

The Ranch Review

www.riataranch.net

December 2006

Volume 1, Issue 10

Official Publication of Riata Ranch Homeowners Association

Letter from the President

I have served on the Board for about 2 ½ years. In the last year, I served as your President. I am proud to say that the team of Board members with whom I am privileged to serve, has worked tirelessly to make sure that each and every complaint, comment, and rule is met. They have reduced cost, improved the look of the community, provided a line of direct and open communication with the members, worked closely with the Events Committee, and put your budget into the black. They have put the community in a better position than it was when they took office. I hope I have done the same.

However, my career is taking me to other places, namely Dallas, TX. Therefore, I must resign my position as your President and leave the leadership of your Board in the very capable hands of the remaining members. Since we have always made our decisions as a group, my absence will make very little difference and it is my expectation that the improvements will continue as planned.

It has been my pleasure to volunteer my time in service to this community. My family and I have gotten to know many of you and we will miss you very much.

We love this community. At all times I have tried to serve in your very best interest and I hope that, in some small way, I have left Riata Ranch better than it was when I took office.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Charlie Hubbard



HAVE YOU NOTICED?

As promised, our next major painting project has begun. The IRON FENCING along the greenbelt is being repainted.

As committed, with a balanced budget, more can be done. And this is the first stage of a 3 stage project that will include the repainting of iron fencing in section 11 and fencing that borders the golf course.

We continue to execute on our commitments to you and hope you are noticing and enjoying the improvements.

Breakfast With Santa Saturday, December 9 9 to 11 A.M.

Santa is coming to Riata Ranch on December 9!

Please join Santa for breakfast and pictures from 9 to 11A.M. Saturday morning at the Kids R Kids Gym.

Kids R Kids has been very generous to let us use their facility for this holiday event, so no need to worry about the weather. Santa will be there for picture taking, so please bring your camera to get that special shot. The Kids R Kids address is 10740 Barker Cypress (right in front of Riata Ranch). The Special Events Committee wants to share the holiday spirit with all in the neighborhood, so this year we will also have caroling during the evening of December 9. We will meet at the pool at 6:30P.M., so that everyone can ride on trailers thru the neighborhood. The map will be given out at Kids R Kids during the morning event. Hope to see you there.



View *The Ranch Review*
each month on-line at
www.PEELinc.com

Riata Ranch

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Sheriff..... | 713-221-6000 |
| Fire Department | 281-855-1110 |
| Cy-Fair Medical Center | 281-890-4285 |
| Memorial City Hospital | 713-932-3000 |
| Poison Control | 800-222-1222 |

Schools

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Cypress Fairbanks ISD | 281-897-4000 |
| Posta Elementary | 281-345-3660 |
| Spillane Middle | 281-216-1645 |
| Cy-Fair High | 281-897-4600 |
| Cy-Falls High..... | 281-856-1000 |
| Cy-Fair College..... | 281-290-3200 |

Utilities

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| HCMUD #196 | |
| Billing | 281-579-4500 |
| Repairs | 281-398-8211 |
| Centerpoint Electric | 713-207-2222 |
| Centerpoint Entex Gas | 713-659-2111 |
| AT&T/SBC | 800-464-7928 |
| Warner Cable..... | 713-462-9000 |
| Waste Mgt | 713-686-6666 |
| HOA, SCS Mgt..... | 281-463-1777 |
| United States Post Office | 800-275-8777 |

Library

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Cy-Fair College Library..... | 281-290-3210 |
|------------------------------|--------------|

Newsletter Publisher

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Peel, Inc..... | 888-687-6444 |
| Advertising..... | advertising@Peelinc.com, 888-687-6444 |

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EDITOR WANTED!!!!

We have received your very positive feedback regarding the monthly newsletter. However, the Board has been putting together the newsletter since it went to a monthly publication. We are looking for a resident who would like to take charge of the newsletter.

No experience is needed but you must have access to a computer and internet connection. The newsletter takes time, so if your interested, please be prepared to take the time needed to get it right and coordinate timely articles of interest.

The newsletter has come a long way and still has much room for improvement.

If you are interested, please contact us at editor@riataranch.net.

Help Keep the Storm Drains Clear

Recently, we have received reports of teens throwing items into the storm drains, such as boxes and basketballs. These items can plug the drain and cause flooding when the next storm comes.

If you see this activity, please report it to the Sheriff's Department with the best description of the activity that you can give.

Stopping this activity is important to all of us. It could even keep your home from flooding.

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Riata Ranch H.O.A., Inc.
 Inspection Date: **Tuesday, October 17, 2006**
Deed Restrictions

Report Date:
 10/18/2006

Open Violation Summary

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| <u>Status of Logged Violations:</u> | | <u>Violations Logged:</u> | |
| Verify Reported Violation | 1 | ACC | 14 |
| First Letter | 93 | Clean-Up | 58 |
| Second Letter | 27 | Lawns | 98 |
| Certified Letter | 0 | Repairs | 6 |
| Mow List | 5 | Vehicles | 27 |
| Continuous Mow | 0 | Misc. | 19 |
| Monitor | 26 | | 222 |
| Monitor After Letter | 58 | | |
| Board Referral | 3 | <u>Property Counts:</u> | |
| Hearing Requested | 0 | Mow List | 5 |
| Board Hold | 0 | Board Referral | 3 |
| Notice of Non-Compliance | 1 | Board Hold | 0 |
| Attorney Letter | 2 | Attorney Letter | 2 |
| Attorney Lawsuit | 6 | Attorney Lawsuit | 5 |
| Judgment | 0 | Judgment | 0 |
| Request More Time | 0 | Brd Stat Update Needed | 0 |
| Board Status Update Needed | 0 | | |
| Total open violations | 222 | | |

Violations Cleared **123**

Activity Summary

Activity since Prior Inspection September 14, 2006

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| First Notice Letters | 81 | Notice of Non-Comp | 1 |
| Second Notice Letters | 23 | Attorney Demand Letters | 0 |
| Renter Letters | 28 | Attorney Lawsuits | 3 |
| Thank You Letters | 0 | | |
| Total | 136 | | |

PLEASE PROCESS BOARD REFERRAL LIST AT EACH MEETING AND RETURN TO SCS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROCESSING:

1. Leave nothing unprocessed at BOARD REFERRAL; move at least to BOARD HOLD.
2. Leave nothing on BOARD HOLD indefinitely; at least RECYCLE (RC) back to notice letters if stronger action not merited.
3. NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE (NNC) is required by law before attorney fees are incurred and recovered. This displays for your information.
4. If a violation appears on this report, then every open violation for this property will also be printed for your information.

Deed Restriction Activity

As this edition of the newsletter goes to print, the November Deed Restriction Summary is not yet available, so I thought I would provide the latest summary, which is October. You'll notice that the MOW LIST numbers returned to normal levels as we enter the fall and winter months and as a result of aggressive action throughout the summer months.

The Board receives many complaints regarding unkempt yards. Although we will not discuss specific actions being taken, we will continue to share this summary so that you can have a sense of the work being done behind the scenes.

As indicated under the PROPERTY COUNTS section of the violations summary, there are 5 lawsuits filed against homeowners who have disregarded all other requests to address violations. As you have told us, you want us to continue to be aggressive with deed restriction accountability and we are doing just that.

Still, we request your continued feedback. The most up-to-date list available is always posted to the FORMS, DOCS, LINKS section of www.riataranch.net and is listed as VIOLATIONS.

In October, there were 222 total violation, 123 cleared, and 5 lawns that were "force mowed."

Please continue to communicate with us through the CONTACT US section of the web site. As the numbers show, we take your comments very seriously.

Classified Ads

The RANCH REVIEW runs classified ads that are FREE to residents. If you would like to place and add, please email your submission to editor@riataranch.net.

Your submission must be received by the 10th of the prior month. For example, you must have your request submitted by December 10th in order for it to appear in January's newsletter.

Street Light Out?

Don't drive around in the dark! Report it. It's easy. Just call 713-207-2222 and list the following:
 The pole number, which is stenciled on the pole
 The nature of the problem; completely out, flickering, etc. Location of the pole, such as the nearest street corner.



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Riata Ranch

Vacation Watch

At your request, the Harris County Sheriff's Department will put your house on VACATION WATCH. Just go to www.riataranch.net and look for the Vacation Watch form in the FORMS and DOCS section.

Your completed form will need to be submitted to the Sheriff's Department 7 days prior to departure, or just call 713-221-6000.

Cypress Christian School Students Perform for the Community

High School Choir

High school choir students from Cypress Christian School will use their talents to make the holidays brighter for those in attendance at the events below. To book the choir for your event or organization, please contact Choir Director, Stephanie Shepson, at 281-469-8829 or Stephanie.Shepson@CypressChristian.org.

- December 6, 11 – Both High School Choir Groups will sing for residents of Ainsley Courte (Assisted Living for Senior Citizens)
- December 7 – Audition Choir will perform Christmas music for AFLAC Insurance District Christmas Party
- December 8 – Christmas Concert by Audition Choir at Cypress Bible Church at 7:00 p.m. All welcome!
- December 12 – High School Choir Christmas Concert at Willowbrook Mall from Noon-1:00 p.m. - All welcome!

High School Drama

The Drama Department will perform scenes from the musical, HONK!, based on the story of the Ugly Duckling at the Barnes & Noble Book Store in the Champions area. Please log on to the school web site for date and times – www.CypressChristian.org

Elementary Christmas Program

Celebrate the season as K-5 students perform "Christmas around the World" on Friday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the multi-use facility of Cypress Christian School, 11123 Cypress N. Houston Road at Jones Road. You won't want to miss this delightful evening!

For information on any of these performances, please call the school at 281-469-8829.

Choose & Cut Your Own Christmas Tree

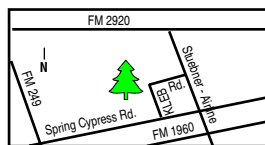


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HELPFUL TOOLS on RIATARANCH.NET

On our website, under DOCS, FORMS, LINKS, there are many helpful tools at your disposal. All of the known forms needed for all neighborhood business and activities are listed on the site, and the list keeps growing. As a new need is realized, the site gets updated with additional links in an effort to give you one place to find everything you need to make the most out of our community.

You will find everything from information regarding mosquitoes and violation summaries, to downloadable forms for vacation watches and ACC applications.

One of the tools that you'll find is very helpful, but not very pleasant. It is a link to the sex offender section of the TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY web site (<https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/soSearch/default.cfm>). This site contains a mapping tool that allows you to input your address and assess your surroundings and proximity to known offenders.

Although it is a difficult subject to address, this link helps enhance the safety of our community through knowledge. Use the site. Be knowledgeable and be safe.

EXCEL

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Attention Teenage Job Seekers

Need some extra cash for the summer? Use THE RANCH REVIEW to find some work.

Fill out the form and send it to The Ranch Review, care of SCS Management. You will need to have your parent's signature on the form before your information will be published.

We hope to have your form turned in soon and get that extra money coming in!!

Teenage Job Seekers:

(B=Babysitting, Pt = Pet care, Pl = Plant Care, H= House Care)

Not Available Online

Teenage Job Seekers

Please place my name on the TEENAGE JOB SEEKERS list in the RANCH REVIEW.

Signature _____

Please check appropriate boxes:

- Baby-sitting
- Pet Care
- House/Plant Care
- Lawn Care

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____ Phone _____

I give my permission for my child's name and phone number to be entered in THE RANCH REVIEW as a TEENAGE JOB SEEKER

Parent's Signature _____

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Riata Ranch

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Do you have a Home Based Business right here in Riata Ranch?

You can get information about your service or products to every home in Riata Ranch, by running a business classified in The Riata Ranch HOA Newsletter. It is a great way to get your name and contact information to many potential customers in your neighborhood. The cost is \$45 for up to 40 words. Display ads are also available. For more information, please contact Peel, Inc. at 888-687-6444 or advertising@PEELinc.com. The deadline is the 10th of each month for the upcoming month's newsletter.

This Is Your Newsletter!

Do you have an idea or suggestion for the newsletter? Want to submit a photo, article, or both? It's easy!! Email the editor at editor@riataranch.net. Articles for the newsletter are finalized on the 10th of the preceding month. So if you get your ideas in before the deadline, you should see them in the very next month's newsletter.

We are glad to hear all of the positive feedback and we intend to continue to improving the look and feel of the newsletter according to what you tell us. So get as involved as you like! We look forward to hearing from you.

Classified Ads

Personal classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Riata Ranch residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail editor@riatranchnet.

Business classifieds (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$45, limit 40 words, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales @ 512-989-8905 or advertising@PEELinc.com.

Coming Soon!

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Drag Racing Alternative

Recently, an EXTREMELY dangerous activity has been reported; DRAG RACING on BARKER CYPRESS.

One resident reported it like this:

"I hear the cars lighting up the tires at Barker Cypress and Riata ranch and have actually witnessed drag racing going on from the lights at Barker Cypress and Riata entrance and watch them race down to the college."

In addition to making us aware of the activity, the resident also provided an alternative for those who just can't stop racing:

"There are two drag racing tracks in this town.....1/8th mile track at Houston motorsports off Beltway near Uvalde street and Houston raceway has a quarter mile track out near Baytown....On Friday night they have street night at Houston raceway in Baytown and for \$15 dollars and less than a half a tank of gas you can drive from the west side of town to the track out there and race your car til midnight..... Spectators pay \$8 to watch. I have been out there quite a few times. Sure beats killing someone on the street especially our neighborhood where little children are playing in their yards or paying a huge fine for racing on the street...\$15 dollars is pretty cheap."

If you want to race, make it safer for everyone and go to the track. Stay off of the street!!!



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| | |
|--|---|
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Did You Know?

It's easier to peel a hard boiled egg that is still warm. If you allow it to cool, the shell can stick to the egg.



Advertising Information

Please support the businesses that advertise in the Riata Ranch Community Newsletter. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all residents to receive a newsletter at no charge. No homeowners association funds are used to produce or mail the newsletters. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact our Sales Office at 888-687-6444 or advertising@PEELinc.com for ad information and pricing.

Sudoku

The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down, and each 3x3 box.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 6 | | | 7 | | | | |
| 2 | | 9 | 1 | | | 7 | | 8 |
| | | | | 5 | | | | |
| | | 6 | | | 5 | | 1 | 7 |
| | | | | | | 4 | | |
| | | | | 1 | | | | |
| | 5 | 7 | | 6 | 3 | | 9 | |
| 3 | | | | | 8 | | | |
| | | 2 | | 7 | | 1 | | |

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Holiday Sugar Plums That Dance On Your Taste Buds

These Holiday Sugar Plums are made with ruby-red Maraschino cherries.

(NAPSA)-The more the cherrier when it comes to holiday treats. And holiday sugar plums are no exception. These traditional treats are made with festive and fun Maraschino cherries.

Whether you are hosting a party or giving gifts to neighbors, these sugar plums are full of holiday cheer. And because they are so simple, the kids will have a ball helping you make them.

Holiday Sugar Plums

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup quick rolled oats (optional)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pecans
- 48 Maraschino cherries
(about one 16-oz. jar)
- Confectioners' sugar for finishing



Drain Maraschino cherries thoroughly on paper towels and set aside. Put butter and 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar in a large mixing bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed three to four minutes, or until well mixed. Stir in vanilla. Add flour, oats and salt; mix well. Stir in pecans.

Shape about 2 teaspoons dough around each cherry. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet about one inch apart. Bake in a preheated 350F. oven for 12 to 15 minutes, or until set but not brown. Role in confectioners' sugar while still warm. Cool.

For a fun presentation, use cherries with stems. Remove stems, bake as directed and then insert stems in cookies while they are still warm but after rolling in sugar. Makes 4 dozen.



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1-23—ORANGE: Christmas Traditions W.H. Stark House. 409/883-0871

1-23—ORANGE: Old-Fashioned Christmas Heritage House. E-mail: hhmuseum@exp.net • www.heritagehouseoforange.org 409/886-5385

1-24—HOUSTON: The Toys Take Over Christmas Tells the story of a spirited rag doll, who teaches her fellow toys and their creator that it is never too late to find the joys of forgiveness and compassion. Stages Repertory Theatre. www.stagestheatre.com 713/527-0123

1-24—KEMAH: Christmas in Kemah www.kemahboardwalk.com 281/334-9880

1-24—SPRING: Home for the Holidays Celebrate the season with more than 150 shops offering unique gifts from around the world. www.otsid.com 281/288-2355

1-25—ROCKPORT: Christmas by the Bay From a beautiful boat, tour the bay and enjoy festively decorated homes. 361/729-6445

1-31—BEAUMONT: Shared Visions: Texas Artists Then & Now Art Museum of Southeast Texas. www.amset.org 409/832-3432

1-31—LA PORTE: Yuletide Texas See the ship adorned with lights, ornaments and decorations just the way the crew members did in the past. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Battleship Texas State Historic Site. www.tpwd.state.tx.us 281/479-2431

1-Jan. 1—CLEAR LAKE AREA: Strange Matter Interactive exhibit

features crystals, amorphous metals, foams, glass and sand. Space Center Houston. www.spacecenter.org 281/244-2100

1-Jan. 6—GALVESTON: Moody Gardens Festival of Lights The lush garden setting is transformed into a winter menagerie of lights. Guests can strap on a pair of skates and slide across the ice at the outdoor ice rink or listen to holiday music performed by area bands. Moody Gardens, One Hope Boulevard. www.moodygardens.org 800/582-4673

1-Jan. 7—GALVESTON: Scott Barber — Selected Works 1995-2005, Henry Ray Clark & Saralene Tapley — People I've Known Galveston Arts Center. www.galvestonartscenter.org 409/763-2403

1-Jan. 8—HARLINGEN: Christmas Tree Forest Exhibit Call to schedule a tour. Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum. 956/216-4901

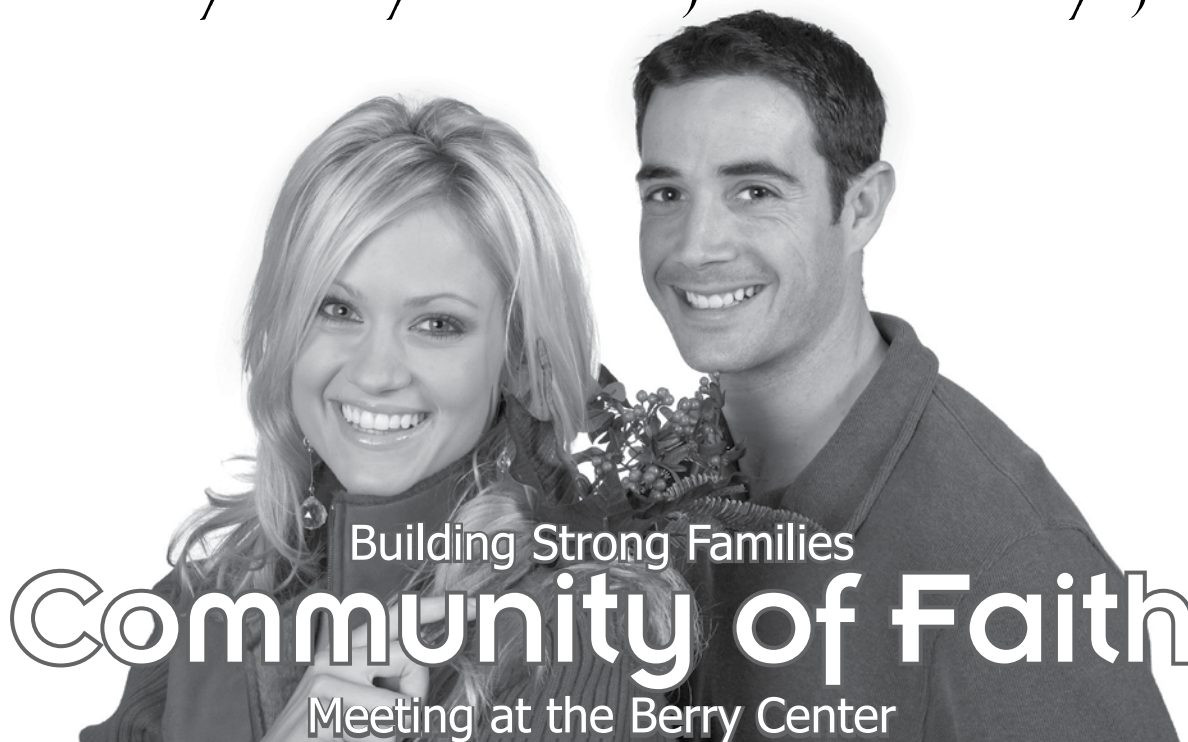
1-Jan. 8—PORT ARTHUR: Elvis: Grace & Grit Museum of the Gulf Coast. www.museumofthegulfcoast.org 409/982-7000

1-Jan. 14—VICTORIA: Victoria Collects Folk Art Includes a variety of media such as wood sculpture, fabric art, metal sculpture, oil paintings and mixed media. Nave Museum. www.victoriaregionalmuseum.com 361/575-8227

1-Jan. 15—PORT ISABEL: A Champion Christmas The Champion's Family Period Room is decorated for Christmas with a tree, toys and

(Continued on pg 11)

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Texas Events - (Continued from pg 10)

postcards. www.portisabelmuseums.com 956/943-7602

1-Jan. 28—HOUSTON: The Modern West: American Landscapes, 1890–1950 Includes about 100 paintings, watercolors, photographs and supplementary contextual material dating from the 1890s to the mid-20th century. The Audrey Jones Beck Building, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. 713/639-7300

1-Feb. 18—HOUSTON: Through the Eyes of Children: The Rwanda Project Photo exhibit at the Holocaust Museum Houston. www.hmh.org 713/942-8000

1-Feb. 24—PORT ISABEL: Postcards from the Past: Robert Runyon's Postcards of Brownsville, Matamoros & Beyond Runyon, a Brownsville photographer, took photographs of everyday life in the Rio Grande Valley. Museums of Port Isabel. www.portisabelmuseums.com 956/943-7602

1-Mar. 31—GALVESTON: Elite Excursions: The Victorian Vacations of a Prosperous Galveston Family Part of a citywide collaboration celebrating the history of tourism on Galveston Island. Ashton Villa. 409/762-3933

1-Mar. 31—GALVESTON: Myth to Momus: Mardi Gras at Menard, 1856 to Present Exhibit is part of a citywide collaboration celebrating the history of tourism on Galveston Island. Michel B. Menard House. 409/762-3933

8-31—HOUSTON: Five Course Love Five dates, five restaurants and one fateful night. Will any of the lovers find the recipe for romance?

Stages Repertory Theatre. www.stagestheatre.com 713/527-0123

9—ALVIN: Stanton's Peddler's Market 219 N. Taylor. 281/331-4491

9—BEAUMONT: Christmas Open House at the McFaddin-Ward House The structure and its furnishings reflect the lifestyle of the prominent family who lived in the house for 75 years. McFaddin-Ward House. www.mcfaddin-ward.org 409/832-2134

9—BEAUMONT: Symphony Ball — A Winter Gala Beaumont Civic Center. www.beaumont-tx-complex.com 409/504-2224 or 409/718-7854

9—BRAZORIA: 10th Annual San Bernard River Boat Parade Lower San Bernard River. www.sanbernardriver.com 979/964-4332

9—BROWNSVILLE: Half Marathon & 1-Mile Run E-mail: tiny433@aol.com • www.withchrist.net/riorunning 956/542-8967 or 956/492-5238

9—CLEAR LAKE AREA: 45th Annual Christmas Boat Parade on Clear Lake More than 100 beautifully lighted and extravagantly decorated boats travel through the Lake and up Clear Creek Channel to Galveston Bay. View the parade along the Seabrook shoreline and from the Kemah Boardwalk. 281/338-0333\

9—FRIENDSWOOD: Holiday Lighted Christmas Parade Parade ends with Santa. Friendswood Drive. www.friendswood-chamber.com 281/482-3329

(Continued on pg 12)

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Riata Ranch

Texas Events - (Continued from pg 11)

9—PEARLAND: 13th Annual Tour De'Lights Bicycle Ride Join in this annual bicycle trek and Christmas carol sing-along. This casual 1 1/2-hour recreational ride starts at 7 p.m. in Independence Park and winds its way through the Green Tee subdivision with its Christmas lights aglow. 281/652-1659

9—SAN BENITO: Sock Hop Fund-raiser Includes Best 1950s and 1960s costume contest, dance contest, prizes and more. Begins at 6 p.m. Fun 'N Sun RV Resort. 956/399-5800

9-10—GALVESTON: The Nutcracker The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 800/821-1894

9-10—INGLESIDE: Renaissance Faire 361/776-2906

9-10—SANTA FE: Wine & Winter Weekend — Haak Winery Hours are 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Haak Winery, 6310 Ave. T. www.haakwine.com 409/925-1401

10—HARLINGEN: Tour of Homes/Beta Sigma Phi 956/425-8236

10—LAKE JACKSON: Holiday Tour of Homes 979/265-2505

10—LOS INDIOS: Celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe Includes 3 p.m. procession with floats relating to Feast of Our Lady, 5 p.m. Mass, and 6 p.m. festival with Mariachi Imperial and Santa Maria Folkloric Dance Group. Enjoy music, games, horse rides and more. Saint Ignatius of Loyola Grounds, 24380 W. U.S. 281. 956/399-4516 or 956/357-2946

10—PORT ISABEL: Antique & Flea Market Hours are 9 a.m. to

4 p.m. Port Isabel Community Center and Beulah Lee Park. www.portisabel-texas.com/pi_fleamkt 956/943-1006 or 956/943-2262

10—ROCKPORT: Holiday Symphony by the Sea Martha Luigi Auditorium. 361/729-6445

10—TEXAS CITY: Christmas at the Davison Home Take a step back in time to celebrate Christmas the old-fashioned way. Hours are 4 to 7 p.m. 1st Street and 3rd Avenue. www.texas-city-tx.org 409/643-5799

12—BROWNSVILLE: Victorian Holiday Traditions Brownsville Heritage Complex/Stillman House. www.brownsvillehistory.org 956/541-5560

12-17—GALVESTON: A Tuna Christmas Comedy stars Joe Sears and Jaston Williams. The Grand 1894 Opera House. www.thegrand.com 800/821-1894

13—SAN BENITO: El Second Weensdee Christmas Party The Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center presents an oral history series on conjunto music. Begins at 7 p.m. 225 E. Stenger St. 956/361-0110

13—SAN BENITO: Guadalupe Art Exhibit This is an art exhibit and Christmas celebration. Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center, 225 Stenger St. 956/361-0110

14-Jan. 11—NASSAU BAY: Winter '06 Open Juried Exhibition Features works in all media and subject matter by area artists. The

(Continued on pg 13)

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Texas Events - (Continued from pg 12)

Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake. www.taaccl.org 281/335-7777

15—VICTORIA: Country Opry Hours are 7:30 to 10 p.m. Victoria Community Center Annex. 361/552-9347

15-17—HARLINGEN: Disney's Aladdin, Jr. All of the favorite characters, including Aladdin, Jasmine and Genie, appear on stage in this adaptation of the Disney hit. Harlingen Performing Arts Theatre. 956/412-7529

16—EDNA: Christmas Crafts Bring the kids and prepare for the holidays by making Christmas crafts to decorate your home. Begins at 2 p.m. Lake Texana State Park. 361/782-5718

16—HOUSTON: Houston Children's Chorus 18th Annual Christmas Concert Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. www.houstonchildren.org 713/650-3800

16—SAN BENITO: Arts & Crafts and Pancake Breakfast Begins at 8 a.m. Fun 'N Sun RV Resort. 956/399-5800

16—VICTORIA: Market Days Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. DeLeon Plaza in Downtown Victoria. www.victoriatx.org 361/485-3200

16-17—PORT NECHES: Trade Days on the Avenue 409/722-4023

16, 23—HARLINGEN: Northland Country Band Hours are 7 to 10 p.m. Tropic Winds RV Resort. 956/423-4020

17—BEAUMONT: Have Yourself a Rockin' Little Christmas Symphony of Southeast Texas presents Holiday Pops at 2 p.m. Jefferson Theatre. www.sost.org 409/892-2257

17-18—HARLINGEN: A Christmas Musical First Baptist Church, 501 E. Van Buren. 956/423-0470

20—SAN BENITO: Dance with the Crusers Begins at 7:30 p.m. Fun 'N Sun RV Resort. 956/399-5800

21—HARLINGEN: The Texas Piano Man Show Hours are 7 to 10 p.m. Tropic Winds RV Resort. 956/423-4020

23—EDNA: Campfire Carols Hours are 6 to 8 p.m. Lake Texana State Park. 361/782-5718

24—HARLINGEN: Folkways Oral history program is from 1 to 4 p.m. Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum. 956/216-4901

27—SAN BENITO: Iowa Country Opry Begins at 7 p.m. Fun 'N Sun RV Resort. 956/399-5800

30—HARLINGEN: Ronnie Furr Band Tropic Winds RV Resort. 956/423-4020

31—BAYTOWN: Murder Me Always Baytown Little Theater. 281/424-7617

31—BEAUMONT: Crockett Street New Year's Eve Extravaganza Enjoy live music, laser light show and street party festivities. Crockett Street. www.crockettstreet.com 409/832-2944

Texas Events has been published with the permission of the Texas Department of Transportation. All events are taken in part from the Texas Events Calendar. All dates for events were correct at the time of publication and are subject to change.

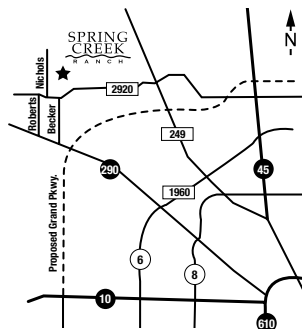
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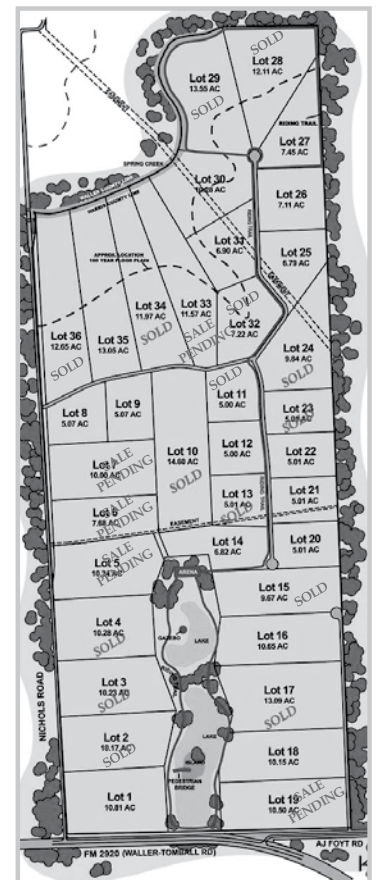


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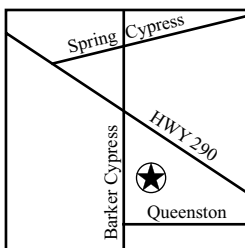
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Healthy Eating

Perfect Pear: Simply Delicious Meals In A Snap

Pears are a delicious, nutritious way to get your daily servings of fruit.

(NAPSA)-The hubbub of the holidays shouldn't mean taking a break from healthful eating. Fortunately, no matter how hectic your schedule becomes, there's always time for working some delicious fruit into your diet.

Pears can be a great place to start. Besides being delicious, they're wonderfully nutritious-an excellent source of dietary fiber that contains vitamin C and is also a source of potassium, with only about 100 calories per serving.

Pears are great anytime of the day: Try pear halves with yogurt for breakfast. Pack one with your lunch. Cut one up over a dinner salad. Or top a dish of ice cream for dessert. In addition, there are many varieties to enjoy throughout the year: Bartlett, Anjou, Bosc and Comice. Each has a distinct texture, color and flavor that can be made into savory snacks, main dishes, appetizers, salads and desserts.

And remember: Adding pears to a main dish gives food a burst of flavor while helping your family get the recommended five to

nine daily servings of fruits and veggies.

The following quick-and-easy recipe does not use a traditional sauce, letting the juicy pears bring a sweet balance to the Parmesan and prosciutto's more salty flavors. Using a prepared pizza crust makes this an effortless meal or a beautiful and savory appetizer.

Savory Pear Pizza

- 1 prepared pizza dough (such as Boboli)
 - 3 T. extra virgin olive oil
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 oz. grated, fresh Parmesan cheese
 - 3 oz. chopped prosciutto or thinly sliced cured ham
 - 1 red Anjou pear, cored and sliced very thinly
1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
 2. Place pizza crust on baking sheet.
 3. Spread olive oil and garlic over the pizza crust.
 4. Top with cheese, prosciutto and pear slices.
 5. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until cheese is melted and bubbly.
 6. Slice and serve. Serves 6.



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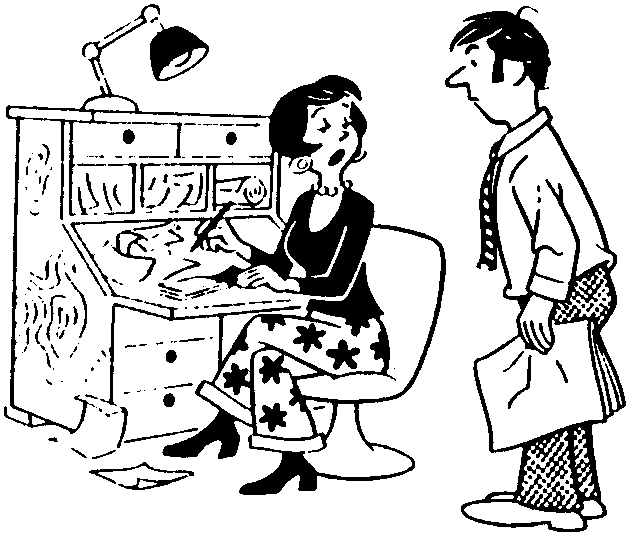
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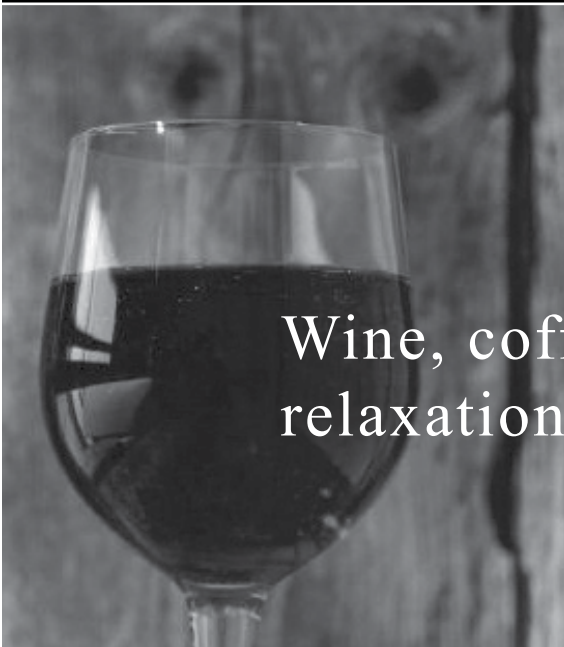
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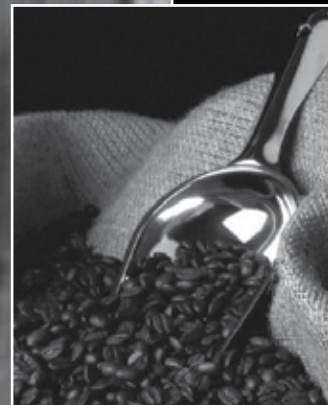
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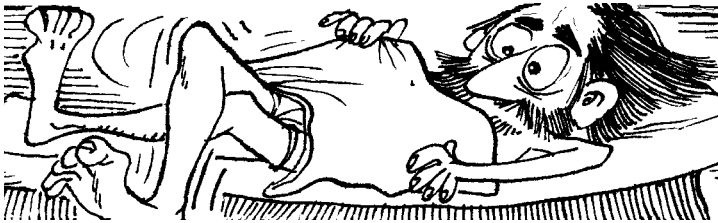
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A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.

-George Bernard Shaw

Did You Know?

Many people believe the more you sleep before midnight, the better looking you'll be. In ancient times, people believed it unlucky to set the left foot on the ground first on getting out of bed.



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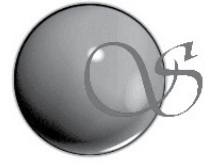
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Dental Tip of the Month.

Gums Receding and Causing Sensitivity?

Dear Friends,

First of all, we want to wish you the happiest of holidays and seasons greetings.

I believe to make the world a better place, we all need to take some time out to help those less fortunate than us. Even small good deeds add up, so I encourage all to open up your hearts and take an opportunity to make a difference.

Some basic advice from Dr. Sundrani:

Do not share toothbrushes with anyone. Bacteria and diseases can be transferred to those sharing the toothbrush.

Store the tooth brushes upright, and make sure they don't touch other toothbrushes when stored.

Do not store the toothbrushes in a closed container. This, over the long run, harbors bacteria.

Replace toothbrushes every 3 months and for children, more often because the bristles get worn real easily. Once they are worn, they do not clean effectively.

If you are sick and using a tooth brush, change it out immediately as you get better.

In the mean time, if you have any dental related questions, please email me at sundranids@yahoo.com, and I will happily respond to your inquiries.

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Fit Facts™

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Exercising In The Cold

The biggest concern for exercising in the cold is hypothermia, or too much heat loss. When you exercise in a cold environment you must consider one primary factor: how much heat will your body lose during exercise?

Heat loss is controlled in two ways:

1. Insulation, consisting of body fat plus clothing.
2. Environmental factors, including temperature, wind and whether you're exercising in the air or in the water. Each of these factors plays a role in the body's ability to maintain a comfortable temperature during exercise.

Insulation

Although many people aspire to have a lean figure, people with a little more body fat are better insulated and will lose less heat. Clothing adds to the insulation barrier and is clearly the most important element in performance and comfort while exercising in the cold. One study showed that heat loss from the head alone was about 50 percent at the freezing mark, and by simply wearing a helmet, subjects were able to stay outside indefinitely.

(Continued on pg 21)

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15 Years Experience

Fit Facts - (Continued from pg 20)

Clothing is generally a good insulator because it has the ability to trap air, a poor conductor of heat. If the air trapped by the clothing cannot conduct the heat away from the body, temperature will be maintained. Unlike air, however, water is a rapid conductor of heat and even in the coldest of temperatures, people will sweat and risk significant heat loss. With this in mind, you want to choose clothing that can trap air but allow sweat to pass through, away from the body.

By wearing clothing in layers, you have the ability to change the amount of insulation that is needed while many new products can provide such a layered barrier, it is important to avoid heavy cotton sweats or tightly woven material that will absorb and retain water. Because these materials cannot provide a layer of dry air near the skin, they can increase the amount of heat your body loses as you exercise.

Keeping the hands and feet warm is a common concern when exercising in the cold. Lower temperatures cause blood to be shunted away from the hands and feet to the center of the body to keep the internal organs warm and protected. Superficial warming of the hands will return blood flow to prevent tissue damage. Blood flow will not return to the feet unless the temperature of the torso is normal or slightly higher (.5-1.0 degree Fahrenheit (F) above normal). So, to keep your feet warm you must also keep the rest of your body warm at all times.

Check with the weatherman

Always check the air temperature and wind chill factor before exercising in the cold. Data from the National Safety Council suggest little danger to individuals with properly clothed skin exposed at 20° F, even with a 30 mph wind. A danger does exist for individuals with exposed skin when the wind chill factor (combined effect of temperature and wind) falls below minus 20° F.

That can be achieved by any combination of temperatures below 20° F with a wind of 40 mph and temperatures below minus 20° F with no wind. If you are exercising near the danger zone for skin exposure, it also is advisable to warm the air being inhaled by wearing a scarf or mask over your nose and mouth to warm the air being inhaled.

Rules for exercising in the cold

- Check the temperature and wind conditions before you go out and do not exercise if conditions are dangerous.
- Keep your head, hands and feet warm.
- Dress in layers that can provide a trapped layer of dry air near the skin (avoid cotton sweats and other similar materials).
- Warm the air you are breathing if temperatures are below your comfort level (usually around 0° F).



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Empty Nest Chance to Chase Forgotten Dreams

Baylor College of Medicine

HOUSTON – (Nov. 9, 2006) – Middle age woes are hard enough to deal with, but throw in empty nest syndrome and it is a recipe for potential depression.

Psychologists at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston say not to look at it as an ending, but as the beginning of a new stage in life with more time to travel, develop new hobbies, rediscover forgotten dreams and get to know your spouse all over again.

Empty nest syndrome can happen twice in an adult's life, once when the kids start kindergarten and again when they move out of the house. The more challenging of the two is when adolescents move out of the house to begin their adult lives.

"Parents have channeled all of their energy into their children for so long they may not know what to do with their time once they leave," says Dr. James Bray, associate professor of family and community medicine at BCM. "It is actually one of the high points when looking at the divorce rate scale. The numbers really tend to go up during middle age."

When people are unhappy in their marriage they usually have internal anxiety about something else, like not knowing what to do with the rest of their lives after the kids leave.

"It is natural to reevaluate your life every so often and even

more natural during this stage in a parent's life," says Bray. "Don't just assume that if you leave your spouse you will make the unhappiness go away. Marriage takes time and energy, so make the effort to get reacquainted."

It is a good idea to talk with friends to reevaluate goals and take note of some lifelong dreams you haven't had time to accomplish, says Bray.

Now that the kids have moved out, there may be more time to take dance classes, travel, exercise or go back to college to retool skills.

Kids need to remember to stand up for themselves if parents become too needy or clingy. Setting a phone schedule can eliminate the out-of-control calling by some parents, while reassuring them can eliminate needless worry.

"Kids can also consult with counselors if they really have an issue with a clingy parent or one that is having a difficult time dealing with the separation," says Bray.

The empty nest transition usually lasts six months to a year, depending on how well parents can adjust to their newly found freedom.



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