But even in the routine of life, there is loss. Green had no reason to go to the girls' department when shopping for school clothes this year, and there is a gap now on Thursday afternoons when she should be taking Christina-Taylor to dance class.

"We talk about her all the time," Green says. "We try to pretend like she's still with us because a lot of times it feels like she is."

But the house is too quiet. It used to echo with Christina-Taylor's giggles, the quick rhythm of her feet running across the tile, her voice singing to Beyonce's "Single Ladies" in her bedroom or her chatter on the phone with girlfriends.

Dallas calls his friends, but it's not the same. He's a boy, so the conversations are short: "Want to come over? Cool."

He was the quieter of the two anyway. Without Christina-Taylor calling out to him, he's not calling back.

"Not only do I miss her, but I miss the noise," Green says. When Christina-Taylor was quiet, something was wrong. She is quiet now, and it feels so wrong.

Green and Christina-Taylor shared a love of old movies, passed on by Green's mother. They'd watch anything with Audrey Hepburn — Christina-Taylor's favorite was "Breakfast at Tiffany's." They watched "National Velvet" with Elizabeth Taylor again and again.

Christina-Taylor would ask her mother what college was like, and what she should do with her life. She was proud of being born on 9/11 and said she wanted to be something good to come out of that awful day.

"We had all these dreams, all these plans," Green says.

Christina-Taylor wanted to be the first woman in the Major Leagues and a politician, a doctor and a dancer. She started dancing at 3, irresistible in a tutu and a ham on stage. She told her mom she would be a star.

"What kind of star?" Green asked. "A singer? Dancer?"

"I don't know yet, but I'll be a star," she replied.

Her mom didn't doubt her. Two years ago, when her daughter announced she wanted to play baseball, Green said, "You mean softball." No, she said, *baseball*. Her mom said she might be the only girl, but Christina-Taylor didn't care: "I just want to

azcentral.com

See more photos of Christina-Taylor Green and her family and follow the latest news on the aftermath of the Tucson tragedy at giffords.azcentral.com.

play baseball."

One of the few times Green saw her daughter's confidence falter, even a little bit, was when she ran for student council. Christina-Taylor worried that she wasn't addressing all the issues. Green didn't have the heart to tell her that it would likely be more of a popularity contest than anything.

But for a little girl who campaigned with her grandmother for Obama and sat with her mom for hours watching the funeral of Sen. Ted Kennedy (prompting Dallas to ask, "Are you still watching this?"), her campaign, even in third grade, had to be substantive.

And Christina-Taylor was thrilled when she did win, running from the bus stop to tell the big news.

It was that win that made Hileman think about taking Christina-Taylor to meet Giffords. The congresswoman seemed a good role model for a little girl interested in politics as a way to change the world.

The playground at Mesa Verde Elementary School, where her daughter used to play, is empty today. Green sits on a swing, moving back and forth, her heels leaving wakes in the sand.

The sun is bright, and Green is wearing sunglasses, as she does a lot of the time now. She doesn't like to be photographed without them.

She has given up wearing mascara. Her eyes, brown like her daughter's, often are swollen from crying. The sunglasses hide that, and they protect her, too, a shield from the world, which still watches closely to see how she is holding up.

This playground isn't much, but Christina-Taylor loved it here. Green can almost see her playing, which makes her impossibly happy and impossibly sad at the same time, like so many things these days.

The sunglasses can't stop tears from falling, and Green raises a shaky hand to her face and catches one, wiping it away.

Dallas went to school here too and played here with his sister. He misses her. He just celebrated his 12th birthday, but she wasn't at his party.

As in many families with a mom and dad, a girl and a boy, Christina-Taylor tended to spend more time with her mom while Dallas did more with his dad. Dallas likes science programs on TV rather than the old films his mom and sister loved.

So now, Green has traded "National Velvet" for "National Geographic" specials that Dallas enjoys, and she is learning about video games and space and "Animal Planet."

"It's actually really neat," she says.

Her foundation shaken, Green is building a new one — The Christina-Taylor Green Memorial Foundation. It will ensure that her daughter's legacy continues, and that Green has reasons to get out of the house, and talk to people, and attend meetings, and arrange deliveries of bracelets, patches, pins and ceramic butterflies bearing Christina-Taylor's name.

"I could stay in bed and become 300 pounds, or have a nervous breakdown, or become an alcoholic," Green says.

Or, she can face each day with the intention of doing some good in the world in her daughter's name. This is her new job.

"For me, it is healing," Green says. "I'm helping others. It just makes me feel so much better."

After the shooting, people all over the world, 79 countries so far, flooded the Greens with cards, letters, gifts and donations.

The kindness has been overwhelming, Green says. Volunteers help her go through the mail. Green reads every letter and keeps them all.

"It warms your heart," she says. "It comforts you."

The list of outpourings is long and sweetly personal.

A girl who was turning 9 asked her birthday-party guests to bring checks in-

stead of presents and sent almost \$500. Others sent money from lemonade stands and yard sales. At one school, the students all honored Christina-Taylor by wearing green one day. (Green, like her last name.)

"It's really special what kids do," Green says.

A firefighter from New York insisted she accept a medal he received for his effort on 9/11. And a little boy sent Dallas a letter that starts, "Dear Dallas, I know how you feel because my sister got shot, too."

With the money raised, Green can make the differences that Christina-Taylor would have loved.

Next month, Christina-Taylor's favorite metal climber with its flaking red paint and hot metal bars will be torn out, and the blue one next to it, too. The pull-up bars where she hung upside down by her knees will be hauled away. And even the swing set Green is sitting on, where Christina-Taylor soared, her head thrown back, laughing, long hair streaming behind her, will go.

In its place will be the kind of playground every child dreams of, made possible by more than \$150,000 donated by The Allstate Foundation after hearing Green speak about the Christina-Taylor Foundation on a radio program. The dedication is scheduled for Sept. 24.

Green's foundation will make a difference inside Christina-Taylor's school, as well. The Greens donated \$50,000 from the memorial fund to buy interactive whiteboards and computers for the school.

"I think she is looking down, and she's really pleased," Green says.

On the ground near the tetherball court, a purple flower has pushed itself up out of the dirt. By the sidewalk on the way out, Green finds a clear purple bead.

Purple was Christina's favorite color. Green sees reminders everywhere.

Grief is complicated, and sometimes it surprises even Green.

"You don't know until it happens to you. There's no right or wrong," she says. "You just do the best you can."

"I want people to learn from this. It's not the end of the world," she says. "You can move on. You're not going to fall apart," though it can feel like it sometimes.

Green rejoices at news that people who also were shot that day are recovering, exchanging wheelchairs for walkers and then canes and then no support at all, and that Giffords is out of the hospital, finally, and then made a brief appearance on the House floor in Washington, D.C.

But when she sometimes hears laments of how hard it has been for the survivors to be laid up for months or of not being able to get back to normal soon enough, she thinks, "I'd take that."

Wheelchairs. Rehab. Scars. Anything but this.

And then she feels terrible for thinking that way.

She goes to grief counseling and talks with other parents who have lost children and says it does help. "It lets you know that you are not losing your mind."

As when people ask Green, "So, are you better now?" Or when they tell her that Christina-Taylor is in a better place.

She's not, Green thinks. *The best place for her is at home, with her family.*

"Losing a child really is the worst thing that could ever happen to you," Green says. "People say that, all the time, but when it happens, it really is the worst thing that could ever happen to you."

Green will not speak out about gun control or mental-health services or other issues raised in the aftermath of the shooting. She won't go to court for the trial unless it is absolutely necessary. She has nothing to gain by sitting on a bench and watching endless proceedings.

"I don't know how that is going to help me," she says.

The Greens' home is tucked into a quiet street that slopes at the perfect degree for a 9-year-old girl on a bike, or a 12-year-old boy on a scooter.

Inside, this is evident: A little girl lived here. On the refrigerator is a portrait she drew of her mom in colored pencil. Framed pictures of Christina-Taylor hang on the walls, and her doll is tucked neatly into a wicker basket in the corner, just where she left it.

This is a refuge for a family trying to heal.

John Green considered taking more time off, but really, it is better to be busy. Roxanna Green nods. Yes, for her too. Otherwise, they would sit and stare at each other, and if she cried, he would too, and vice versa.

But he comes home more often from his travels now, even though that's the hardest part for him.

"When you're on the road, that's what you want when you come home — it's what you are most excited about — seeing your wife and kids," John says. Now, there is no Christina-Taylor squealing, "Daddy's home! Daddy's home!" It hasn't gotten any easier.

"She was Daddy's girl," his wife says.

But John keeps coming home as often, or maybe even more, because it is difficult to be away when he has a particularly hard day, or Roxanna does, or Dallas.

"We need each other," he says. There is no getting back to normal, just finding a new kind of normal.

"There will always be a hole in my heart," Roxanna says.

Her husband echoes her: "There is a big emptiness."

Above the doll, in the corner on a bookcase, sits a baseball signed by Justine Siegal, believed to be the first woman to throw batting practice to a major-league team, and she did it wearing a Christina-Taylor patch on her uniform.

Next to the baseball sits Christina-Taylor's urn. It is a little box made of mother-of-pearl, iridescent white and pink and blue in the morning light, with silver edges and a tiny silver medallion hanging from a thin silver chain.

The medallion has her name, date of birth, and the day she died.

Reach the reporter at karina.bland@arizonarepublic.com.

Supplemental Material

TUCSON TRAGEDY | ONE YEAR LATER



In healing, voices rise

BY JAIMEE ROSE | THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

TUCSON — People were talking when the gunman began to fire. » They were gathered outside a grocery store near Tucson, a year ago today, to talk to their congresswoman. » Rep. Gabrielle Giffords had invited them because she wanted to listen, because democracy is a conversation in which everyone has a say. » The bullets stopped the talking. » One year ago, a gunman opened fire on that gathering, striking 19 people including the congresswoman, leaving six dead. » As soon as the moment passed, sounds, words and sentences have grasped for meaning. First the cries for help, later the quiet cries of mourning. » There were calls for action, assertions of blame. There was anger, too. » In the year since the shootings, the victims and their families have tried to find words to give shape to the tragedy. » Talking, they hope, can heal them.

See TALKING, Page A16



ECHOES OF THE TRAGEDY

Two women who share an aching grief. A man who grapples with being both a hero and a victim. The legacy of a mother and grandmother. Today, *The Arizona Republic* explores new stories of life after the shooting, for the wounded who survived, and for survivors who remember loved ones lost. **Special report, Pages A16-A22**

Awaiting a signal on Giffords' political future

BY DAN NOWICKI | THE REPUBLIC | AZCENTRAL.COM

Will she or won't she? The question of whether Rep. Gabrielle Giffords will seek re-election to a fourth House term this year has inspired water-cooler chatter for months as the 41-year-old congresswoman has recovered from a near-fatal gunshot to the head. But one year after an assassination attempt nearly claimed her life, speculation about Giffords' political intentions is taking on more urgency. While technically she will have until 5 p.m. on May 30 to file her 2012 candidate nominating petitions with the Arizona Secretary of State's Office, as a practical matter Giffords, D-Ariz., will have to signal her plans before that, especially if she decides not to run. Political insiders say that if a decision to retire lingers much past March, it will make it increasingly difficult for a fellow Democrat to assemble a campaign to try to succeed her. If she goes for a new term, she can take her

See GIFFORDS, Page A17



Mark Kelly and his wife, Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, on Saturday visit a Pima County trailhead named in honor of slain aide Gabe Zimmerman. See story, A25 CHERYL EVANS/THE REPUBLIC

At top: Across the street from the Safeway that was the scene of the shooting, six white crosses stand in memory of those who died. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC Above: 11 of the wounded survivors of the shooting; two others decline to speak further about their lives.

VALLEY & STATE

Rep. Gosar will change districts

U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar is leaving his redrawn home district in Flagstaff to run in a more GOP-friendly district to the west. The Arizona Republican's move sets up a tough primary battle with Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu and, likely, state Sen. Ron Gould. **B1**



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

NATION & WORLD

Romney targeted at N.H. debate

Riding the momentum of a victory in Iowa and strong poll numbers in New Hampshire, Mitt Romney turns his focus to President Obama while Romney's GOP rivals largely go after Romney in the first of back-to-back debates in the Granite State. **A3**

VIEWPOINTS

Society played role in tragedy: Jared Loughner may have been a lone gunman, but several societal factors facilitated last year's shooting rampage outside Tucson. **B10**

SPORTS

Texans, Saints advance: Houston wins the franchise's first-ever playoff game, 31-10 over Cincinnati, and New Orleans downs Detroit, 45-28, as the NFL's postseason kicks off. **C1, 4**

ARIZONA LIVING

The thrill of pigeon racing: Jim Korinek gets more excited than most people when a pigeon suddenly flies into view. Especially at the end of a race with \$180,000 on the line. **E1**

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Dear Abby **E4** Opinions..... **B9-11** Valley 101..... **B12**

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SUNDAY

VOICES MOURN, HELP HEAL

TALKING, Continued from A1

More than anything, Ross Zimmerman misses talking to his son.

This hollow of the hiking trail is meant for quiet, but he is talking, always talking — talking about his son.

"They're going to put his name here, on a bench," Ross says, taking in Davidson Canyon below, pointing out a den of golden cottonwoods. He likes to imagine that when people come to this part of Arizona, they might consider the bench, maybe read his son's name out loud.

Gabe Zimmerman, they might say. Maybe they'll know his story — he was the young one who worked for Giffords, the one with a fiancée. He died that day.

Ross likes to take people out here on the trail, to show off this place that's been named for his son, pointing out the pineapple cactus forest and the place where the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts meet and settle into one another.

His son was like that, too. A social worker. He softened edges, brought people together.

Gabe was a listener, the person Ross would call to "bounce something off of," he says. Gabe was his hiking partner and best friend, and when Gabe saw his dad walk into a room, Ross remembers, he'd say, "Daddy-O!"

People still want to know how Ross can do it — talk about Gabe, all the time — on camera, to reporters, in his backyard to CNN's Christiane Amanpour, at meetings, at home.

He explains it the same way every time. The same words he spoke two days after the shooting.

"We want people to remember him," he says.

Once a month, after work, the people touched by the shooting get together to talk.

They are discussing a permanent memorial of Jan. 8, and what it should be.

They drift into a conference room at a Tucson office building, greeting each other with hugs and eyes that linger.

How are you? they ask.

OK, they say.

Empty words, but that's understood here.

Bill Badger, 75 — who helped hold down the gunman while blood from a bullet graze trickled down his scalp — stands just inside the room. His wife keeps close to his side.

Jim Tucker sits in the back row. He was the one talking to Giffords when she was shot. Tucker was shot, too — in his collarbone and leg.

Ross Zimmerman introduces himself the way he always does at meetings like this:

"I'm Gabe's dad."

Ron Barber leads the meeting, sitting at a table up front, resting a hand on his copper-colored cane: his own permanent memorial. The bullets tore through his thigh, his cheek.

He's Giffords' district director, in charge of her Tucson office.

Around the room they go, talking about ways to make a memorial for this shooting, this pain bigger than each of them.

Maybe a statue. Maybe a symphony.

They talk about ways to make sure everyone in Tucson gets a say, too.

"I still have people walking up to me in tears — absolute strangers — telling me what that day meant to them," Barber tells the group at their meeting in November.

They need to think bigger, he coaches.

The victims nod.

The words started not long after the shooting stopped.

On the first night, they came in crayon-colored letters, and on cards from the flower shop, and on homemade signs made of construction paper.

"Love will heal," one sign said.

"Just pray" someone wrote on a poster left outside Giffords' Tucson office: Send words higher.

Impromptu shrines emerged all over the city, and by a few days after the shooting, words were everywhere. There were small notes on scraps of ribbon tucked into the fence outside Christina-Taylor Green's elementary school, and sentiments in big letters on the marquee at Tucson's Rialto Theatre: "We love you Gabby."

Outside the Safeway, someone glued photos of the six victims to white poster board and wrote in black block letters, "Lord God let Tucson be a better place, that these lives were not lost in vain."

"A place of hope," said a sign on the lawn outside University Medical Center, where the pile of cards was deepest, where the candlelight vigil began the night of the shooting and lasted for almost a month.

The media arrived, too — the satellite trucks in rows next to the lawn, for George Stephanopoulos and Brian Williams and even Diane Sawyer, who came quietly to interview Giffords' husband, Mark Kelly. There was the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* and dozens of TV crews from Japan — hundreds of reporters filling air time and pages and the Internet with the news of the day.

A week after the shooting, on a Sat-



Ross Zimmerman sits along a Davidson Canyon trail named in honor of his son, Gabe. The two often hiked together around Tucson. Now, Ross looks forward to a bench that will be placed in the area as a memorial to Gabe. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

urday night, 22-year-old Kameron Norwood sat at a bar near the University of Arizona campus, telling his story to strangers.

Norwood's neighbor was the judge who died.

His girlfriend interned for Giffords in Washington. His girlfriend's father had been on his way to see Giffords at Safeway when the shooting began.

Norwood's own father works at that Safeway. He's a pharmacist, "though luckily he wasn't working that day."

Norwood's ex-girlfriend works at the hospital.

"She was one of the nurses working when all the bodies came in."

Tucson is a town as small as that. Everybody was talking about it — where they were, when they heard.

Norwood wanted to tell people that this was his story, too.

Some don't want to talk.

Eric Fuller doesn't return phone calls anymore. He's the victim who drove himself to the hospital with bullet wounds in his knee and in his thigh.

Kenneth Veeder doesn't want to be interviewed. His leg was grazed. It's fine.

Maureen Roll is the widow of federal Judge John Roll. They have three children, five grandchildren. Roll liked to take the kids to Donut Wheel. The family kindly declines to discuss him.

Kelly O'Brien was engaged to Gabe Zimmerman. People say they see her sometimes, walking along the canal, quiet and alone.

Gabe's parents call her their daughter, still.

She wears her engagement ring on a chain around her neck, still.

She says no to interviews, still.

Only once has O'Brien spoken publicly about what happened: for two minutes and 43 seconds at a lecture in Washington, D.C., a few months after the shooting, endorsing a ban on large-capacity gun magazines.

She spoke only when she thought her words could change things.

Gabe "made sure to tell me every day that he loved me," she told the press corps.

She said that part with her eyes closed.

Tom Zoellner's book "A Safeway in Arizona: What the Gabrielle Giffords Shooting Tells Us About the Grand Canyon State and Life in America" is one of five books published about the shooting, so far. Zoellner, 43, is from Tucson. He and Giffords are close friends. This is his fourth book. He wrote it in four months.

Zoellner hasn't seen his friend Gabby since she was in the ICU at University Medical Center, but he thinks she would be proud of him, of the way he felt compelled to write, to try to explain his home state.

"This book is an attempt to make sense," he writes. It took him 98,595 words.

Ross used to have lunch with his son. It must have been a week after the shooting, and Ross was alone.

Without really thinking about it, he walked in the front door of the office clutching his brown paper sack, past the sign that says U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, and people held their arms out to hug him.

They shared lunch.

They told stories about his son.

A few of them had been there, standing outside the Safeway, when the bullets began flying, when Gabe died.

In their faces, he saw that these people felt as hunched-over and undone as he did.

On their desks, he saw that they were displaying photos of his son.

After that, Ross went to the Giffords office for lunch every day.

He's a year into his habit now: five days a week, sometime around noon, brown paper sack, a burrito or a subma-

GABE ZIMMERMAN 1980-2011



Gabrielle Giffords' aide Gabe Zimmerman in 2010. AZ ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

rine sandwich.

Sometimes, he comforts them. Sometimes, they ask him what Gabe was like as a kid.

Early on, they told him the only other thing he needed to know about his son and that day:

"Gabe was down the line a ways, and for him to have been where he was when he got shot, he had to have sprinted," Ross explains — sprinted toward the shooting. Gabe ran toward the bullets.

"Back into the middle of things to try and help," Ross says now. "And he died in the attempt."

"He might have been diving to see to Ron or Gabrielle, but they tell me he had to have been moving very fast ... to get between the shooter and some of the others ... And Gabe was very fast ... And everything else is ..."

Ross stops talking.

He needs a minute before he can start again.

"I believe that we can be better," President Barack Obama said, standing at the University of Arizona on Jan. 12, 2011. "That's what I believe, in part because that's what a child like Christina-Taylor Green believed. ..."

"I want to live up to her expectations. ... I want America to be as good as she imagined it."

After that, in America, there was a lot of talk about being better: on the TV networks, in newspaper editorials.

Are we better?

Mark Kimble is the person in Giffords' office reporters call when they want answers to such questions. He's her communications adviser, her former speech writer and her friend.

"I don't know that we can answer that yet," he says. "You know, those are the kinds of things I think we can ask after it's been 10 years, and we can look back, and say, 'Was this a turning point? Or was this just a minor disruption in the continuing drumbeat of being partisan and uncivil to each other?'"

People have asked Gabrielle Giffords' husband if Jared Loughner's parents have tried to get in touch. No, Mark Kelly says, and as a parent, he understands. How they must be hurting. And how could they ever know what to say?

Loughner, then 22, was arrested at the scene. Investigators found his rambling Internet posts, journal entries in which he vowed to kill Giffords.

In the days right after the shooting, his parents offered their only comments: typed sentences that they asked a friend to deliver to the horde of media outside their front door:

"There are no words that can possibly express how we feel," they said. "We wish that there were ... we wish that we could change the heinous events of Saturday. We care very deeply about the victims and their families."

We are so very sorry for their loss."

Mark Kimble was there the day of the shooting.

When people ask him what happened, he says, "I have a little script that I kind of replay ... without even thinking about it — you know, that I recite. But if someone really probes me and starts asking me questions that make me think about that day, I get a real chill. I mean I can't describe it, but I get very, very cold ... and I still do."

His script:

"I got there at ten minutes to 10:00 and I went in to Starbucks and I got some coffee. I came out, and Gabe was ... setting up tables ... I helped him move a couple ... He asked me what I thought about a couple of places he was thinking of getting married."

Gabby arrives. Ron Barber arrives. The event begins. People are asking questions, "and just then, out of the corner of my eye, I see some guy run in the area that we had set up to be the exit from where people were talking, and I was just irritated that he wasn't following the way Gabe had it set up."

"I looked at him. He started shooting, and initially I thought it was a movie or some kind of performance piece or something. And then I saw Gabby get shot, right in the head, and then I knew it was not."

"And he fired. He hit Ron. He hit Judge Roll. He hit Gabe, and then he ran down the line just waving his gun and shooting everywhere and that's the last ... that's pretty much what happened. And that's what I tell people."

She was in the middle of a sentence when the bullet pierced the left side of her forehead, fractured both of her eye sockets and continued on a trajectory through her skull.

It went through the full length of the left hemisphere of her brain, traveling at a thousand feet per second, severing nerve connections that damaged her ability to move the right side of her body, and exited behind her left ear.

She crumpled to the concrete in front of the grocery store.

As everyone else started talking again, Gabrielle Giffords was silent. The bullet took her ability to talk.

It buried her capacity to find words, to string them together into sentences, to make meaning. Her brain injury was like opening a filing cabinet, one neurologist explained, and dumping all of the files on the floor.

A year later — a year of tough therapy for Giffords — and the public has only heard her speak in recordings — once on TV and others released by her staff. The cadences are interrupted and slow, but the words determined.

"I'm trying," she enunciates. "Trying so hard to get better."

She hasn't given a speech in public. She hasn't said whether she'll go back to work or run for Congress again. She won't give interviews.

She's not ready, her staff says.

Giffords' husband, Mark Kelly, was having breakfast at home with his wife in December, and told her, "Hey, Gabby, I can really see a difference between last week and this week" — just in the ability for her to put a sentence together and put (another) one next to it, and very quickly find the words she needs to communicate, and those things are still improving every day.

"It's been a really tough year," he says. "But it is working."

Last summer, just a few months after the shooting, Giffords called Ross Zimmerman on the phone.

Her husband had finally told her that Gabe was among the dead. Giffords considered Gabe a brother.

"Kelly," Giffords repeated on the phone, over and over, while Ross listened.

"Kelly. Kelly. Kelly."

Kelly O'Brien. The girl Gabe loved. Who still won't talk.

In that one word, Ross Zimmerman heard all there was to say.