

# We all sing for ice cream

## Job seekers audition for Cold Stone Creamery

By TRAVIS COLEMAN  
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Mauro Whiteman and Matt Wier probably didn't have to sing "Lean on Me" together to land their jobs delivering phone books. But the duet was necessary for the teens to get work at the new Cold Stone Creamery location in Great Falls.

Whiteman and Wier were among 39 applicants in Gibson Park on Tuesday "auditioning" for a job at the new ice cream shop in the Great Falls Marketplace. Applicants were asked to dance and sing, along with answering questions on personality and work experience.

Moves included slow dances, breakdances, a cabbage patch and skips. There was also a Native American song, a rap and an opera tune.

"I've been through a few interviews for jobs. I must say that was the most unbelievable experience I've ever had," Whiteman said.

Store owner Dan

Gruntowicz wasn't looking for proper pitch and clean dance routines. He wanted to see if these applicants were willing

**See COLD STONE. 5A** to be fun and energetic.

"I want it to be a place where you get an experience," Gruntowicz said.

Other Cold Stone Creamery franchises in the nation have held auditions for employees. The idea was created by a franchise owner in California, Gruntowicz said.

Applicants were also asked to group up to sing songs about Cold Stone Creamery. The groups had about 10 minutes to compose a song or work out a routine with a tune provided by Cold Stone management.

Group names included "The Sprinkles," "The Banana Splits" and "Too Cold For Cream." One group sang an ice cream-inspired cover of Josh Groban's "You Lift Me Up."

"Oh, that cone will change my life forever," the group sang.

Cold Stone was established in 1988 in Tempe, Ariz. Customers can order "creations" — ice cream with combinations of fruit, candy, nuts, cookies or brownies blended in front of them on a frozen granite stone. The chain also carries frozen yogurt, cakes, pies, smoothies and other specialty frozen bev-

erages.

Cold Stone Creamery has more than 1,350 locations in the United States and other countries like Japan and Korea.

"If you don't like to have fun, this is not the place for you," Gruntowicz told the applicants. "This is what this Cold Stone is going to be."

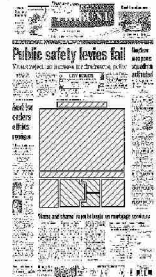
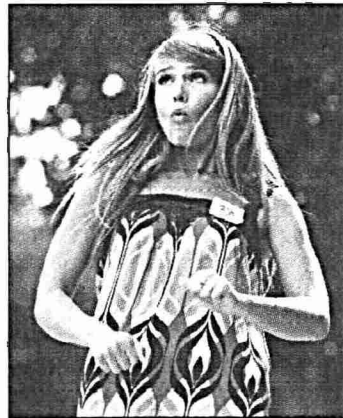
Gruntowicz expected to hire between 20 and 25 employees. He also didn't rule out the possibility of having another round of auditions for more applicants.

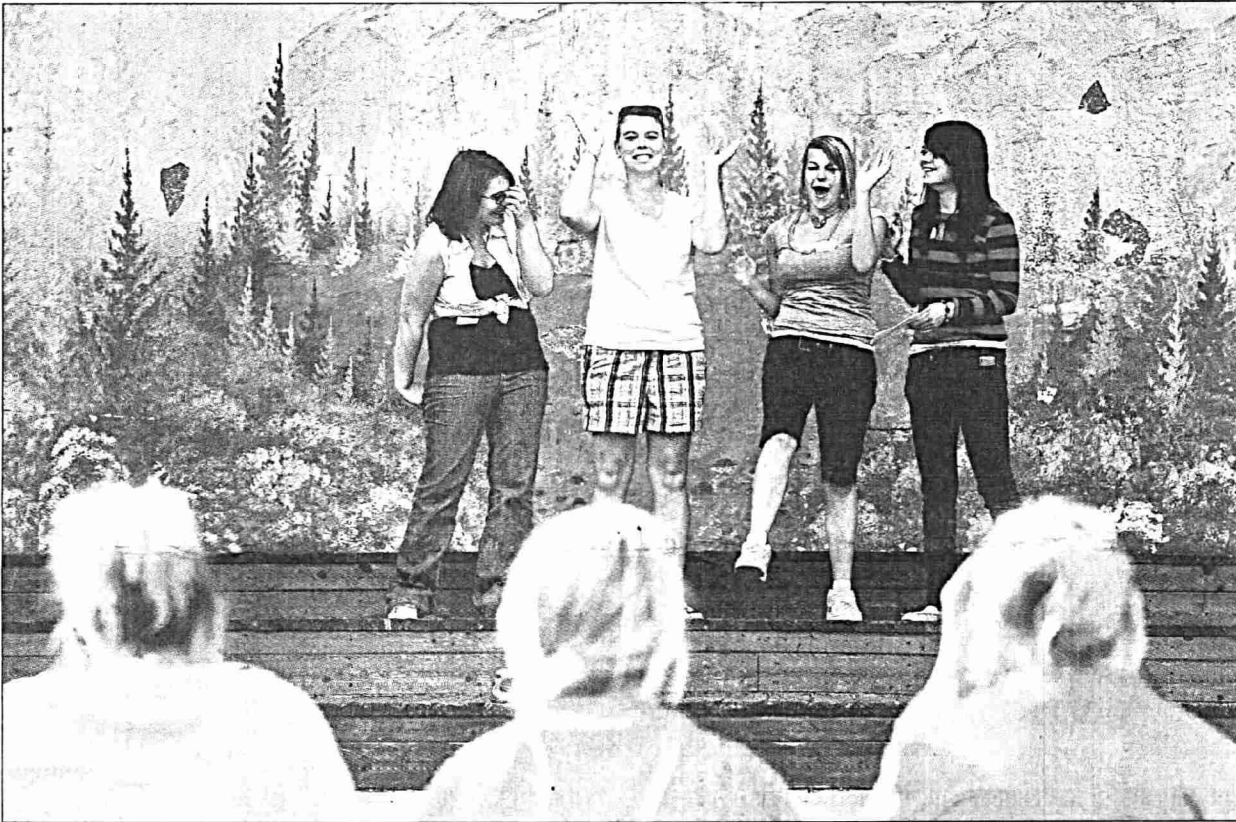
Brandon Murphy stumbled upon the audition in Gibson Park and decided to fill out an application. The 19-year-old ended up performing a rap and busting a few dance moves.

"It was fun. I liked it," Murphy said.



Whiteman





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**ABOVE:** A group of prospective employees auditions in front of judges for a job at Cold Stone Creamery in Gibson Park on Tuesday. **BELOW:** Faith Bridgeman sings during her interview with Cold Stone Creamery.