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## Weekend rain gives wheat a chance

By Andy Heintz

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You might think the dreary weather over the Easter weekend would have dampened spirits here, but to farmers with wheat in the field, the rain was a blessing,

not a curse.

After a dry winter, area farmers had been looking to the sky for some precipitation to water their wheat crop. By coincidence or something more powerful, the rain came pouring down on Easter weekend, calming the nerves of wheat growers and their families.

"The rain keeps us on the right track for getting the yield potential we've been shooting for," said Thomas County Extension Agent Clint Milliman. "This will keep the crop's yield potential from declining."

Milliman said any extra rain the town gets will help sustain the yields that have

already been made by the plants.

Farmer Ken Frahm said the rain was a double whammy. The gentle rain adds moisture to the crop, and that moisture can push the roots down a foot or more. There they can suck up stored subsoil moisture from last fall, said Frahm. He said the rain came just in time to kept the

crop yields from declining.

"A continued lack of moisture can lead to the plant withering away," Frahm said.

Frahm said the wheat crops could still use a little bit more rain and some warm weather to get the plants growing. The plants will continue to be dormant as long as it's cold, he said.



## Look at this!

An unusual place to find eggs? Adriane Sims helped her daughter Brinley, 3, (above) pick colored surprises out of a pine tree Sunday at the College Drive Assembly of God. Zoe Krohn, 3-year-old daughter of Hans and Melissa Krohn, (right) found lots of eggs for her basket under the bushes. Thirteen-month-old Cody Burr (below), son of Andy and Jennifer Burr, had his eyes on the camera before he spotted all the eggs around him.

VERA SLOAN/Colby Free Press



## Piano teacher, top volunteer, leaving town

By Vera Sloan

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Sharon Kriss, a long-time piano teacher and accompanist here, is a consummate volunteer who has helped dozens, maybe hundreds, of projects.

Kriss, who learned the value of being a volunteer when she was in high school, is leaving for Manhattan later this spring with her husband Joel. Her departure will leave one huge hole in organizations she has been a part of going back to 1974.

It's hard to say how many slots Kriss has filled over the years. Her involvement has benefited the Western Plains Arts Association since 1974. She was Welcome Wagon president in 1976, chairman of the Thomas County Centennial Committee from 1983 to 1985; a member of the Thomas County Historical Society board from 1988-91, and held no less



Sharon Kriss at the piano

than 20 positions in the Colby United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women.

And the list goes on. Kriss was president of the Pioneer Memorial Library board from 1987-91. A 1963 graduate, she has been involved with the Colby High School reunion, serving as chair in 1980, and continues to be active.

As a charter member of the American Association of University Women chapter that began

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## Obama opens up visits, mail to Cuba

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama directed his administration today to allow unlimited travel and money transfers by Cuban Americans to family in Cuba, and to take other steps to ease U.S. restrictions on the island.

A senior administration official told The Associated Press about the plan. A formal announcement was being made at the White House this afternoon, during spokesman Robert Gibbs' daily briefing.

With the changes, Obama hopes

to create new space for the Cuban people in their quest for political freedom and a democratic government, in part by making them less dependent on the Castro regime, the official said.

Other steps taken today include allowing gift parcels to be sent to Cuba, and issuing licenses to increase communications among and to the Cuban people. About 1.5 million Americans have relatives in Cuba.

Obama had promised to take these steps as a candidate last year, so the changes were expected.

## Sweepstakes winners get to 'build' \$45,000 pickup from Dodge

By Pat Schiefen

The Goodland Star-News  
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How many people get the chance to "build out" a free pickup with all the goodies — up to a total of \$45,000?

Lyle "Red" Helzer of Goodland got to do just that last month after

winning a sweepstakes sponsored by Dodge. The retiree picked up the truck at Colby's Taylor Motors.

He said he and his wife Della like to enter contests and sweepstakes online.

"We started entering contests and sweepstakes a year ago for

something to do during the winter months," said Della. "I want to win a big screen television."

"Red is always lucky when we go gambling."

Her husband said he got to pick out all the options for the truck, the color, crew or quad cab, short or long box, drive line, chrome en-

hancement package and trim, tube steps and rear-view mirrors.

"I added the GPS and DVD," he said with a smile. "I've only dragged Main a couple of times."

He said he also got both Sirius and XM satellite radio.

"I like 50 and 60s Rock 'n' Roll," he said. "It also has a back-

up camera that lets you know if anything is behind you."

Della kids her husband that all she got out of the deal was a T-shirt.

"Red is enjoying it," Della added. "He works hard."

The couple said the pickup was the grand prize in the "Dodge

Ram Never Back Down from a Challenge" Sweepstakes.

Red said they watched the comedies on Thursday night, and in one show he saw an answer to a question on the sweepstakes website.

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## Briefly

### Seniors plan potluck Tuesday

The group More Fun Together plans a potluck dinner for people 50 or older who are alone, widowed, divorced, separated or have a partner in a nursing homes at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the First Presbyterian Church. Bring a dish to share. Table service and beverages will be provided. The building is handicapped accessible, with an elevator by the east doors. For information, call the church at 462-6342.

### Singer to perform for benefit

The Colby Berean Church will offer a performance by Colby recording artist Holly Stannard Young at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, April 19, in the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. Free refreshments will be served after the concert. An offering will be taken for the Building Generations of Faith Fund. The public is invited. For information, call Peggy Barton at 443-3433.

### Come to library for lunch, talks

The Pioneer Memorial Library plans book reviews, talks by authors and lunch at noon each day for National Library Week this week. The library plans book reviews each day, with authors for three and two by local reviewers. A free lunch (really!) will be served at noon. (Participants can give a donation if they wish.) Book reviews begin at 12:15 p.m.

### County van will be gone

The Thomas County community van will run short hours on Wednesday and be unavailable Thursday and Friday, due to conflicts. The van will run from 8 a.m. to noon only on Wednesday. For a ride or information, call 460-2901 or 443-9208. A \$1 per stop donation is requested.

### Seniors plan potato bar

The Senior Progress Center in Fike Park will have

a potato bar, raffle and bake sale from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday for the center's spring fund raiser. For questions, call Kaila DeBoer at 460-2901 weekdays before noon.

### Lifeguards can renew skills

A review class for lifeguards on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and using an automatic external defibrillator for professional rescue will be held 9 a.m. Thursday at the Colby Community College pool. Call the Thomas County Red Cross at 462-7161 for information or to enroll.

### School plans scrapbook event

Heartland Christian School is having a "scrapbook extravaganza" from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday. Cost is \$30 for all day and \$15 for half a day, including three meals, tables to use, prizes and lots of fun. Call Deena Bandy at (785) 460-6419 to reserve a table.

### Mentor program says thanks

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Thomas County plans an ice cream social as a thank-you for volunteers and contributing supporters and to celebrate National Volunteer Week from 7 to 8 p.m. next Monday at the Pioneer Memorial Library. Anyone who has volunteered for the program or contributed is welcome. For questions, call Diane Stithem at 460-9125.

### Church offers free seminar

Bring a brown bag lunch for free seminar on "Pathways, Disease or Wholeness" at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 2, at Redeeming Love Ministries, 345 N. Franklin. Call (785) 650-2375 for questions.

