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Students hold Haiti concert

Leah Cox (above, at the piano) and Paige Roopchan sang "Hosannah" at the student-organized "Hearts for Haiti" concert Sunday to help raise money for victims of the Haitian earthquake. Getting his electric guitar to "talk" to him, Steve Kersiek (right) got on his knees, while Chace McNinch paid attention to the piano in a rockin' original composition by McNinch. Caitlyn Wark and Brittany Bange (below), both members of the Young Humanitarians Club at Colby High School, helped with refreshments.



County to replace old tornado sirens

By Vera Sloan
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The Thomas County commissioners had good news Monday from Susan McMahan, director of emergency management, who told them grant money is available to help replace the county's storm sirens.

She said the siren at Menlo has a burned-out motor, and this type of old motor is difficult, if not impossible to find. As a small incorporated town, Menlo qualifies for 75 percent of the cost for replacement, she said, adding that

they are looking for a replacement motor for the siren that serves the community with 10 homes.

"For unincorporated towns like Mingo and Levant, the county has to write the grant," she said, "but it was exciting to find out that there is money available, because it is a well kept secret at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development office in Hays.

It is the only office of that type in western Kansas, and I just happened onto the information by accident. But the money is there, and that's good to know when we're having to replace sirens."

She said a siren company actu-

ally told her about the grants.

"Menlo is actively pursuing answers to their problems and will have a city meeting this week," McMahan said. "I told them my office would stand beside them to help get them through the grant process and be there to help wherever they need us. Goodland weather station will talk to our dispatchers and give us a 15-minute heads up on any weather, because we have an unprotected city."

McMahan reminded the commissioners there will be a storm spotter meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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Rancher celebrates 66 years out on the range

By Vera Sloan
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This pair of riders have been punchin' cows together for nearly half a century, and though they're 88 and 66 now, Bob Bixenman and Gary Garrett aren't about to stop — except to tell a story.

They're a couple of bronc-riding, cow-punching, good-natured farmer-rancher-cowboys whose friendship goes back to when Garrett was a kid in high school helping his uncle Elmer, who lived on the place next to Bixenman.

Garrett says he started riding when he was about 9 and roped in his first rodeo when he was in the eighth grade.

"Hoxie was having their fair," he said, "and I guess that was over 50 years ago, but they didn't have any ropers for their rodeo, so they called my Uncle Elmer to see if he could round up someone who could rope. So he rounded up Uncle Albert, brother Wayne and me. There were six ropers altogether, and four of them were Garretts. I remember I won something, but I don't remember what it was."

After high school, Garrett went on to college rodeo at Kansas State University, where he became friends with Ty Murray, who became a world champion roper. They went to Little Britches rodeos together, and after both married and had families, their kids went



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Gary Garrett (right) and Larry Maxwell took time out last week to celebrate Garrett's 66th birthday with some long-time roping buddies. It's not hard to get them together if they're driving a bunch of cows to pasture, but this time, Bob Bixenman offered to buy lunch and furnish the cake.

were in Little Britches together.

"I've had some real good horses, and man, I've sure been beat up a lot when I worked cattle," Garrett said. "When I got to where

I could hardly walk, I had to have both hips and a knee replaced, and now I can ride again."

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Colby doctor plans move to Utah

By Vera Sloan
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Dr. Gary Slavens says he will close his medical clinic, Doc's on Call, on South Range Avenue this spring, and move to his home state of Utah.

Slavens said that the clinic, in a new building shared with an optical practice, should close by the middle of April. He and his family will be living in Mapleton, Utah, a booming area in the suburbs south of Provo.

"My wife and I both have family in Utah, and Jane has grandchildren there," he said. "I've had good of-

fers from Oakley and Atwood, and some great other offers to get me to stay, but I feel it is best to move on.

"I'm leaving with no ill feelings. I've got great patients all over northwest Kansas, the educational leaders have been wonderful and our kids have thrived here in this school system, and we've really appreciated that."

He said he will be going into private practice in Utah.

The clinic has suffered financial reverses, he said. Vision Source next door owns its part of the building, he said, but his part probably will be sold.

Briefly

Stray pet taken to clinic

The Colby Animal Clinic has a stray female, light brown, 1-year-old pug looking for its home. Lost or strayed animals are often brought to the clinic. Call or stop by 810 E. Fourth St. All animals have current shots, and costs are minimal. For questions, call 460-8621.

Business After Five on Thursday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce's March "Business After Five" will be at the Citizens Medical Center annex at 5 p.m. Thursday. The annex is the new building just south of the ambulance garage. Enter through either the east or west doors after parking on either the east or west side of the building or in the west employee parking lot. For information, call Holly Whitaker at the Chamber, 460-3401.

Tornado drill postponed

A statewide tornado drill planned for Tuesday has been rescheduled for 1:30 p.m. Thursday because of the weather. Radio and television stations will air an emergency broadcast test, said David Floyd, warning coordinator for the National Weather Service office in Goodland. Floyd said towns may sound their tornado sirens and everyone is encouraged to test the drill as the real thing to test their preparedness. For information, call Floyd at (785) 899-6412.

Fair board to meet in evening

The Thomas County Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday at the 4-H building on the fairgrounds. The meeting will be open to the public.

Coalition plans Thursday lunch

The Thomas County Coalition will meet a noon

Thursday at El Dos De Oros restaurant at the Quality Inn. The meeting will cover the recent town hall and the coalition's projects, such as a walking trail, events and the community garden. Someone will win a free meal. For information, call Trisha Korthanke at 460-8177.

Church offers dinner Sunday

The Brewster Community Church will hold its annual canned-beef fund-raising dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday at the church. Donations will be accepted for the Water for Life project, which helps people drill wells in third-world countries. For information, call Janet Pinkleman at (785) 694-2720.

Low-income tax help at library

The American Association of Retired Persons will offer a tax help seminar from 1:30 to 4 p.m. every Thursday until April 15 at the Pioneer Memorial Li-

brary. The seminar is designed for low- and middle-income people with special emphasis on those 60 or older. For information, call Alvin Volk at (785) 460-2645.

Youth grant deadline extended

The Thomas County Community Foundation has extended the application deadline to Monday, April 5, for the first-quarter cycle for Kids Can Do! grants. Teachers, principals and club sponsors are encouraged to apply for the \$200 grants for student-run projects. For information, go to www.thomascounty-communityfoundation.com or call Executive Director Melinda Olson at 460-9152.

