

Coach stressing swimming experience

Instruction focuses on quality-of-life issues.

By **AMANDA REIMHERR**
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

For lifelong swimmer Mary Reilly-Magee, swimming is much more than a sport — it is a major part of her life.

Through her business, Love to Swim School, Reilly-Magee strives to teach people from 6 months of age on up how to improve their quality of life by learning to swim.

"I feel so sad for people who do not know how to swim. It is a quality-of-life issue," she said. "I have met people who have gone to the Caribbean or on their honeymoon and not been able to get in the water.

"I like to teach everybody," she added. "I am passionate about it because it is the only sport that can save your life. I think everyone should be able to swim well."

The school does not aim to turn out competitive or professional swimmers, but rather has the goal of teaching children and adults appropriate swimming techniques.

Reilly-Magee is a former competitive swimmer as well as a certified lifeguard and swim instructor. She coached the Holmes High School swim team for five years. She started Love to Swim through developing an adult program for Northside Aquatics Center. As the program grew, she expanded it to all age groups and kept outgrowing her teaching locations.

After several years of renting community and athletic club pools, Love to Swim will open a permanent location this month at 15502 Huebner Road, Suite 111, at the corner of Churchill Estates Boulevard.

"Now I will be able to provide a better learning environment because I can control the air and water temperature as well as the general environment," said Reilly-Magee, a member of the U.S. Swim School Association. "Once you know what to do, everything from the family pool to boating becomes more fun and enjoyable."

The programs strive to make swimming fun by creating a positive experience in the water. Love to Swim focuses on logical progression, safety, proper stroke technique bal-



Mary Reilly-Magee (center) gives instruction to Shaina Miller (from left), Bridget Ortega, Kris Pequeño and Samantha Dralle during the inaugural instructor training program at her Love to Swim School.



Mary Reilly-Magee (second from right) oversees a training session at her Love to Swim School as teacher Phyllis Mebane-Moses (left) works with pre-schoolers.

ance, breathing control and the physics of the body in water. However, if a child decides to pursue swimming competitively, Reilly-Magee will refer families to local swim teams.

"We build a trusting relationship with our students. Once we get past the fear of the water, amazing things can happen," said Reilly-Magee.

Phyllis Mebane-Moses, a former student in the adult class, now is the

aquatics director for Love to Swim. Her son Elijah, 8, participated in the school-age program.

"I was not afraid of the water, but I did not know strokes," Mebane-Moses said. "I like Mary's method of how she focuses on the mastery of all the skills. The program works, and even if I didn't work for her I would be a big fan of her program because I saw it work for me and my son."

She added: "It is so comforting to me to know my kid is water-safe. My son was the fearless kind of kid that would jump into a body of water and not think that it could be dangerous. Now he has the skills from the program to maintain himself, know the dangers and how to protect himself. I don't have to worry about him as much when we are near water because I know he knows what to do."

Love to Swim offers baby and parent, preschool, school-age and adult programs. Reilly-Magee said she is trying to develop special-needs and aqua-aerobics programs as well. For details, call (210) 492-2606.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Symphony plans 5K run/walk

The San Antonio Symphony League is sponsoring its annual Symphony 5K Run/Walk at 9 a.m. Feb. 18 at Pavilion 2 in McAllister Park. Proceeds will benefit the symphony's educational programs, Young People's Concerts and Paint to Music.

Cost to participate is \$12 before Feb. 10 or \$15 thereafter.

For more information, call (210) 735-8037 or (210) 344-8910.

Alamo City Soccer holding registration

The Alamo City Youth Soccer Organization will hold registration for boys and girls ages 4-18 for the spring season.

Registration will be held at Rudder Middle School 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday and Jan. 14 and 2-5 p.m. Jan. 15.

For more information, access the Web site at www.acyso.org or call (210) 647-1019.

Barrel race event scheduled Jan. 13

The Alamo Winter Circuit Barrel Race, an American Quarter Horse Association-approved special event, will be held Jan. 13 at the San Antonio Rose Palace.

For more information about the event, call (210) 923-1111 or visit the association Web site at www.aqha.com.

Training planned for baseball umpires

The San Antonio chapter of TASO is seeking high school baseball umpires 18 years or older.

Umpire class starts at 7 p.m. Jan. 11.

Cost is \$47.

For more information, call (210) 945-8260 or e-mail pparis@satx.rr.com.

Sharpshooters holding boys' tryouts

The San Antonio Sharpshooters team is conducting tryouts for boys of all ages who are interested in playing in competitive basketball tournaments.

For more information, call (210) 481-0073.

Send sports briefs for Northwest Neighbors to P.O. Box 2171, San Antonio, TX 78297-2171; e-mail to neighbors@express-news.net; or fax to (210) 250-3305. Deadline is 5 p.m. Tuesday one week before publication.

Linear-park plans for upper Salado Creek outlined by city

By **NICOLE LESSIN**
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

Although security and accessibility are on their minds, homeowners with property near the upper Salado Creek are remaining cautiously enthusiastic about plans to create a linear park along the waterway from Huebner Road to Blanco Road.

"I'm in support of it — once questions get answered," said resident Ray McDonald after a recent presentation from the Parks and Recreation Department.

Parks Department employees and members of the landscape-architecture firm Rehler Vaughn & Koone Inc., also known as RVK, were at the Cody Branch Library on Dec. 14 to present studies on the trail — and to elicit suggestions from residents.

The park will be the first such initiative using the 1/8-cent sales tax approved by voters in May to create 36 miles of linear parks for Leon and Salado creeks and the Medina and San Antonio rivers, officials said.

Construction on this 2-mile stretch of the park is planned for this spring and is expected to be finished by early 2007, park officials said.

"I think maintaining the entire space is going to take some volunteer assistance."

PAUL JOHNSON
city landscape architect

The project currently is in the design phase.

At the meeting, Timothy Packard, an administrative sergeant with the San Antonio Parks Police, assured residents that his department has a plan to provide security for the new areas.

With every 5.66 miles of new trail added, another officer will be dedicated to the parks, Packard said.

"A new officer will assigned to do nothing else but patrol trails," he said. "We'll increase our manpower to match the patrol needs."

Paul Radlet, a landscape designer with RVK, said the design considerations the firm is working with include safety and security, alternative transportation, neighborhood connection, public recreation, storm water and flood management, and environmental conservation.

Residents also asked how the city plans to deal with garbage generated by users.

"I think maintaining the entire space is going to take some volunteer assistance," said Paul Johnson, a landscape architect with the Parks Department. "We need to determine what is a visible corridor that we can maintain."

But residents most commonly wanted to know about access to and from the park.

"Is there going to be a walking trail directly behind our fence?" asked resident Linda Donowho, whose property directly abuts the creek.

Officials assured residents the project still was early in the design process and all their concerns would be considered.

Not everyone, however, was worried about the influx of visitors that the project would bring.

"I'm really happy this is happening," said Randy Hohlaus, another resident. "There are groups of kids right behind my fence line. I hear people. It doesn't threaten me."

Another meeting will be held in February. For more information, call Johnson at (210) 207-8466.

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Park is a haven amid development

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"In the Great Northwest area, you're looking at an area where you have nothing but development and cars going through, but here, you can find a little piece of peace," she said.

"It's an opportunity for peace, the opportunity to exercise in a safe environment; it's the preservation of land, especially in an area that's growing at an exponential speed; and it's (turning

a flood-zone area into something everybody can enjoy."

The park was funded with 1999 and 2003 park bonds and a \$100,000 Texas Parks & Wildlife Trail Grant.

"In that area of District 6, there were no parks at all before the last couple of bond issues," Stover noted.

"The reports I'm getting from people that live out there is that the parking lots are full. And according to them, hundreds of

people are using it every day."

It's already routine for Jesse Garcia to take his neighbor's son, Andres Avila, to the park every Friday. The 6-year-old runs down the trails, making up stories about things he sees, Garcia said.

"The good thing about this area is that the kids can use their minds and be so creative," he said. "It's good for them."

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BUSINESS NEWS

■ The Kronkosky Foundation has matched the \$10,000 that San Anto Cultural Arts raised through various contributions.

■ Broadway Bank has hired Sara Saldana as market manager/assistant vice president

for its West Commerce Street banking center.

■ St. Luke's Lutheran Health Ministries Inc. has awarded a \$10,000 grant to AVANCE Inc. The grant will be used to enhance the children's health por-

tion of AVANCE's Parent-Child Education Program.

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