

The Daily TriPLICATE



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Del Norte County, Calif.

Saturday
May 9, 2009

50¢

A special good morning to
Daily TriPLICATE subscriber
Jim Cox
of Gasquet

Today's Weather

Today: Partly
cloudy, 55-65
Tonight: Partly
cloudy, 41-51
Full Report: A2



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Santa Barbara
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on with two games
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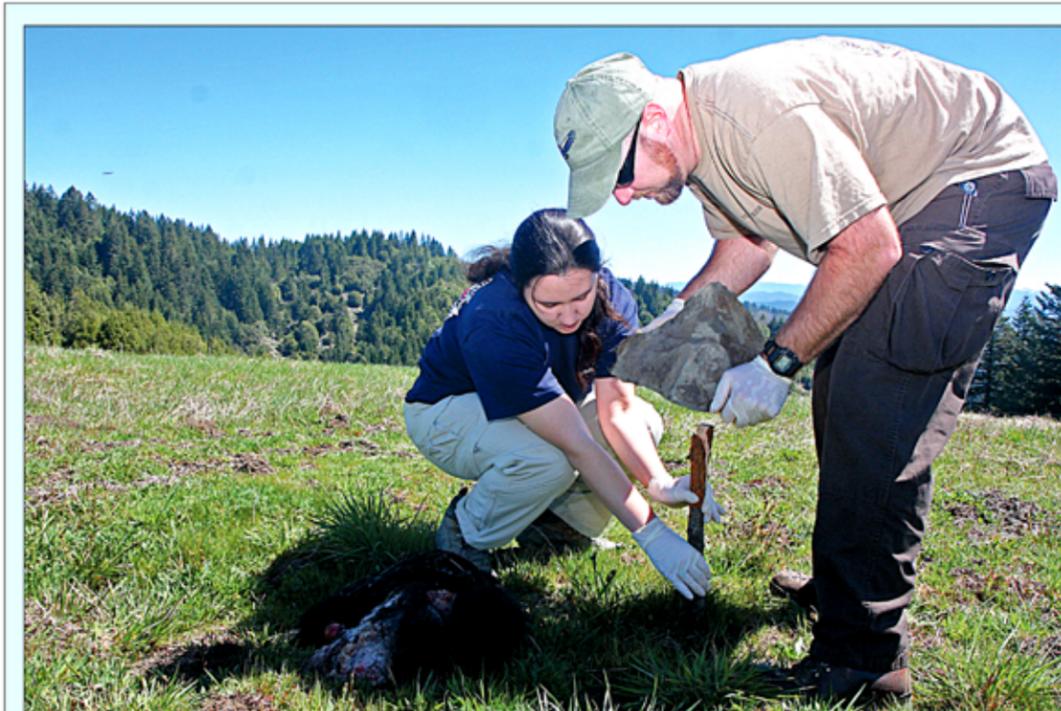
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■ A California condor takes flight.

Photo courtesy of Chris West/Yurok Tribe



The Daily TriPLICATE/Bryant Anderson

Bringing condors back

The Yurok Tribe wants to bring condors back to the North Coast.

Above, two of the tribe's employees, Tiana Williams and Chris West, prepare to tie a bear carcass to a stake in order to attract turkey vultures for research off Bald Hills Road. Remains of prior bait are seen below. Williams and West have been working with the Ventana Wildlife Society — that's Williams at right in the red shirt releasing a condor — to learn more about reintroducing the giant scavengers here.

■ See today's Northcoast Life section (B1) for a full report.



Photo courtesy of Chris West/Yurok Tribe



Betting on more lottery sales

Prop 1C allows more borrowing

The Associated Press
SACRAMENTO — While tax increases and spending caps have dominated the debate over California's upcoming special election, Proposition 1C is the ballot measure that will have the greatest immediate effect on the state budget.
Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders say the Lottery Modernization Act will boost the lottery's revenue through the promise of larger jackpots. That is intended to attract investors who would lend California \$5 billion in the coming fiscal year in return for a slice of the pumped-up profits over the next two to three decades.
If voters agree to change the 25-year-

old lottery law, the state also would have authority to borrow even more money against future lottery revenue without going back to the voters.
"It's an authority to borrow money," said Fred Silva, senior fiscal adviser at California Forward, a bipartisan group of business, political and labor leaders that is seeking a solution to the state's structural problems.
The group's leadership council endorsed all the propositions, including Proposition 1C.
If voters don't buy into this piece of the budget package, California's deficit — already expected to be \$8 billion in the coming fiscal year — will grow by \$5 billion. So far, voters seem unimpressed with this borrowing strategy.
Of the six measures on the May 19 special election ballot, Proposition 1C

■ See LOTTERY, A3

Crewman injured in harbor mishap

Man was helping to download hake from boat

By Kurt Madar
TriPLICATE staff writer

A deckhand on the fishing vessel Collier Brothers was injured by a tube full of water and fish Friday evening at Crescent City Harbor.
As the vessel was offloading hake, a species of cod fish, a piece of Caito Fisheries Inc. equipment broke and landed directly on the unidentified deckhand's head, witnesses said.
Caito Fisheries Inc. buys sea food off the Crescent City docks and ships it to processing plants elsewhere.
"It looked like he was completely crushed," said a Caito employee. "I mean, it must have weighed at least a thousand pounds."
As emergency personnel worked to immobilize the fishermen, Collier Brothers crew members and fire department volunteers carefully removed a heap of fishing nets so the victim could be lifted to safety.
According to Crescent City Fire Chief Steve Wakefield, it was a tricky rescue because possible spinal injuries have to be treated carefully.
"It was relatively difficult to get him out," Wakefield said. "He was stuck behind all that rope and stuff. It took a lot of cooperation between the medics and fire department."
The accident happened during a usually routine part of a fishing vessel's work cycle as crew members were off-loading catch, something every boat does a multitude of times.
"We were pumping out fish, and the pump was having problems," Caito's employee said. "It was running real slow and hard. Then, just like that, the sleeve broke."
The sleeve is a piece of thick metal nearly 2 feet in length. The tubes used to suck hake from the fishing boat are attached to the sleeve, which hangs in the air nearly 10 feet off the deck of the boat.
"It usually takes three to four of us to move that thing around," the employee said.
While the sleeve and attached tubing hangs off pulleys on the vessel, the Caito fisheries employee said that it was the metal of the sleeve itself that snapped and caused the accident.
"I've never seen anything like that happen before," the employee said.
NorCal Seafood employee Kevin Wilson agreed that not only was the accident unusual, the amount of water and fish in the tubing was extremely heavy.
The Collier Brother's captain declined to comment on the accident, but as the fire department lifted his deckhand from his boat immobilized, fellow crew members grimaced and bowed their heads.
According to emergency personnel, the deckhand was awake and aware during the rescue operation, and as he was loaded into the ambulance his eyes were open and he was responsive.
No additional information about his condition was available Friday

COLLEGE FOR A DAY



Kameron Gibson receives a 'diploma' from Karri Buchler at the College of the Redwoods on Friday. Fourth-graders from Pine Grove, Smith River and Margaret Keating schools participated in the 'I'm Going to College Project' designed to encourage them to start thinking about college at a young age.



ART SCENE

High school production set

Del Norte High School Theatre presents "The Girl in the Mirror," a play by Bruce Jacoby, next Thursday through Sunday, May 14-17.

It is a profound drama about a teenager's struggles in life and her descent into suicide thoughts. It deals with communication, feelings, sympathy and self-realization.

The play will be presented on the school's multi-purpose room stage Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 17, at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children under 12 & senior citizens. For more information contact DNHS at 464-0274

Dance concert concludes tonight

Del Norte High School Dance presents the final performance of its annual spring concert, "Rock On," at 7 p.m. tonight in Crescent Elk Auditorium. The concert features 21 pieces choreographed by students, and involves more than 100 dance students, from beginning through advanced classes. Participating students are responsible for their own costumes, staging, lighting, scheduling, studying and rehearsals.

Two guest artists are also featured: Katie Clark and Aimee Wilson, who are both former Del Norte High School dancers. Tickets cost \$8 for adults and \$5 for students and are available at the door.

Davis Jacobs-Strain plays Pistol River

The Pistol River Concert Association presents David Jacobs-Strain, playing and singing traditional blues music, at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Pistol River Concert Hall.

Jacobs-Strain grew up in Eugene, Ore., and in his music one can hear echoes of Skip James, Charlie Patton, Tommy Johnson, Fred McDowell and Robert Johnson, as well as modern influences. At age 25, he is a veteran of the national club and festival circuit (he performed for DNACA in November 2006), and last year he was chosen by Boz Scaggs to be the opener for his tour.

Tickets are \$15 each and are available at Mory's or Words and Pictures in Brookings, and Gold Beach Books in Gold Beach. For ticket reservations or more information, call (541) 247-2848 or visit www.pistolriver.com online.

Gallery's May artist of the month

Deborah Dawson is the May artist of the month at Crescent Harbor Gallery, 140 Marine Way.

Dawson has been artist-in-residence for the Southern Oregon Arts Council, and is an active member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon, the Illinois Valley Fine Artists, Inc. and Coast Redwoods Art Association. A sampling of her work is on display through Thursday at 140 Marine Way, along with pieces by other Coast Redwoods Art Association members.

Gasquet artist Rick Bennett will be the demonstration artist of the month, giving a watercolor demonstration at noon May 28, preceded by a finger food social at 11:30 a.m.

Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 464-9133.

Art in Public Places show at courthouse

The Art in Public Places exhibit up in the courthouse is a one-man show by Gasquet photographer "Smokey Bill" Harper. The show features 16 of Harper's works, and the title is "Let There Be Light, and There Was Light."

The Del Norte County Courthouse is located at 450 H St., and is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, excluding national holidays. For more information, call DNACA at 464-1336.

DNACA presents Tom Rigney & Flambeau

DNACA presents its fifth and final performance of the 2008-09 season, Tom Rigney & Flambeau, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 16, in Crescent Elk Auditorium.

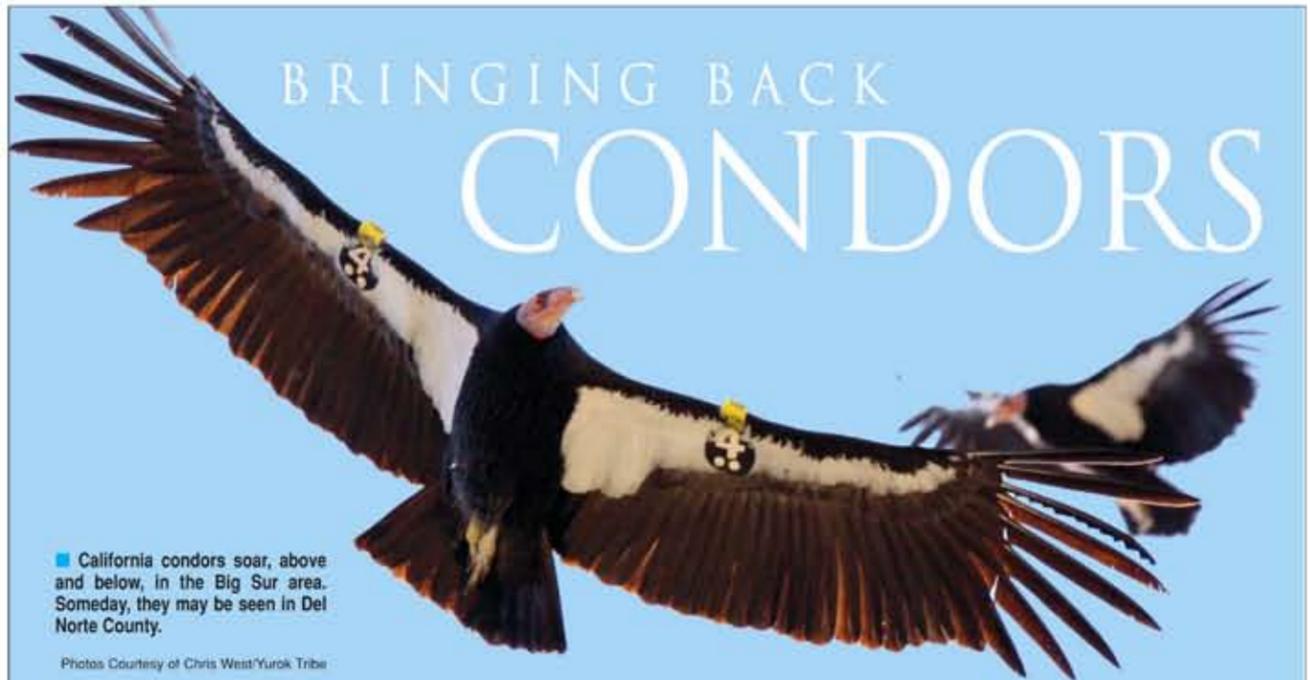
Formerly of The Sundogs and Queen Ida's Bon Temps Zydeco Band, electric violinist/composer Tom Rigney and his band of musicians specialize in Cajun and zydeco two-steps, New Orleans grooves and more. Flambeau showcases Rigney's passionate fiddling, dynamic stage presence, range as a composer, and notorious red boots.

Tickets cost \$18 for general admission and \$12 for students/seniors, and are available at Del Norte Office Supply in Crescent City, Mory's in Brookings and at the door beginning at 6:45 p.m. the night of the show. Call 464-1336 for more information.

LRT schedules fund-raising gala May 30

Lighthouse Repertory Theatre presents "I Wish My Life Were A Musical," a musical review of Broadway favorites, beginning at 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 30, in the Veterans Memorial Hall, 810 H St.

This event includes a no-host cocktail hour, a 7 p.m. dinner catered by Northwoods Restaurant, the 8 p.m. show and an auction. Cost is \$65 per person, or \$120 per couple; tickets are available at Del Norte Office Supply. All proceeds will go to help remodel Leon Red Thomas (LRT) Theatre.



California condors soar, above and below, in the Big Sur area. Someday, they may be seen in Del Norte County.

Photos Courtesy of Chris West/Yurok Tribe

Can rare, giant scavenger be re-established here?

By Nicholas Grube

Triplicate staff writer

Tiana Williams kneels on a hillside holding a sharpened stick to the ground. She just whittled it out of a fallen tree branch, and she's waiting for her colleague, Chris West, to bury it into the soil using a large rock he picked up nearby.

"Just don't hit me," Williams says only half-joking as she looks first at West, who's standing above her smiling, and then again at the impromptu stake in her hands, concentrating on it.

The rock is a rudimentary solution to a simple problem — they forgot a hammer. But they still needed something to tie the bear carcass to.

"We don't want the carcass to walk away," West said.

"We want to come back and see if there's anything feeding on it."

Both West and Williams work for the Yurok Tribe, West as a senior wildlife biologist and Williams as a wildlife technician.

On this particular day, they're at a location just off Bald Hills Road laying out bait to try and attract turkey vultures. It's not their first time doing this, they've brought dead animals out here before.

"It can get pretty rank sometimes," Williams said, sort of wrinkling her nose at the imagined smell. "I don't mind it, it's just gross."

Though their task on this day is rather macabre — ripping apart hunks from a small, frozen black bear and tying them to a stake — they both seem to enjoy it. That's because they know the work they're doing now could one day mean bringing back a species that hasn't soared through these skies for nearly 100 years.

"We're doing this to determine if this habitat will support a healthy condor population," West said.

THEY ONCE SPREAD FROM BAJA TO CANADA

The California condor was teetering on the brink of extinction as recently as 1985 when only nine were left in the wild, according to the California Condor Recovery Program. The bird's decline over the last century is attributed to needless killing and lead poisoning from humans.

Today, it is a federally endangered species, and according to recent data, the population has grown to 322 birds due to captive breeding and recovery efforts. Of those 322 condors, only 172 are now flying free.

Condors used to exist on the Pacific Coast from Baja California, Mexico, to British Columbia. They now only live in isolated pockets in Southern California, Arizona and Baja California, where recovery programs have been put in place.

In 2008, the Yurok Tribe received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the feasibility of reintroducing California condors to the tribe's ancestral territory, which would give the birds another shot at recovery in their historical habitat.

"We're just looking at whether or not condors can survive here," West said. "If we

CONDOR FACTS

- California condors are the largest North American land birds. An adult can weigh about 22 pounds and have a wing span up to 9.5 feet.
- Condors do not have vocal chords so they force air through their body to make hissing and grunting noises.
- Adult condors show their emotion through skin color changes.
- Condors are genetically related to storks.
- Once a condor reaches age 6-7, he or she is ready to find a mate for life.
- Condors defecate on their legs to reduce their core body temperature in a process known as urohydrolysis.
- As scavengers, condors only feed on animal carcasses, and will forage as far as 150 miles in a day to find food.
- Condors eat an average of 2-3 pounds at a feeding.
- It sometimes takes a condor one week to hatch from an egg.
- Chicks are born with their eyes open.
- When scared, condors regurgitate their stomach contents.
- Condors do not have talons like eagles or hawks. Their nails are more like toenails.

Source: Ventura Wildlife Society



can't reintroduce birds here that can reproduce and become self-sustaining, is reintroduction a good idea?"

West, 38, is a veteran condor biologist who studied and worked with the birds for a number of years before coming to the tribe. He even wears a hat with a depiction of the bird stitched onto it. At one point in his career, he said he was able to identify every condor in California by sight. This, and the fact that he has raised some of the birds from when they were chicks, makes him all too aware of their plight.

"It hurts when you're the person working with that bird for so long and one of them goes," he said. "You get pretty attached."

It's hard for West to describe his feelings about condors. He's in awe of these birds, and often thinks about their view as they soar above the ground searching for food. Condors have been observed flying above thunderheads, which can be thousands of feet high, he said, and they can travel up to 100 miles in a single flight.

"They're up there so high and see so much, where we as terrestrial animals are tied to the ground," West said. "It's almost like a type of freedom. It's on a grander scale."

Williams said she's equally as impressed with this attribute — "they can make choices," she said — but she also has a deeper connection to condors as a Yurok tribal member.

Only 23, Williams is a recent graduate of Harvard University. One of the reasons she came back to the area, she said, was to help repair some of the environmental damage that has been done to her ancestral homeland.

"I have always wanted to come back and work for the tribe in some capacity," Williams said. "This is just home."

Condors, or "prey-go-neesh" as they are known in Yurok, play a vital role in the tribe's cultural stories and traditional ceremonies. In fact, Williams said a tribal park committee actually chose the bird as one of its top three candidates for species recovery efforts behind salmon and sturgeon.

"They are very important to the Yurok Tribe and most tribes in this area and up into Oregon as spiritual beings," Williams said about condors. "Primarily we use the feathers in one of our world renewal ceremonies."

There's a lot of buzz around bringing these carrion feeders back to the tribe's ancestral territory, and Williams said that though it will take a long time to do a habitat analysis, she still gets plenty of inquiries from her fellow tribal members.

"Most people are interested," she said. "Most people think it's pretty cool and keep asking if we've gotten condors back yet."

■ See CONDORS, B2



Chris West and Tiana Williams bait a trap for turkey vultures — research on the scavengers helps determine the area's suitability for condors. The Daily TriPLICATE/Bryant Anderson

CONDORS

(Continued from Page B1)

TURKEY VULTURES AS TEST CASES

There's still a lot of work that needs to be done before condors can actually be released here. Working under the federal grant, West and Williams must first determine whether or not the North Coast's habitat is suitable for the birds to feed and nest.

To do this they will monitor turkey vultures in the area, trapping and testing them to see what levels of chemicals are in their systems, and in particular DDT, DDE and lead.

"The turkey vultures, they're just the avian scavenger that's around. Their diet most resembles a condor's," West said. "We're also planning on looking at ravens because they scavenge as well."

The pesticide DDT was banned in the United States in 1972 because of its impacts on the environment and human health. Birds were particularly susceptible to the effects of DDT, as it can thin their eggshells to the point where they can't support the

weight of an incubating bird. Even though the pesticide is no longer used in the U.S., its derivative, DDE, persists in the fat cells of the marine mammals that condors no doubt would feed upon if they came back to the North Coast.

While figuring out the levels of these chemicals in the local environment is a significant factor determining if condors can successfully reproduce here, Kelly Sorenson, the executive director of the Ventana Wildlife Society in Salinas, said the biggest hurdle for the birds is lead poisoning.

"The number one threat to condor recovery is lead from spent ammunition," he said. "Lead is just too toxic and it's just too prevalent today."

AS LIKELY AN AREA AS ANY FOR CONDORS

Sorenson and the Ventana Wildlife Society have been working with the Yurok Tribe, providing guidance on condor reintroduction. The Wildlife Society has

been releasing condors in California for more than 11 years, and it plays an integral role in the effort to create a self-sustaining population.

Lead is the most commonly used ammunition in the country today, Sorenson said. When a hunter kills an animal using lead bullets, the substance can be found in the gut piles that are left behind or in an animal that has gotten away and died later.

Since condors only eat dead animals, he said hunters provide an important food source for the birds. The problem is that lead paralyzes a condor's digestive system and actually causes the bird to starve to death.

"If we would have discovered that tungsten or copper was the most logical first bullet type," Sorenson said, "I'm confident we'd have a wild population of condors flying around right now."

California enacted a ban on lead bullets for hunting activities in condor habitat in 2008. Sorenson said that while this law is helpful, changing public perception about lead ammunition is still one of the biggest challenges anyone doing condor recovery will face, and it's one the Yurok

Tribe will need to confront in reintroducing condors to the North Coast.

"Just from what I know of the area, there are some real remote regions and there's some good opportunities for some natural foraging, including marine mammals, and you've got the Yurok Tribe that really wants to make it happen," Sorenson said. "Ultimately, the success of a reintroduction anywhere depends on the ability to eliminate or nearly eliminate lead ammunition in all hunting activities, whether it's varmint or big game."

West said education about lead ammunition will be a major focus of the Yurok Tribe's attempt for condor reintroduction. But he said he also realizes that some losses will occur.

"If condors get reintroduced here, birds will die from eating lead. Birds will die from being shot."

Even so, he believes a successful reintroduction, in which the birds breed over a period of several years and learn to find their own food, is feasible.

"I don't think that it's out of the question or impossible to achieve," West said. "I think this is really one of the best shots available for condors for a successful recovery."

Reach Nicholas Grube at ngrube@triplicate.com



Danny Gokey, a finalist on the singing competition series "American Idol," is interviewed by the local Fox affiliate, WITI-TV on Friday in Milwaukee. AP photo

Danny Gokey a big hit during visit to Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE — Danny Gokey was so shocked by his young wife's sudden death last summer that he couldn't cry during her funeral at Faith Builders International Ministries.

On Friday, the 29-year-old "American Idol" finalist returned to the church for a joyful event, singing gospel songs to 1,000 or more people, including friends, family and fans.

"To see him from where he was, because I was here for the funeral, this room packed out for a funeral and now: joy," said his friend, Ruben Burgos, 26.

Gokey returned to his hometown Friday to film footage to air in the two weeks leading up to the May 19-20 finale. The church music director is one of three finalists, along with Adam Lambert from San Diego and Kris Allen from Conway, Ark.

Gokey's wife, Sophia, died during surgery for a congenital heart defect four weeks before he auditioned for the show.

"I couldn't even cry. ... I was so shocked," Gokey told the crowd. "Me and my family, we didn't know how to say goodbye. ... It was the most tragic event I ever had to face in my life."

The couple had agreed he would try out for the show, and Gokey has called Sophia his "biggest inspiration."

He started his day early Friday morning at the local Fox affiliate, WITI-TV, where hundreds of people, many young girls, screamed his name and held signs that read "Ga Ga Gokey, ur our idol" and "We love you Danny."

After the visit, Gokey said he's struggled with song selection on "Idol."

"I've always done gospel music and I don't know much about the music outside of that realm," he said. "Literally every song I pick, I'm learning. I don't know what to pick and song choice has been the most difficult thing for me, and it only gets harder as it goes."

On Tuesday, "Idol" judge Simon Cowell criticized Gokey's performance of Aerosmith's "Dream On." Cowell said Gokey's final note — an elongated scream — "was like watching a horror movie."

But Gokey laughed about it Friday.

"Rock wasn't my thing, and I bit off a song that was bigger than me," he said.

"I loved it. It was terrible sounding, but it was funny. ... The thing is I can hit the note but that was like the 40th time. Finally, you get to a point your voice can only handle (so much). Right now my voice is sore from the rock."

At the church Friday, he returned to his gospel roots, singing "Glorify Him," "Keep on Praising" and "Praise Medley."

Crescent City

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May 16th

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Our Garage Sale Saturday locator map will appear in the Saturday, May 16 edition of The Daily TriPLICATE.

Deadline: Wednesday, May 13 at 9:00 a.m.

Hours: M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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