

Portraits of Love Project aims to send 10,000 free family portraits to deployed soldiers this holiday season

Local photographer among volunteers

Special the Chronicle-News

OLD BRIDGE, N.J. – The PhotoImaging Manufacturers and Distributors Association (PMDA) along with Soldiers' Angels, a grassroots volunteer organization, revealed today the Portraits of Love Project, a volunteer effort aimed at sending family portraits to soldiers around the globe this holiday season.

Designed to help bring a piece of home to soldiers around the world, the project is utilizing the talents of over 150 volunteer photographers across the country who are opening their studios this September, to offer free family portraits to military family members who have a soldier deployed overseas. The portraits will be uploaded to a website, www.pmdaportraitslove.com, and a print will be sent, free of charge, directly to the soldier in Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever they are deployed around the world. The website was developed by Fujifilm, a PMDA member who has underwritten this effort; and SeeHere.com from Fujifilm is supplying the free prints to the soldiers and their families. The goal of the project is to send 10,000 free family portraits during the month of September.

"This project is the photo industry's way of giving back to our soldiers, and thanking them for the sacrifices they have made for our country," said Jerry Grossman, the president of the PMDA who has spearheaded the effort. "Our industry is uniquely qualified to bring an important piece of home to our soldiers, and we're pleased to be able to organize this effort."

"It's incredible how motivating a simple family photograph can be to a soldier who is far from home," said Sergeant First Class Toby Nunn, who has

served two tours in Iraq and has worked with Soldiers Angels on a number of projects. "This volunteer effort is one more way that we can help our soldiers cope with their situation," he said.

As part of this project, Michelle Goodall of A Lock in Time Photography has volunteered her time during the month of September to take professional family portraits of soldier's families. Military family members call them at 719-859-0175, or email at windrider86@comcast.net at to make an appointment. You will have to show a valid military ID to be eligible for this offer.

About PMDA
Founded in 1939, the PhotoImaging Manufacturers and Distributors Association (PMDA) has promoted the photo industry for over 70 years with an emphasis on photo imaging manufacturers and distributors. PMDA provides an open forum for its members to exchange ideas and learn new technologies and business trends, in addition to administering programs that promote photography to the general public. The member companies of PMDA have a box seat on the changing product and business developments of the photo industry and a unique opportunity to network with other industry principals and managers in the receptions preceding each meeting and special event. PMDA has also teamed up with the Photo Marketing Association to create the Photographic Information Council (PIC) to promote photography to the general public. PIC's website (www.takegreatpictures.com) provides great photo tips and techniques, celebrity photographers, contests, new product releases and projects. See PMDA's site, www.pmda.com, for more information.



Children swung rubber mallets onto levered 2x4s to propel water-filled rubber chickens through the air, aiming for water-filled buckets in the street.



Photos by Tim Keller

Clayton Mayor Jack Chosvig spent Saturday pulling trainloads of youngsters.



Event organizer and Herzstein Memorial Museum director Victoria Baker poses for pictures with Civil War re-enactors at Clayton's Old West Days Saturday.



Musicians jammed and sang all day. From left, Western Swing Music Hall of Fame member Eloy Gonzales, Dalhart guitarist Nick Cooper, and Clayton fiddler J.M. Cates.

Clayton's Old West Days come to life

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

CLAYTON – Around Clayton on Saturday afternoon, it appeared that anyone not hunting an antelope was walking around downtown enjoying the town's first Old West Days. With vendors coming from as far as Amarillo, Texas, and Elkhart, Kansas, two dozen booths drew the hungry and the thirsty, with sales boosted by the 97-degree temperature that seemed to have no impact on attendance at the popular event.

Like spokes radiating from the intersection of Walnut and Second Street — the location of the event's sponsor, the Herzstein Memorial Museum — the street fair stretched a block in each of four directions, the streets blocked from traffic and filled with demonstrations, games, rides, vendors, and milling people.

Most civic events of this size and nature take a year, or years, of planning before they're launched; this one took six weeks. According to Herzstein Memorial Museum director Victoria Baker, board member Fred Balmer pushed for a museum fundraiser, but the only summer Saturday he had available was August 22. Baker jumped right in and spent the intervening weeks making countless visits and phone calls, attending meetings, and pulling together a surprisingly successful first event. In fact, she and her fellow organizers are now referring to Saturday's Old West Days as the first annual.

The most popular single attraction was the "train ride," with Mayor Jack Chosvig serving as engineer atop his 22.5hp Craftsman riding mower pulling nine "cars," each seating one to three delighted children. Chosvig's train spent the

entire day slowly snaking through the streets, often filled to capacity with pint-size passengers. When Chosvig took a five-minute break to go get a soft drink in the shade, children kept lining up at the train, bashfully asking a nearby photographer if they could ride the train.

Acknowledging that the economic downturn has finally hit Clayton hard, Chosvig said the Old West Days was a great boon to the town. "We have a lot of civic organizations," he said. "Here today, we can pull together, all the various organizations, and work together." He named five participating groups and anticipated that next year's second annual event will gather even more participation.

Along with Civil War re-enactors, horse-drawn wagon rides, and longhorn cattle, the public was entertained

throughout the day by a pick-up band of musicians led by local legend Eloy Gonzales. Arrayed along a fifth-wheel flatbed trailer under the shade of elm trees, the musicians took turns singing standards such as "On the Wings of a Dove", "Release Me", "Living on Tulsa Time", and "Johnny B. Goode." Across the street, the Herzstein Museum displays included early photographs of Gonzales during a long career that has included induction into the Western Swing Music Hall of Fame in Sacramento, California.

Saturday's Old West Days was an impressive beginning for an event that promises to build a long history, in a town that knows a thing or two about building history. The Herzstein Memorial Museum, and the Town of Clayton, had a proud day Saturday.

Residential utility customers may see large rate hikes

Continued from page 1

He cited council figures showing that the average Trinidad residential customer who uses 600 kilowatts of electricity a month would see around a \$6.20 increase in their bills based on an approximate 11.5 percent recommended monthly bill increase while heavy users of 1,000 kilowatts a month would see a bill increase of around \$15. Based on the proposed increases, his department could realize a \$237,000 annual increase in revenue from residential customers alone.

Commercial customer rates would see a smaller percentage incremental increase. The city is also looking at having to pay double the current rate to keep its neighborhood security streetlights running all night. Some of those lights might have to be turned off without a rate adjustment, he said. And one of Trinidad's substations is going to need a major upgrade-expansion in the next couple of years, Brunelli noted.

The problem with that scenario is the city is already experiencing significant problems getting its residential customers to pay their utility bills on time. City Finance Manager Rose Blatnik noted at Tuesday's meeting that some 34 to 37 percent of residential customers are delinquent in payment of bills.

City councilman John Rino added that the biggest complaint he hears from residents is outrage over what they consider already high electric and water bills.

Under the proposed rate hike, the city would also urge its 116 electric water heater customers to convert to using much cheaper natural gas heaters.

Brunelli said he believes there are no other options aside from trying to find further reductions in departmental operating costs, noting that \$5 million of his \$7 million annual budget is used just to purchase electrical power, while the remaining \$2 million pays for equipment, maintenance, salaries and capital improve-

ments. "If we don't change our rates, the city is going to have to live off its cash reserves and those could be quickly depleted."

In other business discussed during the work session Tuesday it was noted that the city needs to decide on a new agreement with the county to pay what it considers a more equitable share of operating costs at the Garcia Justice Center. The city currently pays a little over \$5 per square foot of occupancy for its police department in the justice center and would like a rate considerably less than that or a different way of configuring its space usage, according to City Manager Jim Soltis. He noted the city is also facing a \$43,000 increase in its share of utility usage in the building. Police Chief Charles Glorioso also expressed building utilization concerns about the current conditions for his department. "We're running out of space there," he said. "We need a lot more than we have."

Some discussion focused on whether a department move to another city location would be economically feasible, but council indicated it wants to explore other options first.

Councilwoman Jennie Garduno announced her resignation from her seat on council, effective Tuesday, in order to conform to the city charter requiring such action so she can run for mayor in the November election. Garduno said she has always tried to serve in the best interests of the community during her six years in office.

Soltis also asked council to consider a letter of support for the county health service district in their current attempt and offer to purchase Trinidad State Nursing Home from the state. And he has received a reply from the Colorado Department of Corrections, which basically supports the addition of a water tap to Perry Stokes Airport if all parties meet certain specific stipulations. He said the U.S. Army has not given any indication of its support yet.



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