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Daily Herald

 dailyherald.com

Sunday, June 22, 2008

PADDOCK PUBLICATIONS • 136TH YEAR • No. 252 • NINE SECTIONS \$1.50

Villa Park Summerfest aims to be 'big town picnic' for all

BY ANN PICCININNI

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Eighth-grade buddies Jordan Rieser and Paul Dahmer watched kids bounce two stories high on the Euro Bungee ride at Villa Park's Summerfest Saturday as they waited in line for their turn.

"It's awesome," said Jordan, watching a youngster's feet hit the trampoline surface. She rocketed upward, then made her descent, slowed by a tangle of bungee cords. "You can jump high on it."

"It just plain looks fun," said Paul.

"You and me have got to go to the top of that thing," said Jordan to his friend.

Paul needed no persuasion.

"Yeah, I'm going, I'm going," he said.

The two Villa Park boys had earlier witnessed the wheeled, aerial acrobatics on display by skateboard demonstrators at the downtown summer festival, both saying they were impressed.

Paulina Jimenez, chairman of the Villa Park Skatepark Committee, a coalition of community members and village officials, watched as skateboarders swooped down inclines and jumped up on rails to onlookers' delight.

"Right now, we have a skate park, but it's in really bad shape," Jimenez said, adding that plans are in the works for the construction of a new one.

Ardmore Avenue and Park Boulevard was closed to traffic for the one-day festival, back for its third summer after a long hiatus. The festival also offered booths featuring representatives from area businesses and organizations, 16 craft vendors and a selection of food served up by local restaurants.

"We really try to make it about community pride," said Jean Taylor, chairwoman of the Summerfest Commission. "Everybody here's a volunteer. Our food vendors are all local. We try to make it a family event and affordable."

"We also wanted to show-



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Five-year-old Jenna Meola of Lombard rides the Euro Bungee on Saturday during the Villa Park Summerfest.

"That little sprinkle — nobody was worried."

Jean Taylor, chairwoman of the Summerfest Commission, on the brief morning shower

case all the different organizations in Villa Park. We only let in Villa Park businesses for the business fair. It's a lot like a big town picnic," said Summerfest volunteer Jill Kelly.

As a live rock band played in the gazebo and a few dancers took to the street in the shade of a tent packed with dining tables and chairs,

while others ventured into the beer garden.

By noon, the sun had soaked up most of the evidence of a brief rainy Saturday morning downpour.

"We all knew it was passing," said Taylor, who recalled that last year's festival endured rain until early afternoon.

"That little sprinkle — nobody was worried."