

Out & About

Today

Sunflower maze — Lyman Orchards, at 33 Reeds Gap Road in Middlefield, opens its fifth annual Sunflower maze in the shape of a butterfly. Proceeds from admission will be go to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. For information, call (860) 349-1793.

North Haven Fair — The annual fair on Route 5 in North Haven will offer rides, food, entertainment and more daily through Sunday. Hours are 5 to 10 p.m. today, 3 to 11 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. For information, visit www.northhaven-fair.com.

Auction and dinner — The Meriden Boys and Girls Club will host its annual auction and dinner at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington beginning at 5 p.m. Tickets include dinner and open bar. For information, call (203) 235-8185.

Friday

Farmers market — A farmers market takes place from 3 to 6 p.m. Fridays in the grassy field next to 1003 S. Main St. in Southington. Each week features a different artist, entertainer or civic organization.

Square dance — Durham Cugin-Chuggers and Cheshire Cats Square Dance Club will merge with a kick-off dance from 8 to 10:30 p.m. Friday at the Brewster School on Tuttle Road in Durham. Admission will be charged. For information, call (203) 272-7463 or (860) 349-8084.

Paint party — The XL Center, at 1 Civic Center Plaza in Hartford, will host Dayglow, a one-of-a-kind experience that fuses high-energy music, art, dance and paint into one show. The show runs at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information and tickets call (860) 249-6333.

Folk festival — Edgerton Park, at Whitney Avenue and Cliff Street in New Haven, is the site of the Connecticut Folk Festival and Green Expo running Friday through Sunday. The event features live folk music and eco-friendly educational programs and activities. For information, visit www.ctfolk.com.

Singles dance — Connecticut ConTacts will sponsor a singles' dance party from 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Friday at il Monticello, 577 S. Broad St., Meriden. Admission includes a dinner buffet. For information, call (203) 468-1144.

Pearl Harbor anniversary — World War II veterans are invited to attend and participate in a three-day commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Events begin Friday at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport with the arrival of three World War II combat aircraft between 12:30 and 1 p.m. World War II veterans and air crew members are invited to attend without charge. The aircraft exhibit continues from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission will be charged for the public.

Slavic concert — The Kitka Slavic Ensemble will perform a free concert of Eastern European music at 8 p.m. Friday in Battell Chapel, 300 College St., New Haven. For information, call (203) 432-5062.

Saturday

Fall festival — The annual Cheshire Fall Festival and Marketplace will take place on Saturday at Bartlem Park on Route 10 in Cheshire. The craft show will open at 10 a.m. and the main event will begin at 11 a.m. Fireworks will start at about 8:30 p.m. Festival attractions will include business and community booths, a food court, farmers market, hot dog eating contest, arts and craft show, classic car show, YMCA Kids Zone, entertainment by local musicians and the Kiwanis carnival. The band Eight to the Bar will perform on the main stage from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday. The rain date is Sunday.

Farmers market — The Meriden Farmers Market takes place from 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays until Oct. 29 at the Meriden Hub site between Pratt and State streets.

Marc Anthony — The Mohegan Sun Arena welcomes Marc Anthony at 8 p.m. Saturday. For information, call (888) 226-7711.

"So We Never Forget" — American Legion Post 45, at 835 Hanover Road in Meriden, will host "So We Never Forget" to mark the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. Gates open at 7 a.m. Names of the victims will be read at 8 a.m., followed by a invocation and color guard salute. For more information, call (203) 642-4622.

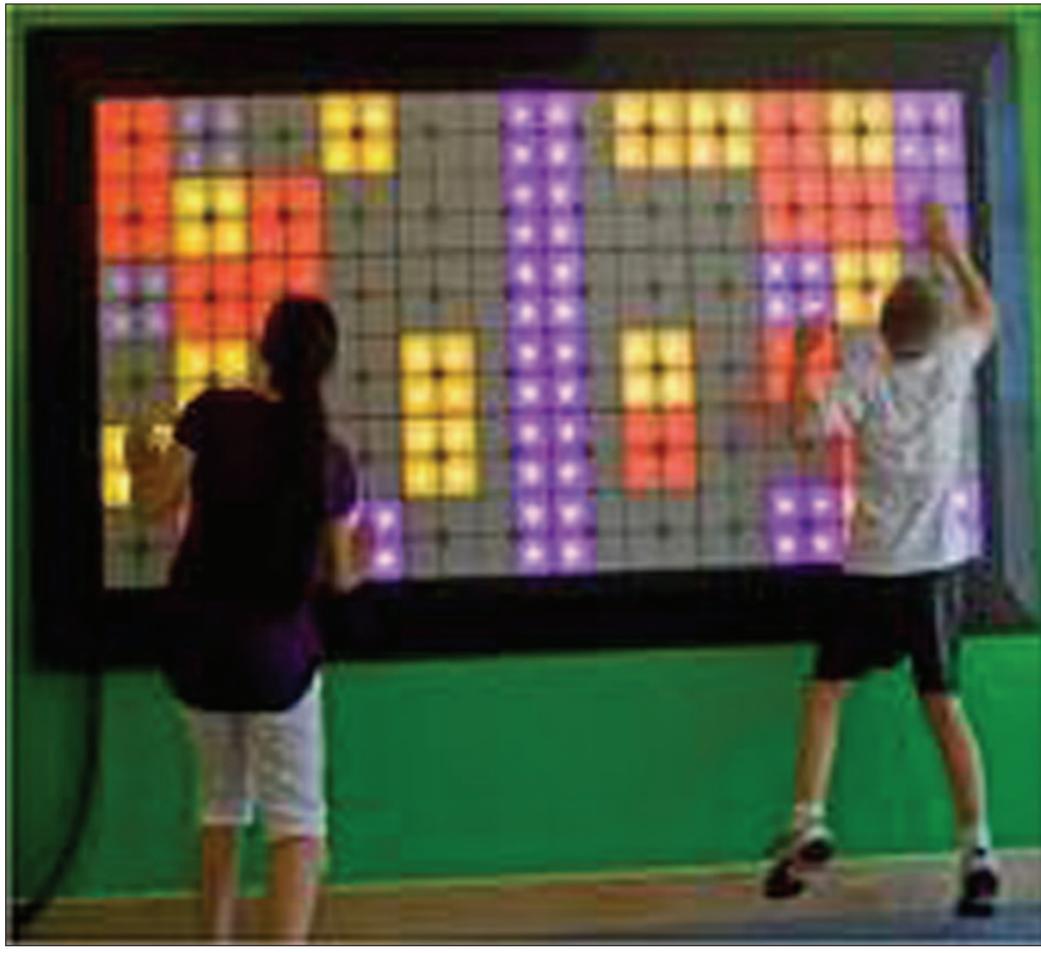
Gardeners market — Wallingford Center Inc. sponsors a gardeners market from 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays until Sept. 17 at the Railroad Station Green, corner of Route 5 and 150, Wallingford. Plants, flowers, produce, home crafts, baked goods and other items are featured.

Contra dances — Contra dances take place from 8 to 11 p.m. the first and third Saturdays of each month at the Branford Community House, 46 Church St., Branford. A beginners lesson will be offered at 7:30 p.m. No partners are necessary. For information, call (203) 915-8259.

Sunday

Uproar Festival — The Comcast Theater, at 61 Savitt Way in Hartford, will present Avenged Sevenfold, Three Days Grace, Seether, Bullet for My Valentine, Escape the Fate and more as a part of the 2011 Uproar Festival on Sunday. Tickets are still available. The show begins at 2 p.m. For more information, call (860) 548-7370.

Science center — The Connecticut Science Center, at 250 Columbus Blvd. in Hartford, is offering free admission on Sunday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. For information, call (860) 724-3623.



The Exergame Fitness Arcade is one of the new features of the Meriden YMCA. Visitors to this Saturday's open house will get a sneak peek, and the ribbon cutting will take place Sept. 21.

Photo courtesy of Joan Goodman, Meriden YMCA

Fast facts

What: Meriden YMCA fall open house.
When: Saturday, Sept. 10, from 9 a.m. to noon.
Where: 110 W. Main St., Meriden
Admission: Free.
More info: www.meridenymca.org.

Meriden Y shows off fitness arcade

By Stephanie A. O'Connell
Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — At the Meriden YMCA's annual open house this weekend, patrons will get a first look at some state-of-the-art technology not yet available to the public.

The Exergame Fitness Arcade, featuring cutting-edge equipment to entice young children to stay active, will be open for the first time on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon.

The facility has an open house each year to let people see all the YMCA has to offer and the latest additions, such as massage therapy, the new yoga studio and new instructors. The YMCA has a longstanding policy of opening its doors to the community, said Joan Goodman, membership and marketing director.

"We like to partner with the community and welcome them into the center," she said. "We have so many new things here that we want people to come and check them out. Our main focus is to educate everyone on what we have to offer and how it can help them to maintain healthy lifestyles."

The Exergame Fitness Arcade, which was installed last week, was funded by donations from the Napier Foundation, a private donor and the Y Strong Kids Campaign. The arcade is part of the YMCA's focus on fighting childhood obesity.

"We noticed that it was difficult to get elementary school-aged children to engage in regular physical activity, like using the fitness center," said Carrie Marquardt, YMCA fitness director. "We were looking for an angle to interest these kids in staying active. Nowa-

day, kids are very much into video games and computers."

The arcade has a white space wall with a variety of games that keep kids moving as they follow lights that change all over the board. Brain bikes equipped with Xbox systems let kids pedal faster or slower to control the speed of the video game character on the screen. DanceDanceRevolution pads are available for play and stepper-type fitness equipment features games that require constant movement.

"We started a program earlier in the year to help battle childhood obesity and with the Exergame we feel we have the latest and best technology available that no one in the area has," Goodman said.

Besides the new yoga center at the YMCA's art center, at 14-16 W. Main St., the Y has added youth wrestling and volleyball, songwrit-

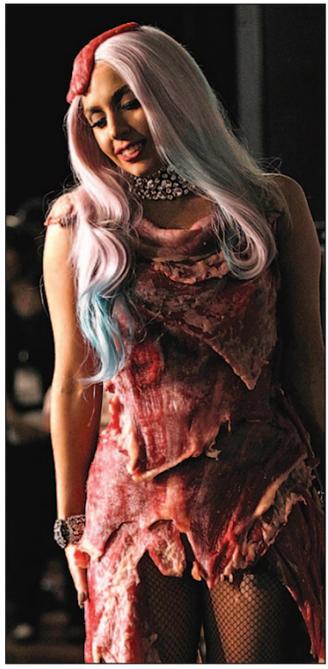
ing classes and onsite day care this fall.

People who visit the open house will also learn about the first annual Healthy Body, Brain and Business Competition, to be held a week later, on Sept. 17. The competition will involve 10 local businesses in a race of physical and mental endurance.

"This idea came about through our meetings with the chamber. We are going to have 10 teams of four participate in five activities using their muscles and brains. The winners will get a trophy and bragging rights as the healthiest business in Meriden," said Goodman.

Proceeds will benefit the Meriden YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign.

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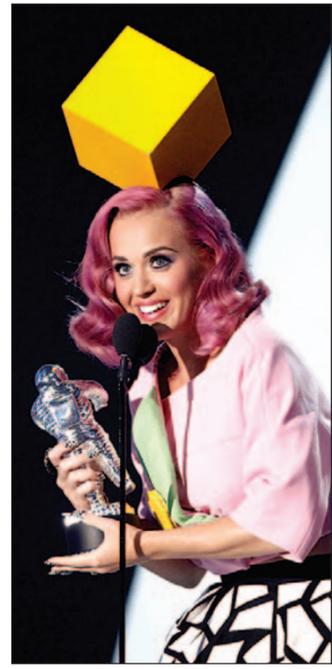
Lady Gaga



Ke\$ha



Nicki Minaj



Katy Perry

Ladies of pop win with wacky, weird tactics

By Mesfin Fekadu
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Whether it's being encased in an egg or wearing slabs of meat, there's never a question of whether Lady Gaga will make a spectacle of herself at an awards show — the question is just what kind.

So when the MTV Video Music Awards came around this year, Gaga didn't disappoint. Though she dressed somewhat conservatively in short black hair, a dingy white t-shirt, a black blazer and pants, it was whom she embodied that made headlines — a man, whom she called Jo Calderone. The temporary gender switch marked yet another act in Gaga's strange pop odyssey.

But what made the VMAs so

noteworthy was that Gaga wasn't the only oddity who graced the stage. In one corner there was Katy Perry, sporting pink hair and a giant yellow cube on top of her head. And then there was Nicki Minaj, who wore a colorful surgical mask, a rainbow-colored wig, a mini-tutu made out of cubic designs, with an attached string of stuffed toys.

It wasn't too long ago pop's top ladies were likely to try to out-sex each other, from plunging necklines to gyrating stage performances.

But Gaga, Minaj and Perry are part of a group of contemporary pop stars who are finding success by defying the conventional definition of sexiness with oddball tactics and wacky outfits, recalling pop stars from the past, from

Cyndi Lauper to Annie Lennox to Grace Jones.

"All three are emblematic of the millennial generation, who are constantly remixing and reshaping their identities," said MTV president Stephen Friedman of Perry, Gaga and Minaj.

"It used to be all about the jocks and the beautiful women, and now the nerd is the new jock," Friedman continued. "The currency is about being smart and funny and different and I think that's what they're playing into — (it) is how can they be different than what you can expect the day before."

Ke\$ha, who was absent from this year's VMAs, has also rebelled against the norm. She burst on the scene with her sideshow style singing about brushing her teeth with Jack Daniels; she now wears

a necklace of her fans' teeth. She wears her disheveled look with pride: At last year's VMAs, Minaj sported a fitted dress and pink wig, Perry also sported a sexy dress with pink and purple highlights in her hair — Ke\$ha rocked a trash bag.

"People are like, 'Oh, maybe you should tone the homeless thing down?' It's just not going to happen," Ke\$ha said from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where she performed her "Get \$leazy Tour." "I like looking homeless sometimes. I like looking like a drunken grandma sometimes. I like looking like a tribal warrior from the future sometimes and I'm not going to stop playing with my style for anybody."

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