



## OVERNIGHT

### Musical miser

Several TV stars, including a scowling Kelsey Grammer, will be showcasing their musical talents Sunday night in NBC's *A Christmas Carol*. **9B**

### YOU DON'T SAY?



## Curator flying high in new job

Chris Woodul is soaring, but it's not because of the airplane ejection seats he loves to collect.

Mr. Woodul has been named the Frontiers of Flight Museum's new curator. The Dallas museum, which opened a new facility in May, features dozens of exhibits chronicling aviation history.

Mr. Woodul, a pilot who formerly restored cockpits, sees blue skies ahead in his new job with only minor turbulence.

"The phone rings constantly with people calling who want to donate things, and 100,000 square feet can fill up quickly," he said.

"I have a hard time saying no to things."

Katie Menzer

### Jacquielynn Floyd

The columnist has the day off.

### COMING SUNDAY

#### Turning her life around

A year ago, she was 16, homeless and an orphan. See how Gina Rodriguez's life has changed for the better.

### INSIDE

#### Board, ice maker in 'real dog fight'

Rife with allegations of broken promises and government abuse, a dispute between the Melissa economic development board and an ice-making company is getting ugly. **5B**

#### Man hurt in possible road rage incident

A 38-year-old man was severely injured early Thursday when he was beaten by three men on Interstate 35W in Fort Worth, police say. **7B**

#### Deportations keep Dallas officials busy

Federal customs officials in Dallas deported 26 percent more foreigners in fiscal 2004 than the previous year, one of the highest jumps among the nation's 22 field offices. **8B**

### The Dallas Morning News Charities

Total collected **\$522,326.12**  
Distributed to date **\$49,000**

The Dallas Morning News is collecting money through Jan. 31 for distribution to 21 agencies that assist the hungry and homeless in North Texas. Send your check or money order, payable to: **The Dallas Morning News Charities**, P.O. Box 910845, Dallas, Texas 75391-0845 or donate online at: [charities.DallasNews.com](http://charities.DallasNews.com)

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## For overeaters, holidays a trial

With food at every turn, sufferers cling to one another for help

By **MATT STILES**  
Staff Writer

There were no pumpkin pies or other rich desserts in the Thanksgiving feast Nancy made for her family this year.

It's not that she wasn't craving the holiday sweets.

But she's fought off urges to compulsively eat for more than five months. She couldn't risk a slip — not even to cook the

treats for others.

"All I have to do is just lick my fingers, and it starts me going," said Nancy, who's battled overeating, especially sweets, for 22 years. "There are certain things that I can eat that will give me the same feeling as alcohol or drugs."

The same temptations, often more plentiful throughout the holidays, weighed on others who attended an Overeaters Anonymous meeting on Friday at a Plano church.

They're thankful they made

See **HOLIDAY** Page 7B

## FW gains backing for river project

\$110 million approved for Trinity plan; city in search of more funds

By **JEFF MOSIER**  
Fort Worth Bureau

FORT WORTH — A plan to double the size of downtown Fort Worth and create acres of new waterfront development has cleared a major hurdle: money.

Congressional authorization this month of \$110 million for the Trinity River Vision could allow construction to start in the next

couple of years. The proposal, similar to one in Dallas, would open the river to development and create an urban waterfront.

"This takes the project a long way from abstraction to reality," said Fernando Costa, the city's planning director.

The project is not a done deal, though. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers still has to complete an impact study. A draft of that report is expected in March.

After that, the focus will be on obtaining the rest of the federal funds, which are expected to pay for about half the total \$360 mil-

lion cost. Fort Worth, Tarrant County, the Tarrant Regional Water Authority and a tax-increment financing district will pay the remainder. The TIF, which would pay \$93 million, would use additional tax dollars generated in the new downtown area to help pay for the project.

If all goes smoothly, the project could be finished in a decade.

Andy Taft, president of Downtown Fort Worth Inc., said the project could bring 10,000 new homes to downtown and attract

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## Raising chances for a longer life

Family's aid helps find cure for rare disease

By **TONY HARTZEL**  
Staff Writer

CARROLLTON — By all accounts, Ryan Dant should no longer be alive.

Instead, the 16-year-old with a rare disease has become the poster boy for a minor miracle that started in North Texas and has spread across the globe. And in the world of charity fund-raisers, he and his family have done something remarkable — they have put themselves out of business.

"Just because you know the future doesn't mean you have to accept it," said Ryan's father, Mark, who also is a lieutenant with the Carrollton Police Department.

In 1991, doctors told the Dants that their son Ryan suffered from Hurler-Scheie syndrome, which affects only several thousand children worldwide. Most die by the time they are teens.

Rather than resign themselves to that fate, the Dants took up golf.

Now 12 years after the first Ryan Foundation charity golf tournament, the family and sponsors have raised more than \$2 million. The money kept research labs open, searching for a cure.

It worked.

So far, the money and studies have almost perfected a drug and medical treatment for Ryan and hundreds of other children desperately waiting for treatment.

"In 1991, we were told what our future was going to hold. We were told what was going to happen," Lt. Dant recently told supporters at the Ryan Foundation's final fund-raiser.



LAWRENCE JENKINS/Staff Photographer

Victor Warmerdam (foreground), Ryan Dant's uncle, snaps a photo of Ryan and his aunts Barbara Warmerdam (left) and Betty Bradford at a gala on behalf of Ryan and to raise money to fight his disease, Hurler-Scheie syndrome.

*"Just because you know the future doesn't mean you have to accept it."*

Mark Dant

"You all have given us the ability to think about the future without feeling guilty."

At that crowning fund-raiser in late September, the foundation raised \$500,000, the amount needed to complete the final clinical trials for the drug treatment. Ryan will take part in those new trials next year, and his prognosis

is brighter.

At age 3, doctors diagnosed Ryan as having mucopolysaccharidosis, also known as MPS 1 or Hurler-Scheie syndrome. Ryan's body cannot produce an enzyme that helps clean out certain sugar molecules from cells, leading to damaging deposits in joints and vital organs.

Each year, the condition affects about 40 newborns nationwide. In comparison, doctors diagnose about 1,000 new cases of cystic fibrosis nationwide each year.

When two doctors, a social worker and a geneticist broke the news to the Dants in 1991,

See **FUND-RAISERS** Page 4B



VERNON BRYAN/Staff Photographer

Occupational therapist Amy Lake wraps a brace around Ryan Dant's hand at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

## In Plano, mailboxes to stay, sidewalks to move

City plans to make concrete slabs wider to help pedestrians

By **LEE POWELL**  
Collin County Bureau

PLANO — There's the one about the fork in the road ...

So what about a mailbox in the middle of the sidewalk?

In some Plano neighborhoods, replacement sidewalks have been poured around freestanding mailboxes close to the curb.

Nice for the mailman but tough going if you're using the sidewalk for, say, walking, as was pointed out to Plano City Council members recently after a sidewalk rehab in an eastside neighborhood.

The U.S. Postal Service regulates where mailboxes should go on urban streets.

That means boxes stay put. Future sidewalk pours will try to create obstacle-free walkways — at least 36 inches wide around in-sidewalk mailboxes, the city says.

Existing slabs with protruding boxes will be remade with a curve here or there, making them more navigable.

"We're going to eliminate this problem," said Jim Foster, Plano's public works director.

First up are several areas of eastern Plano. The city says what's done in front of one house will be done all along a particular block, to keep up appearances.

A city inventory found almost 800 homes with mailboxes in sidewalks. It will cost more than \$100,000 to fix the problem city-wide, officials say.

City Council members say the retrofit deserves some bucks.

"I think the cost is not unrea-



JUAN GARCIA/Staff Photographer

Mailboxes are positioned for letter carriers, not walkers.

sonable," said Mayor Pro Tem Shep Stahel.

Other parts of Plano come with user-friendlier sidewalks, where grassy parkways separate curb from concrete path, providing a convenient space for mailboxes.

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## Twins' DNA is at root of slaying case

Identical material could complicate brother's murder trial

By **ROBERT THARP**  
Staff Writer

As twins, Shannon and Brandon Haynes maintain an uncanny likeness, and for police and prosecutors, that's part of the problem as the trial in the death of Leon Martin Jr. approaches.

Prosecutors charge that Shannon Haynes shot Mr. Martin, 26, in a stairwell outside a northeast Dallas apartment building in April 2002.

The case balances on an eyewitness who told police that the 23-year-old brothers had been together the night of the shooting and that Shannon Haynes was the

one who fired the deadly gunshot.

But that witness had also spent the evening hanging out outside the apartment, passing around a gin bottle before the single gunshot was fired, striking Mr. Martin in the head, according to court records.

With any other case, DNA evidence recovered from the crime scene might help support such a potentially sketchy witness account. But besides their similar appearances, identical twins share the same DNA. Fraternal twins are products of two fertilized eggs and have a different assortment of genes, but identical twins come from the same egg and are the only people in the world with identical DNA.

Prosecutors have obtained a

See **DNA** Page 7B



**EAGLE SCOUTS**

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. To earn the honor, Scouts must complete a community service project and other requirements. These youths have earned the honor.

**Jonathan A. Backof**

Jonathan, 17, designed and coordinated the installation of a prayer garden in the courtyard between Prestonwood Christian Academy and Prestonwood Baptist Church. He is a member of Troop 1077, a senior at Prestonwood Christian Academy and the son of Marsha and Alan Backof of Plano.



**Alex Jackson**

Alex, 18, restriped the outside gymnasium at Brentfield Elementary School in Dallas. He is a member of Troop 1077, a senior at J.J. Pearce High School and the son of Dede and Jerry Jackson of Dallas.



**Calvin Marston**

Calvin, 19, built a large supply cabinet for the after-school camp at Neighborhood Service Council. He is a member of Troop 1077, a freshman at Baylor University and the son of Nancy and Walt Marston of Dallas.



**Justin Snasel**

Justin, 18, designed and built a privacy fence for First Presbyterian Church in Richardson. He is a member of Troop 1077, a senior at J.J. Pearce High School and the son of Marcia and Mark Snasel of Dallas.



News about Eagle Scout or Girl Scout Award recipients should be mailed to Holly Warren at The Dallas Morning News, Communications Center, P.O. Box 655237, Dallas, Texas 75265. Please include the student's name, age and birth date, troop number, school and grade, a brief description of the project, parents' names, a mailing address, day and evening phone numbers, and a nonreturnable photo. Announcements appear in the order received, and all information is verified verbally before publication.

# Fund-raisers help find cure for disease

Continued from Page 1B

they said Ryan probably would not live past age 15. Until then, the disease almost always proved fatal.

Lt. Dant immediately set aside his hopes and dreams for his son: helping Ryan get his first car, seeing him graduate from high school and go to college, watching him get married and have children.

"That all went away. But now it has all come back," he said. "The cool part about it is we get to be Mom and Dad again."

That means more focus on schoolwork. Ryan used to get some leeway on his homework. Household chores also slipped on occasion as the Dants tried to keep things in perspective and provide Ryan a normal life.

Since the first fund-raiser in 1993, Ryan has grown accustomed to being the center of attention, both at galas and in the world of obscure medical research. At school, however, the Hebron High School sophomore prefers to blend in. He manages the wrestling team. He also prefers not to tell his classmates about his condition.

"I don't tell them because they would treat me differently," he said, adding that only some classmates and the wrestling team know about his disease. "I can be like a regular guy with the wrestlers."

Ryan has come a long way in the 6½ years since he began receiving weekly infusions of en-

zyme therapy. He has grown 15 inches and added 78 pounds since then, unremarkable numbers for a typical teen but astounding growth for someone with Hurler-Scheie syndrome.

"Before, I could pick him out among the crowd of kids when school let out," said Lt. Dant. "He was the little tiny guy with the limp. Now I can't find him [without the limp]."

Ryan has endured nine surgeries, including a hernia procedure and carpal tunnel surgery on both wrists. Most of the procedures occurred before he was 10.

Last month, Ryan underwent what could be the final surgical procedure he will require for a long time. Living with the disease caused his fingers to curl inward — a classic sign of his condition. To fix his hands, doctors had to break each finger and insert a series of metal pins that fused his fingers at the first knuckle. By fusing the knuckles, the fingers remain straight and give him more use of his hands.

"I can still throw a perfect spiral," he said shortly before a surgeon at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children removed the final collection of two-inch pins from fingers on his right hand.

Ryan still faces huge hurdles as he grows bigger and older. The enzyme treatment costs about \$300,000 a year, a figure based on Ryan's 131-pound weight. With every new pound, the cost will rise. Lt. Dant's insurance will cover Ryan only through college.

As Ryan gets older, his heart



Photos by VERNON BRYANT/Staff Photographer  
**Ryan Dant checks himself out in a mirror during a fitting for a tuxedo at AI's Formalwear in Lewisville. Fund-raisers have made Ryan grow accustomed to being the center of attention.**

may suffer the only serious side effects from the disease. His heart valves, damaged before he started receiving medication, may have to be replaced.

The weight of living under the constant scrutiny of doctors has worn on the polite, affable teenager.

"I want to get this doctor stuff over with," said Ryan, who estimates that he has visited the hospital 100 times or more.

At school, Ryan mixes well with the hundreds of other students in his class.

"I'm not the shortest one in school now," he said.

But it is as manager of the wrestling team in which Ryan has found a home. He travels with the team to matches. He stays after school for their practices. He

even earned a letter jacket last year.

"I'm proud of that letter jacket," he said.

The next big step involves ensuring that Ryan and other Hurler-Scheie patients get the medicine to the brain, something that a home-based IV treatment cannot do. Ryan and others with the disease will need an occasional spinal tap to get the missing enzyme.

Clinical trials will start soon on the brain treatment, said Dr. Emil Kakkis, the senior vice president of BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc., who researched and perfected the treatment while at the Harbor-University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center. Starting sometime next year, Ryan will begin getting spinal

taps every month to six months.

"The Dants were an incredible inspiration," said Dr. Kakkis, whose research would have stopped without the Ryan Foundation funds he received in the early years.

Many people are pulling for Ryan, including notable golf club maker Barney Adams, founder of Adams Golf. He signed on to support Ryan's cause when his business was still growing, and his success has mirrored that of the Ryan Foundation.

"The odds were impossible. Here was a guy facing the longest of odds," Mr. Adams said while celebrating with the Dants at their final fund-raiser. "How many things end like this?"

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**In 1991, the parents of Ryan Dant, now 16, were told their son probably would not live past age 15.**

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