

The Boy Friend

Historic Plaza Theatre showcases District's student musical

When the curtains go up at the Plaza Theatre this week, you'll see EPISD's stars and starlets shining on stage.

The Fine Arts Department will present Sandy Wilson's "The Boy Friend," at the Plaza Theatre July 10-12, giving EPISD students an unprecedented opportunity to experience the elegance and grandeur of the professional stage.

This year's "The Boy Friend" marks the 20th EPISD Summer Musical and the 21st summer production. "We think it is unique that we are in our 21st season in the 21st century doing our 20th musical set in the 1920's," said Gail Manago, fine arts facilitator.

Liz Gaidry, a former El Paso High theater teacher and the first director of the summer production, resumes her role as director with the same musical she began with 21 years ago.

For Gaidry, moving the production to the Plaza is an exhilarating experience. "I'm terribly excited," said Gaidry, who performed in the Plaza before its renovation. "I remember the Plaza as a child and I can remember it in its grandeur, the whole ambiance of it."

The El Paso Community Foundation is underwriting the \$15,000 cost for renting the venue, which includes the seven days in the theater for rehearsals and performances and the technical crew.

"The Plaza belongs to the people of El Paso,



Reagan Lopez, Will Windle, Margaret Manago and Emily Clarke star in **The Boy Friend** at the Plaza Theatre.

so it's only logical to bring in as many young performers as possible," said Janice Windle, El Paso Community Foundation president. "The children will be able to say on their college applications that they have performed on the stage of a professional theater. More importantly, they will go through life remembering what a thrilling experience it was and how much fun they had in the summer of 2006."

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Employee of the Month

P.E. instructor, clerk honored

The school year ended on a positive note for two EPISD stellar staffers as they were recognized as May's Employees of the Month and honored by the Board of Trustees in June.

Sharon Johnston-Vass, the book-room clerk at Guillen Middle, was recognized in the "Non-Certified" category. In her nomination, Principal Rosa Lovelace said Johnston-Vass is certainly a Jack, or if you will, a Jackie of all trades. She answers phones, organizes and re-organizes. She orders, receives and distributes.



Johnston-Vass

She greets, she meets ... she does it all. And after all that, she still finds time to mentor at-risk students to make sure they have a voice and a sympathetic ear.

Lupe Castillo, a physical education instructor at Richardson Middle, earned recognition in the "Certified" category. She's organized fundraisers to buy new equipment and is constantly putting together creative and exciting ways to keep P.E. fun, earning not only the respect of her students, but of her peers as well. As a matter of fact, the entire P.E. department nominated Coach Castillo for this award to recognize her for her dedicated efforts.



Castillo

Each top employee received a special plaque and a check for \$200.



EPISD Auction: An EPISD Surplus Auction will be from 8 a.m. to noon July 14 and July 15 in the warehouse area of Central Office at 6531 Boeing. Items up for auction are commercial kitchen equipment, computers, desks, chairs, tables, pianos, home refrigerators and stoves, shop equipment, furniture and much more. Auction is performed by Auctions Unlimited, Neil Waxman, TX Lic #12930. Cash, Visa, MasterCard, and Discover is accepted.

Information: 845-1334.

Intern of the Year: Two EPISD teachers were named Intern of the Year by the Region 19 Teacher Preparation and Certification Program. Rommie Davis, a special education teacher at Hawkins Elementary, and Christi Atkinson, a science teacher at Irvin High, received this year's honors. Both interns completed 18 months of intense training, a yearlong internship and qualify to become certified teachers.

Leadership Award: Program assistant Lee Schwartz received the SIM national leadership award from the Center for Research in Learning at Kansas University (KU-CRL) in Lawrence, Kansas. The award is given to individuals who in an exceptional way have shown leadership with the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) by helping educators to become strategic teachers and, as a result, students to become strategic learners. Lee was a SIM teacher at El Paso High School from 1991-2001. She helped design and implement a school wide SIM initiative called SAS (Strategies for Academic Success) and later designed and implemented the program districtwide.

Outstanding Teacher: Jefferson teacher and coach Ray Gallardo Jr. has been named Marketing Teacher of the Year 2005-06 for Texas. Gallardo was selected for his outstanding job with students, and his leadership and professionalism. He also has been elected the new MET president of District 10, which includes El Paso. Gallardo, a 20-year teaching veteran in EPISD, has been teaching and coaching at Jefferson High School for the past seven years. He will be honored at the Marketing Educators of Texas' Professional Development Conference in Corpus Christi in July.

UTEP, Zavala paired for summer science program



UTEP students helped Zavala Elementary students build lumber race cars which they raced at the end of the program.

EPISD and UTEP engineered the right chemistry for teamwork and creativity in this summer's Excite Engineering Program.

More than 80 Limited English Proficiency students built better study skills in math, science and language in the program as part of the Dual Language Academy.

Traditionally, the annual program had been offered to high school students at Chapin, Jefferson, Irvin and Austin. This summer, the academy welcomed Zavala Elementary students.

"We are extremely thankful for everything that has come this summer for our special Zavala kids," said Lorraine Martinez, a science teacher at Zavala. "It is so special to be part of such a great program and unforgettable experience where you can feel the excitement everyday. This is a summer the kids will never forget."

This year's federally-funded program drew its largest number of participants. "It is our obligation to provide as much as we can for our students," said James Teranova, grant coordinator. "We are so proud to provide for our students something this summer, that does not cost their pockets anything and something the students and teachers will never forget."

The academy went beyond the classroom into the engineering world

at UTEP. More than 13 future engineers from the university partnered up with the elementary students to build lumber racecars. The racecar project encouraged teamwork and the importance of language, math and science.

Excite coordinator Humberto Santacruz, a UTEP senior, liked the challenge of working with younger students.

"Seeing how much fun both the instructors and students had in learning a bit about engineering and how important self-esteem and teamwork are, it was a win-win situation you can never forget," Santacruz said. "We, as students ourselves, were given the opportunity to practice on how to be teachers, and students, in return, learned how much fun school work can be."

The four-week program closed with an event featuring students racing their lumber cars on the UTEP campus, testing their knowledge and new-found skills.



Word Weavers' Academy

Students explore writing during 10-day workshop

Did Humpty Dumpty really fall of the wall, or was he pushed?

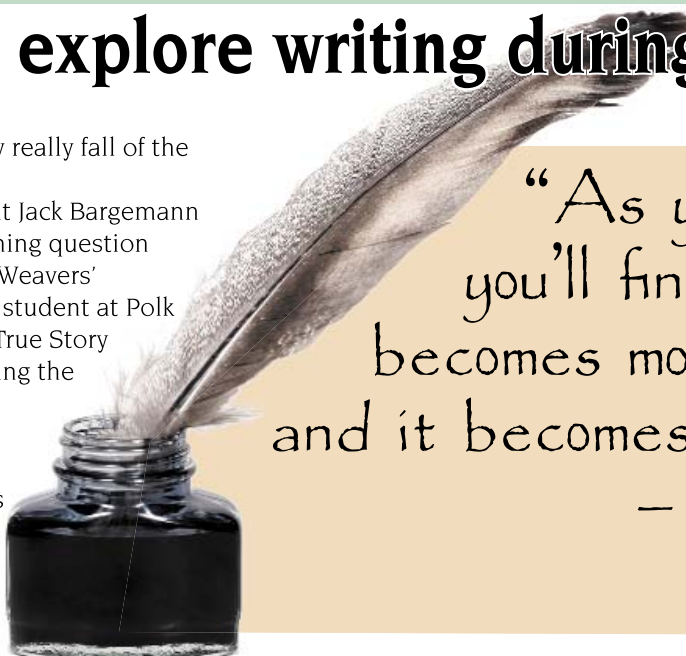
Fourth grade student Jack Bargemann tried to answer that burning question during the 10-day Word Weavers' Academy. Bargemann, a student at Polk Elementary, wrote "The True Story of Humpty Dumpty" during the summer program.

Bargemann and 23 other young authors honed their writing skills during the workshop sponsored by EPISD's Gifted and Talented Department and the West Texas Writing Project. The Word Weavers' Academy is for fourth and fifth grade elementary school students. More than 90 students applied for the 24 slots in the academy.

"Kids enjoy it," said Michelle Villalobos, assistant director of the Word Weavers' Academy. Students surpass their expectations and realize that they can write about more things than they expected. "It's not enough to finish a poem or a story," she added, "but students want to finish it well."

At the end of the academy, their works were published in an anthology and they presented a reading from their works at the Westside Barnes & Noble.

Board member Sergio Lewis, who is also an award-winning poet, attended the reading and he explained to the young writers how important writing is for him. He said, "As you all grow up, you'll find that writing becomes more and more fun, and it becomes more real."



"As you all grow up, you'll find that writing becomes more and more fun, and it becomes more real."
- Sergio Lewis, poet Board Member



Word Weaver students at the Barnes & Noble reading.

The flower blossoms and we see
A new life has begun.
Filled with hope and happiness,
It opens its petals one by one.
O the joy and splendor
It brings to one and all,
But then there comes a time
When all living things must fall.
But the flower still brings hope.
Its seeds fall round everyone,
And then the magic starts again.
A new life has begun.
- Trent Winsor



Word Weaver teachers Donna Helmling and Karen Alvarez introduce students during the public reading.

Knockabout and Knockaboom
The wind that whistles desert songs by spinning tops of sand,
Leaves behind a silent sea of dune upon dune land.
The land of sand burns hot as fire, but one or twice a year...
Into the picture perfect sky,
Two thunder clouds appear.
They Knockabout and Knockaboom to make a
THUNDER SHOWER!!
But when they leave, they always leave...
At least one desert flower
- Alyssa Holt

The Renaissance Experience

Middle students go back in time for fine arts

More than 70 EPISD middle school students traveled back to the Renaissance era this summer, working like real Shakespearians and shaping their fine art talents in art, music and drama.

This year's Gifted and Talented Annual Fine Arts Summer Renaissance Experience at Chapin High School drew the highest enrollment since it started more than 20 years ago. Students dedicated their mornings and afternoons to rehearsing lines, creating costumes, fencing and practicing music. The four-week camp culminated with the June 29 Renaissance Experience, an extravaganza of music, food and arts. More than 200 friends and family came together for the morning of fun and imagination.

Donna Mullens, Renaissance director, complimented the devotion and hard work teachers and students contributed to the program, making the "Renaissance Experience" an unforgettable event.

"It was such an honor to direct such a fine performance," she said "Fine arts brings out the creativity and imagination that lives inside our students. It is important to provide them with all the possibilities to show off their talents."

Student volunteer Sarah Stout, a senior at Chapin High, has been involved in the program for more than three years and looks forward to it every summer.

"The Gifted and Talented Program is more than just a boring summer camp," Sarah said. "It's a fun place where if you really love fine arts, it is the place to be. This program gives everyone a chance to work on something you love over the summer break, along with making new friends and catching up with old ones."



Students study medicine during summer DREAMS program

The crime scene at Silva Health Magnet last month involved all the excitement of an episode of CBS' "CSI": a missing millionaire, blood analysis, fabric samples, carpet fibers, DNA. But the investigators at this crime scene weren't TV celebrities rather

high achieving fifth and sixth graders enrolled in Developing Research and Early Aspirations for Medical Scholars (DREAMS).

Through the four-week Gifted and Talented DREAMS program students

in the Austin, Bowie, El Paso and Jefferson feeder schools discovered medical forensics, orthopedic robotics, medical careers and issues related to childhood obesity. The program is a collaborative between EPISD and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at the El Paso Hispanic Center of Excellence.

"The goal of the DREAMS program is to develop awareness of medical and health care professions and their contributions to society," said coordinator Donna Serna.

Students rotate through the four medical units learning each with a hands-on approach. In the orthopedic robotics section, students worked together to develop a computer program in making a prosthetic device with Legos. Students programmed robots to pick up and drop ping pong balls with a claw to simulate a prosthetic.

"They have to follow logical progression to make it work," teacher Gene Palyu said. "By designing the robotic arm, they can see how the future of robotic prosthetics works."

Lilian Martinez, a 7th grader at Cordova Middle, is enthralled with the robotic device she and her team created. "I like robotics because I like

building and seeing how people who have lost a limb can use prosthetics," Lilian, who wants to be nurse, said. "This program is really fun. I like how there are so many activities here."

Most students aspire to enter careers in medicine or science. Each



Students received certificates after graduating from the program.

student created a poster explaining their chosen career with job descriptions, educational requirements and salary ranges. Veterinarians ranked the highest, with pediatricians a

close second. Students' career desires went beyond the ordinary career paths the more creative arts therapist, nuclear medicine technician and embalmer.

Down the hall from the robotic section, students were engaged in depositions of witnesses for the mock murder and crime scene. Each student had a job – from sketch artist to collecting evidence to chief investigator.

"They absolutely love it," teacher Lynn Lopez said. "When they collect evidence, they put on gloves and put things in plastic bags. It's just like CSI."

For CSI fan Victoria Avila, the medical forensics was her favorite unit. "We learned about finger printing and blood typing and we got to solve mysteries," she said. "It's like CSI detective work."

The unit on childhood obesity gave students an incite into the dangers of diseases caused by poor health and nutrition. Students studied 30 different diseases linked to obesity.

"One in five kids are overweight in our country and hopefully the knowledge they learned here will help at least a small group," teacher Jenni Rey said. "We hope they will share their knowledge with their families."



Medical careers explored in two languages

At EPISD, the age for learning about medical careers became a little younger this summer. This year's Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos summer camp gave 106 first through sixth graders a chance to discover medical careers and experience hands-on lessons about the digestive, skeletal and circulatory systems in English and Spanish.

The gifted and talented students are enrolled in the dual language program at Mesita Elementary and Wiggs Middle School, which is funded through the federal Javits Grant. The program is part of the Gifted and Talented Department, under the direction of Fara Green.

The two-week camp offers students in the dual language program an educational enrichment opportunity, giving them the chance to practice both languages while learning about the body.

"In the camp, we try to replicate what we do in the real program as much as possible," coordinator Sandra Spivey said. "The languages are 50-50 – half of the day is taught in English and the other half in Spanish. All textbooks are in both languages and we try to get as many

materials in both languages as possible."

To learn about the various body systems, the

students used cut outs, created clay molds and added on pasta for texture to replicate organs.

"I like how we have a hands on approach to the program and we get to work on it in Spanish, too," said Jake Lasley. Jake liked



the science aspect of this year's camp. The fourth grader to-be is already planning for a career in the field of science or medicine.

So is his friend, Scotty Spivey who also will be in fourth grade this fall. Wearing blue scrubs and a stethoscope around his neck, Scotty already looks like a doctor and likes explaining the lessons he learned about the body systems. Although he admits wearing the scrubs were a little sweaty, he enjoyed coming to school in the medical attire.

"It makes you feel like a doctor and I want to be a doctor when I grow up," Scotty said. "Here we learned about the digestive system and different things like the stomach, large intestines and liver and how they all have a purpose and they all work together."

During the camp, students also learned about the importance of blood donation with a trip to United Blood Services. They also traveled to El Paso Community College for lessons on health



careers with visits to an operating room, dental clinic and nutrition clinic.

"I loved coming to school because it's fun and I've learned a lot," Scotty said.

The last day of the camp featured the Systems Expo, giving the students a chance to present their work to parents. All of the students dressed in scrubs and carried around exhibits illustrating the systems they learned.

"It's really fun because you see your friends and have a good time learning," said Ixchel Torres, who will be in sixth grade at Wiggs.

Phoebe Schirmer, also a future Wiggs sixth grader, enjoys the time she spends with classmates.

"I get bored during the summer," she said. "It's like school but with no grades. We learn a lot in a fun way."



Picture This!

A look at graduations across the district



The 2003 Bond implementation progress has now achieved some very dramatic results as \$122,424,621 or 100 percent of the total bond construction funds have been completed at 30 campuses throughout the district.

The completion has included such important projects as the new Aoy Elementary, which moved into its new facilities after spring break last semester.

Opening its doors to students this fall will be the new Magoffin Middle School. The old building will remain intact to accommodate the growth in enrollment in anticipation of new Fort Bliss units arriving in the area as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

Wainwright Elementary, mothballed since the opening of Moye Elementary School, also will be available as an alternative site given the additional elementary students anticipated with BRAC.

The new Western Hills Elementary also will be ready to open its doors for the 2006-07 school year. Furniture will be moved in during the summer months in time for the first day of school in August.

Completed construction also includes 18 multipurpose rooms at elementary schools throughout the district and classroom additions at Putnam Elementary



and Lincoln Middle.

Fine arts facilities at Jefferson and Irvin, twin projects of sorts with similar designs, also are 100 percent complete.

Harry S. "Hut" Brown Middle School, located at Northwestern and Helen of Troy, is nearing 40 percent completion overall. The middle school will be ready for the 2007-08 school year.

The Bowie High Performing Arts Theater is taking form, as about 50 percent of the exterior masonry walls are complete. Work on the Bowie ROTC facilities is anticipated to begin after the completion of the theater.

Still on tap is the Mesita reconstruction project, awaiting additional preparation to the construction site. Construction on the new 1,000-seat performing arts theater and the 20-classroom addition at Coronado High School also are just around the corner.

With the completion of the remaining \$27 million for the replacement of the heating and cooling systems in the district, dramatic progress for the completion of the entire 2003 bond program is on the horizon.

Stay tune for details of a proposed May 2007 Bond proposal election to cover additional needs throughout the district.

Luis Villalobos is the Executive Director of Public Relations

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The summer musical theater combines the talent of high school drama, dance and music students from throughout the district. Many have gone on to pursue careers in music, theater, and dance at the university level and with community theater.

"The idea is that the students compete all year long," Gaidry said. "We felt we should work together as one school district."

Margaret Manago, a Burges High School senior-to-be, is a veteran of the summer theater having started as a fourth grader when the "Music Man" production needed three young children to fill roles. Selected for a second year to the All-State Women's Choir, Margaret's stunning voice has carried the female lead of some of the more recent summer musicals. "It's so much fun getting people to love the arts," Margaret said. "It's beautiful."

For Margaret, who portrays Madame Dubonnet, the thought of performing at a venue her parents grew up visiting and performing in is thrilling. "It gives me butterflies in my stomach," she said.

"The Boy Friend" takes place in the French Rivera during the 1920's and is a light, romantic spoof set at a finishing school for young ladies.

It features jazzy musical numbers with the cast performing period dances like the Charleston, waltz and tango.

Chapin High's Emily Clarke, who plays Maisie, describes her character as a frustrated 17-year-old living a prim and proper lifestyle. "I think this is a cool character," Emily said.

Emily, a summer musical theater first-timer, likes the concept of bringing together the talents of students from throughout the district.

"I really like the unity it brings and the notoriety it brings to theater," Emily said. "It gives theater program students a chance to shine. It's a lot of hard work but it makes you grow as a performer."

The production taps the strengths of teachers districtwide – from vocal and acting coaches, band & orchestra directors, choreographers to costuming and technical direction. This year's musical even features the talents of Burges dance teacher Irma Acosta and Franklin choir teacher Reuben Reza, who will dance the tango during the third act.

"I love to perform," Acosta said. "When (Gaidry) asked, my heart was pounding, but I thought it would be wonderful."



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