

Balch Springs | Sunnyvale

Mesquite

Friday, July 23, 2010

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The Dallas Morning News



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Warm welcome home



Photo submitted by JULIA DAVIS

Lt. Phillip Davis returned home after nearly seven months in Afghanistan, and the Marine was greeted at the airport by his family and friends when he came home July 10. Do you have a great photo from around the Mesquite area? Submit it to neighborsgo.com and it could end up in a future issue.

ON THE COVER

Frank Epps and his wife, Jane, sell their farm-raised watermelons at Eden's Organic Garden Center in Balch Springs. The couple started farming after Frank lost his job, and they found a new hobby as well as a passion. See the full story about Eden's and various other local markets on **Page 9**.

Staff photo by JENICE JOHNSON/neighborsgo



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Weekend fun continues in Mesquite



MARCUS MURPHREE

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One of my fondest memories of growing up in Beaumont, Texas, was going with my mother to the farmers market on Highway 105 on Saturday mornings for fresh watermelon, peaches and blueberries.

The Texas peaches were always ripe and ready to dice up and put into a pie or fruit cocktail, and to this day, that fresh-picked flavor and scent of the orchards sticks with me.

Out at **Eden's Organic Garden Center** in Balch Springs, the peaches are in full season and succulent as ever, and last weekend, I tried out some of these treats firsthand on **Marie Tede's** farm.

Eden's is among the many farmers markets across the Dallas-area that are open on weekends as not



Staff photo by JENICE JOHNSON/neighborsgo

P.J. and Adrian Bergkvist of Carrollton visited the Farmer's Market at Eden's Organic Farm on July 17 their daughter.

only places to pick up the freshest produce, but also as spots for friends and family to gather and enjoy one another's company.

This week, we take a look at these seasonal markets on **Page 9**.

We also continue our coverage of our StayingHome summer vacation series with a visit to **Resistol Arena** for the **Mesquite Championship Rodeo**.

With the help of photographer Rose Baca, we captured a day in the life of the crown jewel of Mesquite, which has gone through a handful

of changes since coming under new ownership.

Photos and a story of our behind-the-scenes look at the rodeo can be found on **Page 12**.

As summer comes to a close and the thoughts of school begin to loom on the horizon, remember there is still time to show off your summer activities and events at neighborsgo.com.

Your best photos, stories and videos have the chance to be featured online and in an upcoming issue of *neighborsgo*.



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MUSIC WORKSHOP —

Former Garland resident and Nashville Country Music Hall of Fame member Gary Nicholson will return to his home town to help teach a songwriting workshop at Pace House, 234 Museum Plaza in downtown Garland. For more information, call C.B. Luce with the Garland Opry at 469-831-2123.

FRIDAY
23

CRAFT TIME —

At 3:30 p.m., arts and crafts for children ages 6 and older will be available at the North Mesquite Branch Library, 2600 Oates Drive. Younger children are welcome to participate if they are accompanied by a parent.

FRIDAY
23

BOATER SAFETY —

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary of Lake Ray Hubbard will host a boaters safety class from 9 to 5 p.m. at The Center, 108 E. Washington St., for ages 13 and older. Learn about boats and maintenance, navigation rules, state laws, ropes, knots, anchors and what to do in the case of a boating emergency. For more information, call the Rockwall Parks and Recreation Department at 972-771-7740.

SATURDAY
24

RODEO NIGHTS —

The Mesquite Championship Rodeo continues at 7:30 p.m. at Resistol Arena, 1818 Rodeo Drive. The Mesquite Citizens Police Academy Alumni will be onsite fingerprinting and taking free photos of children for ID purposes at their table at the rodeo. Rodeos will continue every Friday and Saturday through Aug. 28. For more information about fingerprinting, call 972-329-8376, and for rodeo information, call 972-285-8777.

SATURDAY
24

CLOWNING BUSINESS —

Ronald McDonald, the mascot from McDonald's Restaurants, will make an appearance at 3:30 p.m. at the Mesquite North Branch Library, 2600 Oates Drive during the summer reading club session at the library.

MONDAY
26

ART EXHIBIT —

The Texas Area Artists exhibition titled "Pigment of the Imagination 2010" will be on display from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at the Mesquite Arts Center in the Main and Chamber galleries of the facility. The exhibit will also be open during weekend performance times. The exhibit closes Aug. 1. The arts center is located at 1527 N. Galloway Ave. For more information, call 972-216-6444.

TUESDAY
27

POLITICAL NETWORKING —

The Dallas County East Democrats will meet at 6 p.m. at Martinez Restaurant, 901 Gross Road in Mesquite. Networking and social hour begins at 6 and the meeting formally starts at 7 p.m. Annual dues for the club are \$12. For more information, contact Sergio Garcia at 214-440-7561 or e-mail sergio@mesquitelion.com.

WEDNESDAY
28



JUGGLING SHOWMAN —

Guinness World Record juggler David Slick will be performing at 2:30 p.m. at the Mesquite Main Library with his show that is a mix of juggling, magic, unicycle, comedy and more. The library is located 900 W. Grubb Drive in Mesquite. For more information about David Slick, visit sluckjugglers.com.

WEDNESDAY
28



GET IN THE GAME —

From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., card games, board games and video games will be available for students in sixth through 12th grades to play at the Mesquite North Branch Library. The library is located at 2600 Oates Drive. For more information, call 972-681-0465.

WEDNESDAY
28

TODDLER TIME —

At 10:30 a.m., children's activities for toddlers ages 18 months to 3 years will be at both Mesquite North Branch Library and Mesquite Main Library. This is the last toddler time of the month. The Main Library is at 300 W. Grubb Drive and the North Branch Library is at 2600 Oates Drive.

THURSDAY
29

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4

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Keep Texas Beautiful recognizes Mesquite

Keep Mesquite Beautiful was awarded the Sustained Excellence Award during the 2010 Keep Texas Beautiful Conference in Austin.

Keep Mesquite Beautiful qualified for the award by scoring 95 or higher on the Governors Community Achievement Award application.

Keep Mesquite Beautiful will host its Recycling Fashion Show on Sept. 11 at West Mesquite High School. Mesquite students of all ages are invited to show their fashion made from recycled materials. Visit the organization's website to register. There is no cost to attend.

— Ray Leszczynski, rleszczynski@dallasnews.com



Photo submitted by JESSA THOMAS
A commemorative plaque was given to Keep Mesquite Beautiful for its local conservation efforts.

On July 16, ICP proposed allowing 70 units to be built on five of the 15 acres it owns at 3217 Belt Line Road. It would then work with the town on plans for the remaining 10 acres.

— R.L.

Strict deadlines issued for low-income housing

A federal judge has issued strict deadlines for the approval of low-income housing in Sunnyvale.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor ruled that if the Inclusive Communities Project, a Dallas fair-housing advocacy group, submits a written plan for the development of 70 housing units by Dec. 1, the town of Sunnyvale must reply by Jan. 15.

He issued his ruling July 19, following a hearing July 16 on how to remedy Sunnyvale's failure to comply with a court-sanctioned 2005 agreement between the town and the Inclusive Communities Project. O'Connor found the town in contempt last fall.

In his July 19 ruling, the judge also ordered the town to pay all legal costs for hearings stemming from the contempt order.

O'Connor ruled that if ICP does not submit a written plan for the development of affordable housing, Sunnyvale must solicit proposals from other developers or work with developers to provide housing. The town was given until next July 15 to come into full compliance with the 2005 agreement.

Police investigating possible murder-suicide

Mesquite police are investigating the deaths of two people found inside their home shortly after midnight as a possible murder-suicide.

Godfrey Spain, 52, was found upstairs in the two-story home, in the 2600 block of Bandera Place. He had apparently hanged himself.

Irene Haggerty, 46, was downstairs in the downstairs foyer. She had signs of blunt force trauma.

Family members concerned about the couple called police early this morning.

There were no signs of forced entry.

Police have not released any information about a possible motive.

Mesquite police Lt. Bill Hedgpeth said the couple's children were not at home when officers arrived.

A 15-year-old son was away at a church camp, and a 7-year-old daughter was at an aunt's house.

Both children, police said, are with now relatives.

For additional information, visit tinyurl.com/23qm6sr.

— Taryn Luna, tluna@dallasnews.com

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The Dallas Morning News **Worship Guide 2010** will publish on Sunday, September 26.

In it, readers will discover the differences between traditional and contemporary worship, how size affects congregations, common misperceptions — and perhaps, a spiritual home.

Publishing Date: Sunday, September 26, 2010

To reserve space contact Arnetta Harris or Farrah Brooks:
aharris@dallasnews.com (214) 977-8857
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MESQUITE

- **Avis Street, 2200 block,** 11:59 p.m. June 17: Unauthorized use of a vehicle
- **Bahamas Drive, 3600 block,** 6 p.m. June 20: Theft
- **Brunswick Lane, 100 block,** 6 p.m. June 20: Burglary of a vehicle
- **Gus Thomasson Road, 3600 block,** 3:45 p.m. June 15: Burglary of a vehicle
- **Highland Village Drive, 500 block,** 12:09 p.m. June 19: Aggravated assault with a weapon
- **Hillcrest Street, 2000 block,** 4 a.m. June 18: Theft
- **Hillcrest Street, 2000 block,** 4:06 p.m. June 20: Assault causing bodily injury
- **Horse Shoe Bend, 400 block,** 7:15 a.m. June 21: Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon
- **Kensington Drive, 3300 block,** 10 p.m. May 29: Burglary of a vehicle
- **Lagoon Drive, 2400 block,** 9:26 a.m. June 19: Burglary of a residence
- **Lee Street, 700 block,** 4:45 p.m. June 19: Assault
- **Modlin Street, 4000 block,** 6 a.m. June 18: Burglary of a vehicle
- **Oates Drive, 1800 block,** 10 p.m. June 18: Burglary of a residence
- **Rolling Vista, 4900 block,** 12:54 p.m. June 21: Burglary of a vehicle
- **Smokehouse Lane, 1300 block,** 6 a.m. June 20: Criminal mischief
- **Snapdragon Trail, 600 block,** 6 p.m. June 15: Theft
- **Towne Crossing Boulevard, 4000 block,** Noon June 21: Burglary of a residence
- **Tradewind Drive, 2100 block,** 12:30 a.m. June 15: Burglary of a vehicle

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PROBLEM TRACKER

Report civic problems such as potholes, graffiti, broken streetlights and vandalized playgrounds at tinyurl.com/clickfix. Following are recently reported problems:

Belt Line Road (Mesquite): Southbound Belt Line road where it intersects the westbound portion of Highway 80 is causing serious backup from cars that are going straight in the right hand lane. A lane change could reduce this backup.



Flamingo Way (Mesquite): Potholes along the 3900 block of Flamingo Way in Mesquite are still in need of repair.

Oates Drive (Mesquite): The faded lanes that were hard to make out with wet road conditions have been fixed.



Faces of the military

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Sunnyvale has high hopes for new overpass

By KAREL HOLLOWAY
kholloway@dallasnews.com

It may not be a multimillion-dollar signature bridge designed by a famed architect, but a new overpass going up on U.S. Highway 80 at Collins Road means as much to Sunnyvale.

"I think it's going to be a standout for sure," town manager Scott Campbell said. "I don't know of anything else like this."

As part of a \$25 million federal highway project, the city could have had a plain vanilla bridge, just like hundreds of bridges around the state. But the town opted to put up an extra \$600,000 to add stonework, columns and the Sunnyvale logo. The bridge should be finished next year.

The town already had contributed \$1.4 million to get the bridge started. Mesquite and Dallas County also contributed \$1.4 million each to the project.

That's far from Dallas' \$117 million Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge that's just been topped out over the Trinity River. Architect Santiago Calatrava designed it.

But the importance to Sunny-

vale, Mesquite and the county is similar. It marks an entryway into the area, Campbell said. And it's an intersection destined for major retail development.

Without the local money, the project would have been delayed years. And that would have been a problem not just for Sunnyvale, but for those who regularly use Highway 80 on the east side of Dallas County.

The old bridge is narrow and not tall enough to let big trucks easily pass under it. In his three and a half years with Sunnyvale, at least two accidents have closed the key intersection, Campbell said.

The Texas Department of Transportation has been offering cities the option for decorated overpasses for several years.

"It's like decorating a house. It's as much money as you want to put into it. You can get the five-star treatment or do less," TxDOT spokeswoman Michelle Releford said.

Until the Bush Turnpike is extended in 2015 or beyond, the bridge marks the site of Sunnyvale's lone freeway exit.

For the full story, visit tinyurl.com/DMN-Bridge.

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World Cup

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SONY PICTURES

Angelina Jolie is lackluster as CIA officer and suspected Russian spy Evelyn Salt in *Salt*. The film also stars Liev Schreiber as Ted Winter, Salt's colleague.

'Salt' loses flavor with action scenes

Salt, the new spy thriller from writer Kurt Wimmer (*Law Abiding Citizen*), is at times Jason Bourne and at times just boring.

It is always exciting to see Angelina Jolie put on her action hat, but she seems to have lost a spring or two in her step. Maybe it is the fact that 80-pound action heroes are hard to buy into.

Evelyn Salt (Jolie) is an apple-eating CIA officer who has served her country well. But she finds herself on the run when she is accused of being a Russian spy.

Friend and loyal colleague Ted Winter (Liev Schreiber) has to play both sides as he tries to catch Salt while proclaiming her innocence. Moviegoers have to decide for themselves who Salt really is.

The premise and storyline of the film have all the ingredients to make a superb spy thriller. The film has tasty Cold War morsels that reflect on old school spy flicks in a modern manner. One would think this is a fantastic film, but sadly it is just OK.

It would be easy to blame Jolie for the misfires in this flick. She seems stiff and uncomfort-

**MATT MUNGLE**

Contributor

neighborsgo.com/blog/movies

'SALT'

★★★★☆

PG-13 for intense sequences of violence and action; 100 minutes
able in the action sequences. She is sublime as an intense, dramatic actress, but I think she has lost her kick-butt edge.

Jolie is a fabulous spy if conversation and peering eyes are her weapons. Everything else? Not so much.

Director Phillip Noyce is to blame. With a talent like Jolie, he could have better suited his film to fit what she brings to the table. He does that with Schreiber, who does a killer job with his role.

Salt is entertaining, and most will find it exciting. Those who are looking for a top-notch film from beginning to end may be disappointed. It is missing too many elements to be a solid hit.

Recent reviews on neighborsgo.com

Inception: PG-13 for sequences of violence and action throughout; 148 minutes

★★★★☆

Despicable Me: PG for rude humor and mild action; 95 minutes

★★★★☆

ROXY THEATRE

'Folly in the Footlights' brings together local talent

By **SANDRA WOOD**

Contributor

Something is afoot at Roxy Theatre in Balch Springs.

From mischief to mockery to mayhem, it's all part of *Folly in the Footlights*.

An onstage battle from beginning to end, the performers try to dazzle the audience and win the coveted Moxy Award. They are hopelessly upstaged by the celebrity panelists who are competing to raise the most money and by the hosts who are rigging the contest.

The antics combine to create a fast-paced evening of music and comedy. It is also a fundraiser.

Audience members can participate in the action by compet-

When: 7:30 p.m., July 30-31**Where:** Roxy Theatre, 4000 Pioneer Road, Suite 201A, Balch Springs**Admission:** \$10 per person with discounts for groups and seniors**Additional information:** Call 972-557-1555 or e-mail sandra@balchspringsartsalliance.org

ing as "high rollers" to win various auction items including fine art, restaurant packages, gift baskets, sports memorabilia and more.

The proceeds benefit the Balch Springs Visual and Performing Arts Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Folly in the Footlights brings together talent from across the

Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Cast members include Mary Christine White, Becky Ragan, Bob Allen, Marla Acevedo, Jeff Poteat, Zach Splawn, Sandra Wood, Carlos Reyes, Willard Mardenborough and Diane Williams.

Sandra Wood contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Balch Springs Arts Alliance.

TOWN EAST MALL | SHOP 'TIL YOU ROCK

Teens can rock out at mall concert

By **SUNNY MCKINNON**

Contributor

Dallas' local 23-year-old music celebrity, Dustin Cavazos, will headline Town East Mall's Shop 'Til You Rock event beginning at 4 p.m. Saturday.

The Dallas rocker will perform a live set presented by Hot Topic as a way to cap off a full afternoon of music-themed mall activities, and he will host a meet-and-greet at the event stage after his set.

Events during the day fill the schedule beginning at 1 p.m.

To learn more about the day's events, visit shoptilyourock.com.

Sunny McKinnon contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Town East Mall.

PLAN YOUR DAY

Rock On Salon: Teens can release their inner rocker with an outrageous rocker hairstyle, captured celebrity-style by Kodak. All photos will be uploaded online, where teens have the opportunity to change their hair color or style, share with friends and more.

Just Dance: Mall-goers can show off their rockstar moves and challenge friends to a dance off with America's hottest dance game Just Dance, featuring music from chart-topping artists. Teens who fan Just Dance's Facebook page at the event will receive an "I Just Dance" T-shirt, while supplies last.

Rock The Runway: Teens have the chance to rock the runway with Fusion Model Management's search to reward ages 13-19 with modeling contracts totaling nearly \$400,000.

Rock Star HQ: Teens can enable their cell phone's wireless technology capabilities to win prizes, get the latest retail offers, register for sweepstakes and join GGP's free, exclusive membership, The ClubSM.

Center Stage: Popular retailers will host onstage fashion spotlights to give teens inspiration to create their best fall looks. There will also be games, contests and trivia to win great Shop 'Til You Rock and participating sponsor prizes.

Farmers make organic market best in area

By **MARCUS MURPHREE**
mmurphree@neighborsgo.com

The bumper sticker on the back of a rusty truck parked outside of Eden's Organic Garden Center in Balch Springs says it all — "No Farmers, No Food."

In the last few years, a surge of farmers markets in both rural and urban areas have become a staple on weekends during prime harvest seasons, and at Eden's, the market has taken a step further by pushing for an all-organic approach to food sales.

Bakers, butchers and horticulturalists will ship in goods from as far away as parts of central Texas to take part in Marie Tedei's small, specialized market.

Additionally, customers looking for organic, farm-raised goods don't mind trucking upward of 30 miles to sample what Tedei and her team of farmers sell on weekends.

For some people, lifestyles make shopping at a market like Eden's a necessity.

Steve Kraisinger, a raw foodist from Plano, splits weekend shopping duties with his wife, Bonnie, who picks up some of the organic fare at the McKinney farmers market.

"You're healthier the more local, fresh food you can eat, and I can't have a big garden at my place," he said.

Tedei moved her gardening operation from Lake Highlands-Lakewood area out to Balch Springs about three years ago and she has used her farm as not only a market setup, but also as a sustainable community garden.

Community efforts

During the week, Tedei's garden serves as a way to supply herself and several other members of her Community Supported Agriculture cooperative in the area with organic fruits and vegetables. But during the market weekends, the surplus of produce is sold at her



Marie Tedei writes out the prices of her fresh, organic produce at the Saturday farmers market at Eden's Organic Gardening Center. Tedei's market in Balch Springs draws customers and vendors from several counties across North Texas.

Staff photos by JENICE JOHNSON/neighborsgo

A FAMILY OUTING

The atmosphere of farmers markets has changed over the years from being a weekend produce trade to a full family-event.

Farm animals out wandering around, free samples for kids, vendors that let people get a hands-on look at products all give people the chance to feel more welcome in these venues.

"Here on the farm, it's an event because of its atmosphere," Marie Tedei, owner of Eden's Organic Garden Center, said. "You're bringing your kids out to a real farm with chickens, ducks and horses, and it's under trees and on grass and a very friendly environment."

"I'd like to think that parents are trying to expose their kids to where their fruits and veggies and foods come from. Your foods don't come from a plastic covered package from the store — it came from the ground."

IF YOU GO

Eden's Organic Garden Center

4710 Pioneer Road, Balch Springs
Hours: 8 a.m. to noon each first and third Saturday of the month

Eden's offers an emphasis on organically grown produce and meats from various local farmers.



organic market.

Setting Eden's further apart from some of the other weekend markets in the area is its actual location on the farm where the food is grown.

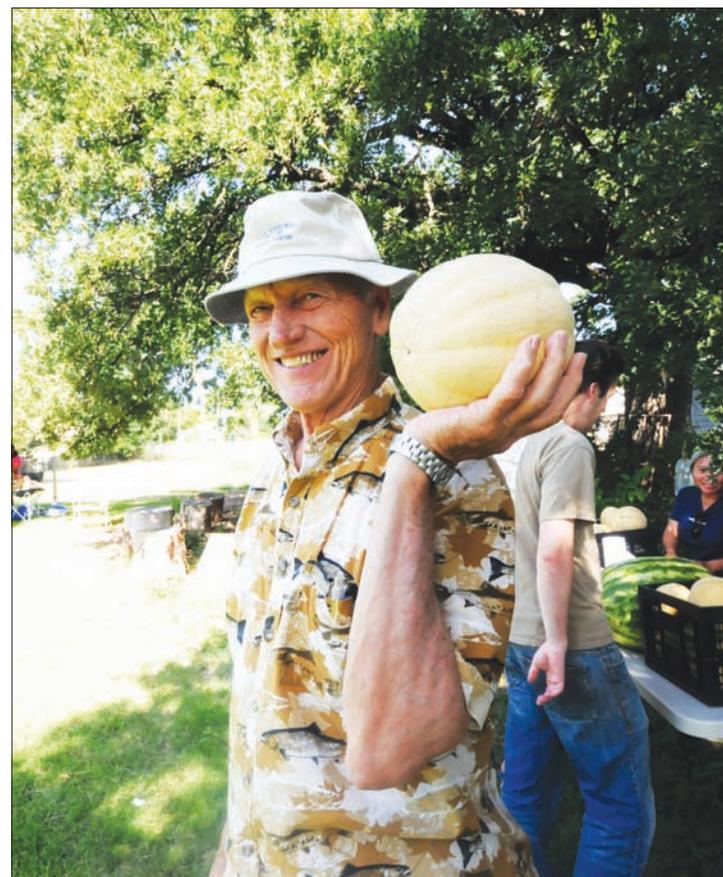
"We are a farm, we're not in a parking lot, and we have a different environment to shop at in addition to being all organic and all clean," Tedei said. "This is a true 'farmers' market, and it makes me more respectful of the farmers' and ranchers' needs."

It is this boutique market atmosphere that has made loyal cus-

tomers of Eden's and made equally loyal vendors on the grounds the first and third Saturday of the month.

"We have communities showing up of people who want to grow together," said Susan Pollard, a beekeeper who sells at several local markets. "The reason we want to be here is because it's a model of we can all do as farmers and not just as schleppers of honey."

Marcus Murphree is Mesquite neighborsgo editor and can be reached at 469-330-5638.



Harold Marshall of Mesquite carries a melon he purchased at Eden's Organic Garden in Balch Springs last Saturday.



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Host and Educational Partner



Photo submitted by LAWRENCE HOOD JR.

Caden Curtis and his family are working to raise funds for a new van suitable for the family's needs with a wheelchair-bound child.

Movie theater pitches in to help family in need

By **LAWRENCE HOOD JR.**
Contributor

Making a Difference

Starplex Cinema Stadium 12 in Forney joined forces with Variety the Children's Charity of Texas to raise money for Caden Curtis, a 5-year-old who was injured by his father at 12 days old.

Those injuries required him to have the left side of his brain removed. Caden requires a wheelchair to get around, which makes even a simple trip to the grocery store difficult for his family.

Caden's mother, Stacy, originally came to Variety for assistance in getting a wheelchair ramp for their current vehicle. Due to the age and condition of that van, it was not worth the cost to modify the vehicle. So Variety partnered with Starplex Cinemas to raise funds to purchase a van more suited to the family's needs.

Donation boxes are placed at

Know someone or a group that's making a difference? Send an e-mail with names and contact information to mmurphree@neighborsgo.com. Or write about them in your own words and post it as a story on neighborsgo.com.

the theater concession counter, and A Car For Caden T-shirts are available for a \$10 donation. In addition, through Sept. 12 Starplex Cinema Stadium 12 Forney will donate 10 cents of every \$1 hot dog sold to this cause.

Helping to add to the cause was Madre's Cocina on Pinson Road in Forney, which recently hosted a fundraiser that brought in \$1,000 for A Car For Caden.

Lawrence Hood Jr. contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Variety the Children's Charity of Texas.



follow Mesquite go

Marcus Murphree | editor twitter.com/mesquite



Photo submitted by TERRAL BOISFONTAINE

Youth volunteers help to gather and sort school supplies for the upcoming 2010 school year. Community Partners of Dallas will begin collecting school supplies Aug. 1.

Back-to-school drive to serve students in need

By **TERRAL BOISFONTAINE**
Contributor

Throughout August, Community Partners of Dallas will collect new school supplies for children served by Dallas and Tarrant counties' Child Protective Services. Many of these abused and neglected children lack the resources to buy essential supplies such as markers or folders.

Included in those collection areas are schools in Mesquite, Garland and Richardson school districts.

CPD's Back-to-School Drive aims to provide these children with new backpacks, age-appropriate school supplies and uniforms for the upcoming school year. These basic items allow kids to feel self-assured and prepared on their first day back.

"Although the children benefited by the Back-to-School Drive have had very abnormal pasts, they can return to school feeling like everyone else," said Community Partners president and CEO of Dallas Paige McDaniel. "So often, that confidence is the difference between success and failure in the classroom."

Those interested in supporting the Back-to-School drive can do so

MORE INFO

Monetary donations can be mailed to 1215 Skiles St., Dallas, 75204. For more information about Community Partners of Dallas, call 214-624-7557 or communitypartnersdallas.org.

through in-kind or monetary donations.

Donations of new school supplies can be dropped off at any area location of The Container Store between Aug. 1 and 31 or at Community Partners of Dallas' central location, 1215 Skiles St. in the Wilson Historic District, at any time.

"The kids are always overjoyed and appreciative to receive new full backpacks. We know that none of this would be possible without the support of our community," McDaniel said.

The items most needed this year are backpacks, construction paper, two-pocket folders, notebook dividers, blunt-tipped scissors, watercolors, composition books and Manila paper.

The Container Store and ExxonMobil are Back-to-School Drive sponsors.

Terral Boisfontaine contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Community Partners of Dallas.

Building it together



Photo submitted by WAYNE LARSON

The city of Mesquite public works department director **Tim Tumulty** receives the 2010 Texas Public Works Association's Project of the Year award in the \$10-\$100 million transportation category from Mesquite Mayor John Monaco at the City Council meeting July 6.

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New team helps rebrand Mesquite Rodeo

By **MARCUS MURPHREE**
mmurphree@neighborsgo.com

An ownership change may have been a saving grace for Mesquite's 25-year-old Resistol Arena, home to the Mesquite Championship Rodeo.

Though the classic rodeo events are still played out on the dirt oval floor, there is something different both in the crowd and across the grounds of the arena.

Sponsorship signs, corporate backing, private suites and a special club have all come from the recent ownership changeover that took place in May 2009.

Under the company name Camelot Sports & Entertainment, a crew of eight local sports and entertainment gurus teamed up to create a new and improved Mesquite Championship Rodeo.

Some of the eight-member cooperative are cowboys, some are businessmen and others are sports fanatics, but their diverse backgrounds have started transforming the rodeo into a venue that has new relevance in East Dallas County.

"I used to pass this place a lot living out there, and it's hard not to get caught up in the western culture, because it's everywhere," said Donnie Nelson, president of basketball operations for the Dallas Mavericks and partner in Camelot Sports.

By bringing in live concerts from notable country artists and television broadcasts crews from Fox Sports Net, Resistol Arena is gaining notoriety in circles outside of rodeo.

"We all decided to give it a shot of energy to create an entertainment product that is there for all of Mesquite to enjoy," Nelson said.

Keeping the cowboy way

While polished suites and a chance to enjoy the rodeo in a more fashionable atmosphere could bring in more fans, the classic western attitude has been kept in check by the livestock provider, Stace Smith from Smith Pro Rodeos.

Smith, who is no stranger to rodeos, has won several awards for his work with the stock at the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association events.

"Sometimes you need a breath of fresh air and that is what new ownership does," saddle-bronc rider Bonner Cooper said. "Stace Smith has done so much for rodeo,



Seth Morgan of Azle wrestles a steer to the ground during the bulldogging event at the Mesquite Championship Rodeo on July 16.

Staff photos by ROSE BACA/neighborsgo

and the last couple years, he has really started to bring in some good horses."

Cooper has been riding out at Resistol Arena for the last eight years, and fellow cowboy Cody Smith have noticed the changes to the arena.

"There are fresh faces and new advertisements and almost anyone can see the difference," Cody Smith said.

But when the cowboys strap in and prepare to jump out of the gate on the back of a 2,000-pound bull or on the back of a wild bronco, their mindset doesn't follow advertising or corporate sponsorship — it goes back to what every young kid on the ranch wants to do: prove who is better, man or animal.

"You don't have the horse control you, you control the horse, and right before I step over the rail, I just learn to turn it on," Cody Smith said.

Marcus Murphree is Mesquite neighborsgo editor and can be reached at 469-330-5638.

NEW CHANGES

The 8-Second Club: For those willing to pick up the special season ticket packages, corporate sponsorships or become sweet holders, the plush back room of the arena is a place to put your feet up, grab a cold beer and sample some freshly smoked barbecue. The club debuted in December and more additions to the back patio are in store for the coming weeks.

HD screens: New high-definition video boards are located above the chutes where the rough-stock reside.

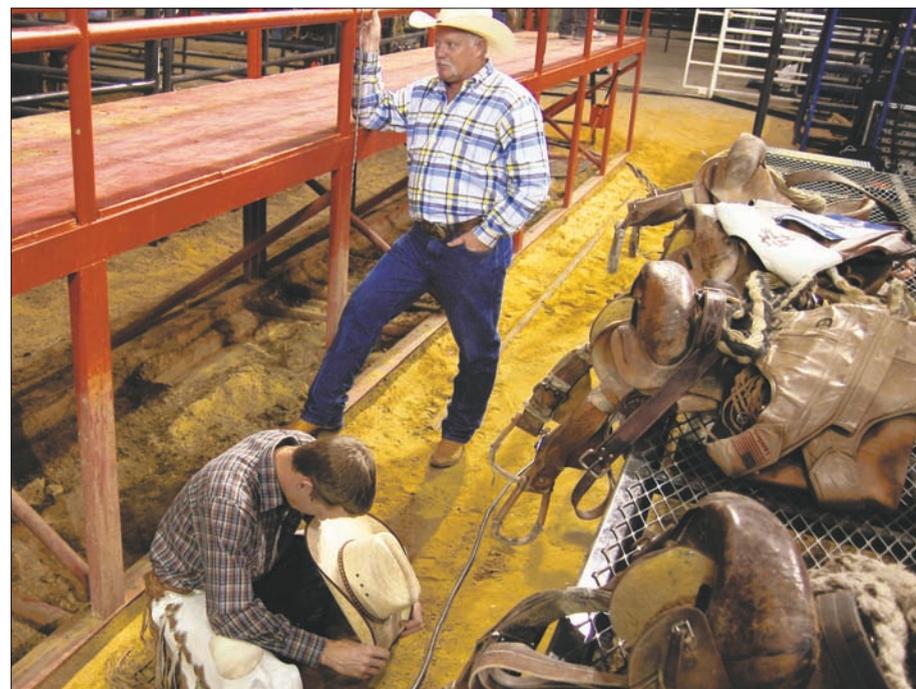
Upcoming events: In addition to the weekly rodeos, events at Resistol Arena will include mixed martial arts fights, motocross races and arena racing contests.

IF YOU GO

When: 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays through Aug. 28.

Where: Resistol Arena 1818 Rodeo Drive, Mesquite

Cost: \$11 adults, \$6 kids 3-12, \$6 seniors 55 and older, \$30 VIP tickets, \$50 All-Inclusive 8-Second Club seating.



Cody Smith, 26, says a prayer before his go-round in the saddle-bronc riding event at the Mesquite Championship Rodeo as his father Kirk looks on. Cody Smith has been competing in rodeo for more than 10 years.

neighborsgo | Mesquite

July 23, 2010

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Gospel showcase in fifth year

By RHONDA BERRY
Contributor



Photo submitted by RHONDA BERRY

The Greens, a gospel quartet from North Carolina, will perform during the fifth anniversary event for Rodeo City Music Hall's gospel show.

A celebration is coming to the old downtown square in Mesquite.

Rodeo City Music Hall's gospel show will celebrate five years of live southern gospel music Aug. 6-7 with award-winning group The Greens.

The Rodeo City gospel show was started by Joe Gordon the first Friday of July in 2005. There were about 45 people in the audience on that night. Today, five years later, the average attendance is 250.

Gordon wanted something memorable for the fifth anniversary celebration.

"We had Lulu Roman as our guest for the third anniversary and I wanted to do something special this time also," Gordon said. "So after much prayer, I asked Clara (Walker) and Karol (Dyess) [from RCMH] if we could have an entire weekend. They graciously agreed."

The regular Friday night show will cost \$5 and showcase the Apostolic Boys, The Ardens, Rhonda Arden-Hamilton and Tina Morgan. Ransomed, the host group, will be there as well.

The special Saturday night event features national recording artists The Greens out of Boone, N.C. They have appeared at the Lake Country Jubilee in Terrell and with the Gaither Homecoming Series. With them that night will be Trusting Hymn, a ladies trio and Ransomed. Tickets for this event are \$15.

In addition to the gospel music planned for this night, there is going to be a special drawing for a three-day and two-night stay at the No. 1 bed-and-breakfast in Eureka Springs, Ark. All Season's Luxury Properties is located in the historic district and is known for its service, specialty rooms and suites.

IF YOU GO

When: 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6-7
Tickets: \$5 Aug. 6, \$15 Aug. 7
Reservations: Call 214-5378-2097 or e-mail rodeocitygospelshow@yahoo.com.

"In the last year and a half, the crowd has been steadily increasing. Then in August of 2009, the crowd was so large we had to put some of the audience on the stage and pull chairs out," Gordon said. "The crowd has continued to come, no matter how cold or wet it is — even on holiday weekends.

"We want the audience to leave with a good feeling and renewed spirit. Our purpose is to get the Gospel message into people's hearts through music."

Rhonda Berry contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Rodeo City Music Hall's gospel music show.

MESQUITE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Libraries receive state-funded grant

By NANCY WATSON
Contributor

The Mesquite Public Library System recently received a \$32,958 grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission through Loan Star Libraries, the direct state aid program for Texas public libraries.

The grant money will be used to purchase additional books, DVDs and books on CD, as well as pay for the library's subscription to the TexShare Databases.

"Additional funding for these

particular items is especially important due to their popularity," library director Jeannie Johnson said. "During the summer, the library gets a large increase in DVD and books on CD usage. The new materials should be arriving in time to meet the heavy demand."

Since 2002, the Texas Legislature has made it possible to distribute \$19.4 million to Texas public libraries through the Loan Star Libraries grant program. In 2008, 540 public libraries across the state shared \$5.65 million in funds distributed by the Commission, an in-

crease of \$3 million in 2007.

Libraries can use the grant funding however they wish, with few exceptions, to meet the needs of their communities.

The Mesquite Public Library is active in the community with both adult and children's programming. A book club for adults and an anime club for teens are ongoing as well as story times and craft times for younger children.

Nancy Watson contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Mesquite libraries.

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sports | CITY OF MESQUITE

Manager sought for Bruton Soccer Complex

By MICHELE MILLER
Contributor

Mesquite Soccer Association is looking for a facility manager for Bruton Soccer Complex and a new equipment manager for Eastfield Soccer Complex.

Some of the responsibilities for the Bruton Soccer Complex manager include opening and closing the concession stand several evenings a week, handing out the equipment, picking up the trash at the end of the night and selling small concession items.

The field maintenance and equipment manager position out at Eastfield job responsibilities include opening and

MORE INFO
Those interested in applying, contact Billy Johnston at mesquitesoccervp@swbell.net or call 214-534-6010.

closing equipment room on game days, distributing and restocking nets, emptying trash cans at all MSA sanctioned events at Eastfield and maintaining the overall cleanliness and organization of the equipment room.

Persons applying for either of these jobs must pass a background check.

Michele Miller contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of the Mesquite Soccer Association.

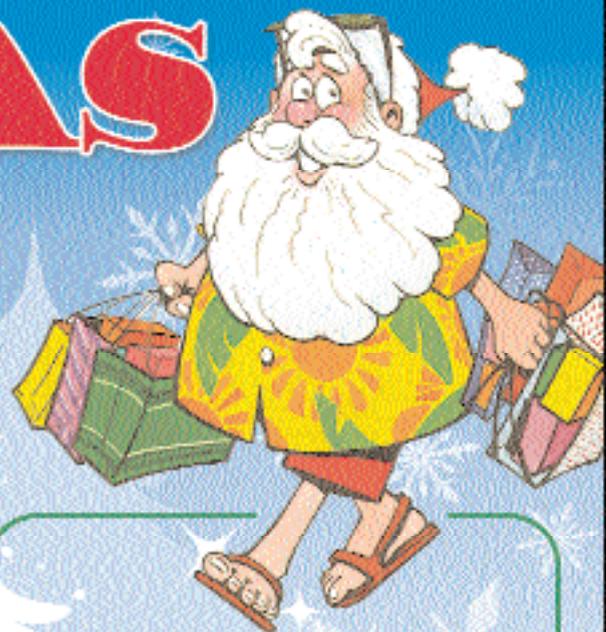
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