

Actress Gilbert to speak at fund-raiser

◆ STATE NEWS ROUNDUP

■ Melissa Gilbert of 'Little House' fame will be featured at the event, put on to benefit the Centers for Children and Families.

By Ginger Pope
Odessa American

From the Prairie to the Basin, Melissa Gilbert of "Little House on the Prairie" fame will speak at a Centers for Children and Families' fund-raiser.

This is the third year the Centers for Children and Families has put on its "An Evening With ..." event. Thursday's event will also feature local celebrity waiters who will serve up desserts and coffee.

Gilbert will speak at the Midland Center and cover a little bit of everything.

"At least so that people will understand why I'm here," she said Friday in a telephone interview. "I'm honored they asked me to do it."

Gilbert said she checked out the Centers for Children and Families before agreeing to speak.

"I actually went on to their Web site. I was impressed with

"... One of the greatest things a parent can say is 'I don't know' — and find help."

Melissa Gilbert
ACTRESS



the work that they do," she said. "I'm such a believer in a place to get therapy."

Gilbert, a mother to two sons, ages 8 and 15, and two stepsons, ages 18 and 24, said family is important to her. She sets limits as to how much time she spends working, whether it be as president of the Screen Actors' Guild or working on a movie.

"It's important to be there for the kids," she said.

Being a mother has not been without challenges. Gilbert's youngest son with husband Bruce Boxleitner was born two months prematurely. She said he was very sick as a newborn and has battled a weak immune system and some attention deficit issues.

Even without health problems, Gilbert said children and families face nearly insurmountable challenges in today's world. She said the Centers for Children and Families is a great source people can turn to.

"I don't think there's any-

thing even close to a perfect parent," she said. "None of us set out to mess up our kids' lives. You can read all the books you want and still you never know what's coming up."

Gilbert cited the Sept. 11 attacks as just one example of a more confusing world families live in.

"We live in a very complicated society and one of the greatest things a parent can say is 'I don't know' — and find help," she said.

Gilbert said this will not be her first time in Texas. In 1984, at the age of 20, Gilbert shot a movie in Marfa and spent about two months in the Alpine area.

The movie was "Sylvester" and was the first time the actress was on a set shooting a film without her mother's presence.

Gilbert, who was adopted, began performing at the age of 2. Her father, Paul Gilbert, was a stand-up comic, and at a young age she would travel with him and was soon looking for the spotlight onstage.

If You Go ...

What: "An Evening With Melissa Gilbert"
When: Thursday with a silent auction at 6 p.m.
Where: Midland Center
Cost: \$35 per person and \$300 a table. Tickets are available by calling 570-1084 or 580-7006 or at the Midland Centers for Families and Children, 1004 North Big Spring St., or the Odessa Centers' office at 835 Tower Drive, Ste No. 1. Tickets are also sold at Cavender's Boot City in Midland.

CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Was established in 1957 and serves all of the Permian Basin, with offices in Odessa, Midland and Abilene.
- Their post adoption program serves 60 counties providing counseling, parent training and support groups.
- Has five programs: counseling to anyone aged 3 or older, parenting classes "Parent Education," Kids First, a visitation program for noncustodial parents, and PALS, or Preparation for Adult Living.

■ ODESSA AMERICAN

Gilbert said performing gives her a chance to get under a character's skin, travel and make great friends.

"That's my passion, my outlet, and it's very fulfilling to me," she said.

Gilbert just finished filming "Heart of the Storm" in New Orleans. She said it is a psychological thriller about a woman and her daughters being held hostage during a hurricane. She does not know yet whether the movie will be

released for television or in theaters.

Megan Doerfner, Centers for Children and Families director of marketing and development, said "An Evening With ..." is the center's largest fund-raiser each year.

Previous speakers were Henry Winkler and Lisa Welch.

Doerfner said the center sought out Gilbert because of her adoption story and her commitment to family values.

Officials OK North Texas rail plan

IRVING (AP) — Dozens of North Texas leaders have agreed to a formal plan to build a six-county regional rail network stretching from Denton to Waxahachie and McKinney to Cleburne.

Now the leaders must sell the plan, agreed on Friday, to state lawmakers and ultimately to voters. The \$3.5 billion, 260-mile commuter rail blueprint would require a half-cent sales tax increase.

Former coach is in more hot water

FORT WORTH (AP) — A nationally recognized diving coach accused of molesting a 12-year-old boy is facing additional charges that he tried to sexually assault another child.

Wirt Norris, a judge at the 1976 Olympics, was indicted Friday on charges that he tried to molest an 11-year-old boy at least three times in 1987 at his Eagle Mountain Lake home.

The boy, now 27, watched pornography with Norris but thwarted an attempt at oral sex, according to the indictment.

Norris, 76, was charged with one count of attempted aggravated sexual assault of a child and two counts of attempted indecency with a child.

ECISD school board to adopt new budget

By Ginger Pope
Odessa American

Several ECISD teachers expect to be at Tuesday's School Board meeting to cheer on the approval of a teacher pay raise.

The 2004-'05 proposed school budget includes a pay increase for teachers of more than \$4 million and a total of \$800,000 in pay increases for other ECISD employees.

The Ector County Independent School District School Board will have a public hearing on the budget at 5:30 p.m. The board is then scheduled to adopt the budget during the 7 p.m. meeting in the ECISD Board Room at 802 North Sam Houston Ave.

Permian High School teacher Terrie Reed said she expects a few teachers to be at Tuesday's meeting.

"We hope that once they vote and announce the pay raise we can give them some applause," she said. "We feel like the board is anxious to work with us."

Reed, who is president of the local chapter of the Texas State Teachers Association, said she and other teachers are encouraging all teachers to be there Tuesday. She said teacher morale seems to be good for the start of the year.

"Everything is looking so positive," she said. "We've got some opportunities here we've never had before. We hope we can repay (the board) by upping the quality of teaching."

The teacher pay increase will balance out the current pay schedule and create more equality between the years of experience for each teacher. That will cost about \$3.5 million.

Bruce Revell, ECISD executive director for finance, said another \$1 million will be used for one-time stipends. In balancing the teacher pay schedule, to get rid of the "swag," some teachers would receive only a \$5 pay raise. The stipends will go to these teachers to give them more than just a \$5 pay raise.

The proposed budget also includes \$1 million for the purchasing of about 14 to 15 buses, Revell said. The district will be purchasing buses with air-conditioning.

Revell said that despite the district advertising a property tax rate of \$1.45 per \$100 valuation, the district now is looking at a tax rate of \$1.43 per \$100 valuation.

The current tax rate is \$1.50 per \$100 valuation.

Because of increased property valuations in Ector County, Revell said, a tax rate of \$1.43 is sufficient to operate the budget he has proposed.

A public hearing for the proposed tax rate will be in September.

Board members were first presented with the proposed budget on July 28.

For Tuesday's meeting, Revell said he will give a brief overview of the budget.

"I'm just going to present the meat and potatoes — major increases and the functions of the budget," he said.

Seeing Well Is The Magic of Learning
DR. EARL T. GRAYSON
Therapeutic Optometrist
EYE EXAMS FOR GLASSES & CONTACT LENSES

- Comprehensive Eye Health Evaluation
- Treatment Of Eye Infections & Minor Eye Injuries
- Consultation & Follow Up Care For Laser & Cataract Surgery
- Glaucoma Testing

Walk-in Patients Welcome
Se Habla Español
368-4102 4214 JBS Parkway • ODESSA
WAL-MART SUPERCENTER BLDG.

The Doctor is In!
No Waiting!
Walk-Ins Welcome!
Dr. Barrett Whitefield
FAMILY PRACTICE
School Physicals, Texas Health Steps
6110 Eastridge Odessa
362-8766
Metro: 550-7423

ONE NIGHT ONLY
Monday Aug 16
DOORS OPEN AT 8:00pm
MEMORIAL CONCERT
Place:
310 W. 42nd St. Odessa, Texas
550-5456

We may still be in diapers when it comes to our e-commerce... but we know how to count!
ODESSA AMERICAN
Link up your business with oama.com

Tickets: \$35
Tables for 10: \$300
For tickets, call 432-570-1084 or go by Cavenders Boot City in Midland
Centers Children & Families
August 19, 2004
The Midland Center
Doors Open 6 p.m..
Buy Tickets Now! Expecting a Sold-Out Venue!

An Evening With Melissa Gilbert
Melissa Gilbert, former star of TV's "Little House on the Prairie," will speak on behalf of Centers for Children & Families.
August 19, 2004, at The Midland Center.

Mike McGarrity Chevrolet
Steve and Nancy Shaw
Odessa American
Look forward to Odessa American's Pat Canty as Celebrity Waiter

Midland Reporter-Telegram
Arcadis
Midland Memorial Hospital
The Bosworth Company
Pure Resources
Saubhary Industries
InWest Pension Management
Goodpasture, LTD
All American Auto Group

The WEIGHT is over! Health & Fitness for You and Your Lifestyle!
Slender Lady of Odessa
Coming Soon
to
Santa Fe Square • 3952 E. 42nd • Suite J
One-on-One Weight Management & Lifestyle Guidance!
Circuit Training - Burns Up To 650 Calories Per Workout!
Lose Up To 24 Pounds in 12 Weeks!
The Shape of things to come!
Get the SKINNY at (432) 362-8883

In our continuing effort to serve you better, we've chosen a new location.
ODESSA INTERNAL MEDICINE ASSOCIATES
JOHN DORAN, M.D., DANIEL O'HEARN, M.D., JOSEPH SHAYEB, M.D., JOHN WHITTEN, M.D. & Y. SURENDRA, M.D.
We will now be located on the third floor of the Dr. Wheatly Stewart Medical Pavilion across from Medical Center Hospital.
Our office will closed at noon on August 26th through August 27th but we will be open for patients on August 30th.
ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS AGES 16 AND OVER.
OFFICE HOURS 8:00 A.M. TILL 5:00 P.M. - MONDAY - FRIDAY
PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
oima ODESSA INTERNAL MEDICINE ASSOCIATES
540 W. 5TH • SUITE 300 • ODESSA, TEXAS 79761 • (432)-337-5411