



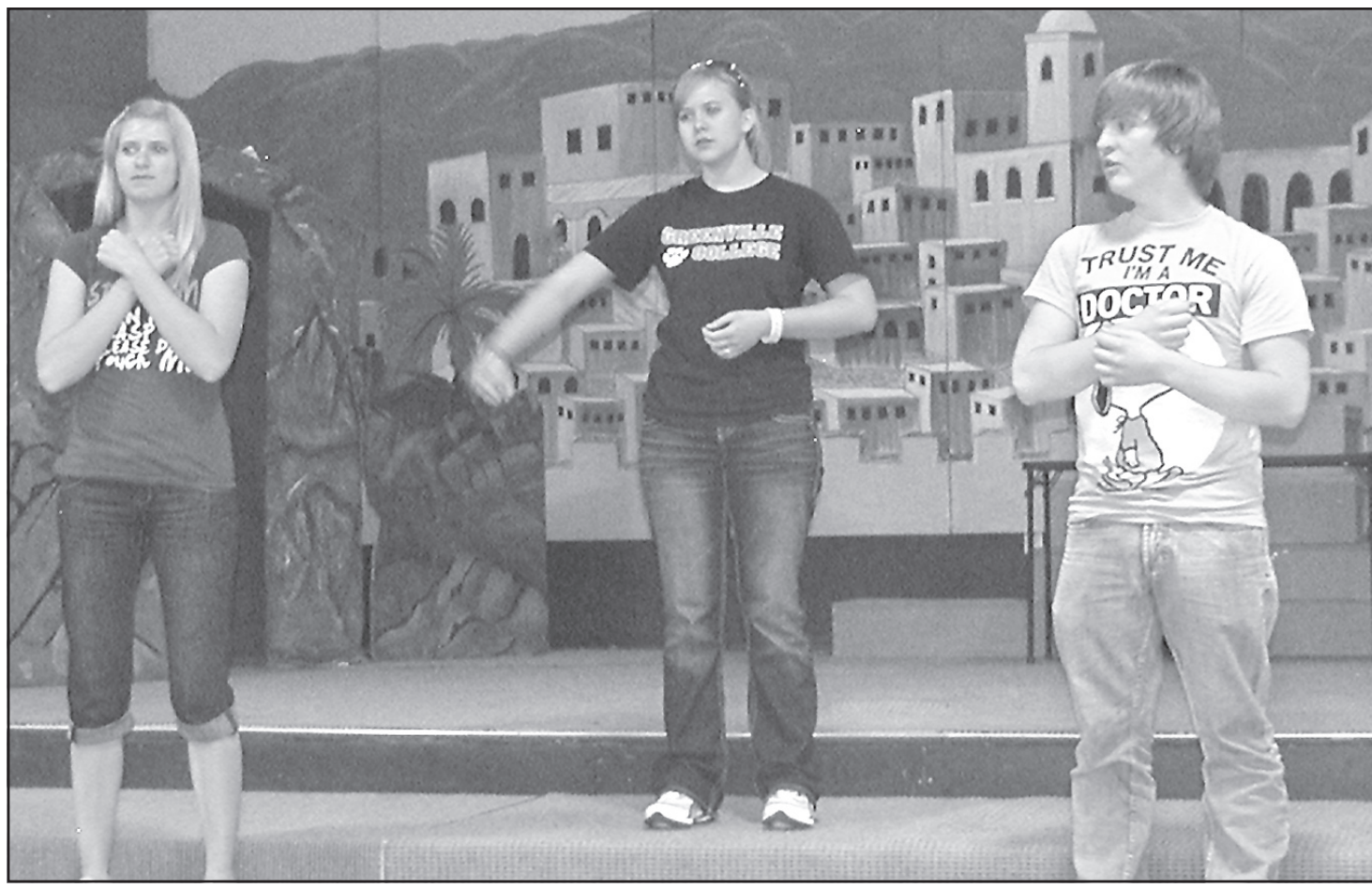
COLBY FREE PRESS

8 pages

Drama tells story of Easter

Cast members of Heartland Christian School's Easter production practicing under volunteer musical director Shannon Myers (right) in the school gym Thursday evening included (from left, below) Heartland sophomore Amy Myers, Colby Community College freshman and former Heartland student Rachel Myers and Heartland senior Andy Wood.

CHRISTINA BERINGER
Colby Free Press



County votes 'no' on beer sale

By Kayla Cornett

Colby Free Press
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The Thomas County commissioners voted Friday to deny requests for a beer garden on the fairgrounds, including one for Rocking M for its annual Great Bull Giveaway, which the radio firm was hoping to hold at the fairgrounds.

Sacha Sanguinetti, general manager of the stations, started the conversation by telling the commissioners about the giveaway.

He said the event offers a prize package, which includes a Black Angus bull and a featherlight livestock trailer, among other things. Sanguinetti said the package is valued at over \$30,000.

Last year, he said, the station held it at the Cooper Barn in Barton County, which is part of the

Barton County Historical Museum and Village. They sold beer at the event and the giveaway ended with a "big final bash," a dance with a live band that was open to the public.

"Basically, we do the giveaway and then we have a dance," he said. "We called it our Farmers, Ranchers and Listeners Appreciation Night."

He said the 25 finalists must be present to win. They are eliminated through a bingo-like drawing using ping-pong balls. Each finalist has a number and if a number is drawn, that contestant is out.

"When you do a typical drawing, it leaves some holes open..." Sanguinetti said. "So this is pretty much a fool-proof way to do it, to where we have a true winner and nobody can accuse anybody of

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Hiring pace shrinks unemployment roll

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits fell to a four-year low last week, suggesting employers kept hiring in March at a healthy pace.

Weekly applications dropped 6,000 to a seasonally adjusted 357,000, the Labor Department said today. That's the fewest since April 2008.

The four-week average, a less volatile measure, fell to 361,750, also the lowest in four years.

Applications have been steadily declining since last fall. The four-week average fell 4 percent in the January-March quarter, after dropping 8 percent in the final three months of last year.

When unemployment benefit applications drop consistently below 375,000, it usually signals that hiring is strong enough to lower the unemployment rate.

The downward trend in applications is a promising sign ahead of Friday's report on March job growth. Employers added an average of 245,000 jobs per month from December through February. And the unemployment rate has fallen from 9.1 percent in August to 8.3 percent in February, the

See "HIRING," Page 2

Veterinarian hired to lead tech course

Colby Community College and 13. He began his duties as the selection coordinator of the program on March 26.

The instructor and coordinator of the recently approved distance learning veterinary technology program.

Clymer, a licensed veterinarian, received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Kansas State University. He has been working in mixed animal practices in Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming for 12 years.

Dr. Clymer and his wife have four children ages 8, 10, 11



Shad Clymer

Students in the distance learning veterinary technology program complete traditional classroom course work online and gain hands-on experience with animals such as dogs, cats, horses, cattle, rabbits, rodents and birds in veterinary hospitals.

For information about the veterinary technician program, contact program director Dr. Jennifer Martin at (785) 460-5466.

Kids, dealer join to raise cash

By Christina Beringer

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Tubbs and Sons Ford Sales and the Colby High National Honor Society are partnering to raise money for two causes this weekend.

From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, the Ford dealership is inviting people to test drive a new car to raise money for school activities and athletic programs, said event coordinator Pat Tubbs.

She said that for every test drive, Ford will donate \$20 directly to the high school as part of their national Drive One 4 UR School program. The maximum donation is \$6,000 if they get 300 qualifying test drivers. Tubbs said this is the fourth time the car dealership has sponsored the program, and they have met the limit every

time.

"This is a great fund raiser," she said, "because it subsidizes school programs that are hurting because of budget cuts. These days, people are asked all the time to donate money for charities, but we are just asking people to donate 15 to 20 minutes of their time to help their school without spending their own money."

"There is no pressure to buy a car, either. It is just a great way to help the school."

So far, the dealership has raised \$18,000 for athletics and other activities at Colby High, she said, and they hope to continue meeting their goal.

Tubbs said drivers must be at least 18 years old with a valid license, and only one person per household can participate. Drivers can ask to test any car on the lot that they want as long as it is

new.

During the event, Colby High students will be present trying to raise money for their own charitable efforts.

Student members of the National Honor Society will volunteer their time to raise money for the Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a charity that raises awareness and money for treatment and research for childhood cancers.

The lemonade stand is being spearheaded by seniors Rachel Juenemann and Michael Tubbs, who came up with the idea after attending the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership program.

Teacher Linda Jones, the Honor Society sponsor, said service is a key component of being a member, in addition to having exemplary character, leadership qualities and grades, and this event fits right in with the group's mission.

"The kids bring their community service ideas to the group," she said, "and Michael and Rachel were inspired from HOBY to raise money for the foundation. The other members are on board, too, and are always eager to participate."

She said juniors and seniors are chosen by school faculty for membership into the honor society. This year, the group has 33 members, and many of them will be at Tubbs and Sons on Saturday supporting Drive One 4 UR School and raising money to help find a cure for children with cancer.

For information about test driving a new car, call (785) 460-6746. Go to www.alexlemonade.org to learn about the foundation. Call Jones at (785) 460-5300 for information about the society's other projects.

Coast Guard ready to sink Japanese ghost ship off Alaskan shore

By Mark Thiessen

The Associated Press

OVER THE GULF OF ALASKA — The U.S. Coast Guard plans to use cannon fire to sink a derelict Japanese ship dislodged by last year's massive tsunami.

The shrimping vessel, which has no lights or communications systems, was floating about 195 miles south of Sitka in the Gulf of Alaska this morning, traveling about 1 mph.

The ship holds more than 2,000 gal-

lons of diesel fuel and authorities are concerned it could interfere with the course of other vessels as it drifts through shipping lanes.

A Coast Guard cutter was headed out to the ship today with plans to fire cannons loaded with high explosive rounds to sink the vessel.

If left to drift, the ship would ground somewhere, said Coast Guard spokesman Petty Officer Charley Hengen.

"It's safer to mitigate the risks now before there's an accident or environmental

impact," Hengen said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency studied the problem and decided it is safer to sink the ship and let the fuel evaporate in the open water.

The Coast Guard will warn other ships to avoid the area, and will observe from an HC-130 Hercules airplane.

The vessel, named Ryou-Un Maru, is believed to be 150 to 200 feet long. It has been adrift from Hokkaido, Japan, since it was launched by the tsunami caused by

the magnitude-9.0 earthquake that struck Japan last year. About 5 million tons of debris were swept into the ocean by the tsunami.

The Japan earthquake triggered the world's worst nuclear crisis since the Chernobyl accident in 1986, but Alaska state health and environmental officials have said there's little need to be worried that debris landing on Alaska shores will be contaminated by radiation.

They have been working with federal counterparts to gauge the danger of de-

bris including material affected by a damaged nuclear power plant, to see if Alaska residents, seafood or wild game could be affected.

In January, a half dozen large buoys suspected to be from Japanese oyster farms appeared at the top of Alaska's panhandle and may be among the first debris from the tsunami.

