

The Ranch Review

www.riataranch.net

July 2008

Volume 3, Issue 7

Official Publication of Riata Ranch Homeowners Association

Parent Advice Column

Five Ways We Discourage Our Children

NEGATIVE MOTIVATION makes children feel bad about themselves discourages them. It includes guilt trips, punishment, shame, and name calling (i.e., lazy, stupid, bad, irresponsible.)

OVER-DOING or doing too much for our children or solving their problems for them is discouraging to a child and includes over-pampering, doing for them what they can do for themselves, making decisions for them, and talking for them (i.e., ordering food for them)

DEMANDING too much from them discourages children. When parents focus on the negative instead of the positive, when they expecting high achievements, or wanting your child to be "the best" instead of asking for your child's best job, and giving too much responsibility and not allowing them to be children.

DISCOUNTING is when parents fail to value their children as it discourages children. Discounting includes not having time for your children making them feel unimportant, (Give "GEMS" often), making other things consistently more important than them like house work, not asking for the child's opinion, and by not valuing their contributions to the family or denying or minimizing their feelings and wants.

PERMISSIVENESS is when a parent does not set or follow through with limits and permissiveness discourages children. Permissiveness includes allowing them to watch too much TV and using TV as a babysitter; giving in to the children's demands instead of following through with limits; and letting children mistreat you or treat property disrespectfully. Respect is taught by being respectful to your children.

Claudia England
- Riata Ranch
Resident.

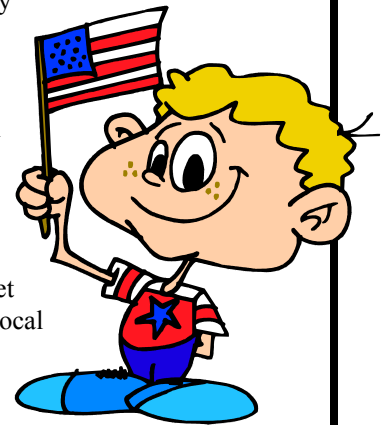


Join us for the Children's 4th of July Bike Parade

July 4th at 10AM

Children of all ages are encouraged to dress in red, white and blue and decorate their bikes for the annual bike parade to take place down Riata Ranch Blvd. If your child does not ride a bike, they are invited to walk, skate or parade along in any way they can. We love creativity and will have a special treat for each participant!

Hang around afterward for a hot dog, a cool drink and something sweet to eat. While you're there, don't forget to stop by and say hello to our local firefighters and police officers. If you have any questions, please email events@riataranch.net.



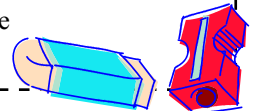
Cypress Assistance Ministries CAM School Supply Drive

With the start of school just around the corner, CAM's school supply drive is in full swing. In August, we will be handing out school supplies to hundreds of children whose families are served through CAM. Your donations of school supplies are greatly appreciated. For a current list of needed school supplies go to our web site: www.cypressassistance.org.

For the summer, the Food Pantry is needing kid-friendly foods.

Cypress Assistance Ministries provides an array of services to needy families in the Cypress and Northwest Houston area.

For a description of all our services, please see our web site, www.cypressassistance.org.



RiataRanch.net

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
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“Adventures in Mothering” at The MET

Mothers of Preschoolers need a little encouragement...and a whole lot of fun! METMOPS is registering throughout the summer for the fall semester of MOPS. We are exploring “Adventures in Mothering”. Join us this fall (September – December)

on Friday mornings from 9:15 -11:45

a.m. at the Metropolitan Baptist Church. METMOPS meetings include awesome speakers, creative crafts, encouraging discussion time, food and door prizes. Childcare is provided with registration. Register now at metmops.org.



Cy-Woods Crimson Cadettes Third Annual Dance Clinic

The Cy-Woods Crimson Cadette Drill Team will be hosting their third annual dance clinic August 13th through the 15th from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. each day. The registration fee is \$55 for the first child in the family, and \$40 for each additional child in the same family.

Sessions will include dance technique, specially choreographed routines for each age group, a performance dance shirt, drinks and snacks each day, and a picture of each participant. Showoffs will be held August 15 at 11:30 a.m.

For more information contact margaretquillin@hotmail.com
Come Dance With Us!

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2008 POOL SEASON

Riata Ranch Homeowners Association, Inc.

The 2008 Swim Season will begin Saturday, May 3, 2008 and pool tags will be required for admittance. The pool will be open the following days in 2008:

DAYS: May 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 26*
May 30 through August 24
August 30, 31
September 1*

The pool will be open when a lifeguard is on duty during the following hours:

HOURS:	Monday	Closed*
	Tuesday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Wednesday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Thursday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Friday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Saturday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Sunday	12:00 pm to 6:00 pm
	Special Hours:	
	Memorial Day (May 26)	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
	Labor Day (September 1)*	10:00 am to 8:00 pm

*(Closed on Tuesday if Holiday falls on a Monday)

All residents must fill out a 2008 Registration form and return to SCS to arrive no later than May 31, 2008.

A limit of six (6) pool tags per address will be issued. Any applicant requiring more than 6 tags per household should note the circumstances on the back of the pool registration form for review by the board.

The following qualifications must be met in order to use the pool facility:

1. Residents must be current on all Annual Maintenance fees in order to receive tags.
Residents whose annual maintenance fees are not paid in full prior to June 1, 2008, will not be allowed pool privileges for the entire 2008 pool season.
2. Tags must be worn at all times while at the pool.
3. Residents may invite one guest per tag holder.
4. Tags are issued to **full-time household members** listed on your application.
5. The charge for lost, misplaced or stolen pool tags is \$50.00 per tag.

Forms received June 1st or later will incur a processing fee of \$25.00 per household. Your tags will be given or mailed to you, upon receipt of your application and the \$25.00 processing fee.

Note: This \$25.00 processing fee does not apply to new homeowners.

NO TAGS – NO ENTRY INTO POOL



Prep time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 - 6-oz. salmon steaks (a normal portion size for meat and fish is 3 oz.)
- butter or vegetable oil cooking spray or fat-free canola cooking spray

Directions:

1. Preheat the broiler. Cover the broiling pan with aluminum foil and lightly grease the foil with butter or vegetable oil cooking spray.
2. Place the steaks on the pan and broil the salmon for 5 minutes. Turn the steaks carefully and broil the other side for 4 to 5 minutes or until the fish is firm but still springy and a bit translucent in the center.
3. Serve immediately topped with the sauce of your choice.

Serves: 2

Serving size: 1 salmon steak

Nutritional analysis (per serving):

350 calories
34 g protein
20 g fat
114 mg sodium
0 mg calcium

Note: Nutritional analysis may vary depending on ingredient brands used.

Variations and Suggestions:

This recipe can easily be doubled to serve 4. Salmon freezes well if prepared properly. Freeze each piece separately, wrapped first in plastic and then in aluminum foil to preserve freshness and facilitate defrosting. Serve with Orange Ginger Sauce.

Updated and reviewed by: Steven Dowshen, MD

Date reviewed: May 2005

Originally reviewed by: Allison Brinkley, RD, LD/N, CNSD

Don't want to wait for the mail?

**View the current issue of The Ranch Review
on the 1st day each month at
www.PEELinc.com**

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.

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Lost Pets

Submitted by RB Cox

When a pet is lost, finding the pet means that time is of the essence. It takes time to create, print and distribute flyers. The flyers are many times illegible because of wind or rain. I certainly do not fault the pet owner because I have done this myself.

Frustrated, I thought there has to be a better way. So that is why we created Cypress Lost Pet Alert.com. The idea is to very quickly get the word out through an e-mail alert to as many neighbors as possible plus post the picture and information about the pet on the website under the specific neighborhood.

Once the email alert goes out to the specific neighborhood, many many neighbors are now aware. If they happen to forward the e-mail to their friends who have not signed up, it could mean hundreds of your neighbors are already alerted and are keeping their eyes open for your lost pet.

Cypress Lost Pet Alert.com is on call 7 days a week from sun up to sun down and is free. We are glad to work with any informal e-mail chains. The whole idea is to find lost pets quick for the good neighbors in Cypress Mill.

Please feel free to keep doing your posters but in the mean time give us a call.

Regards,

RB Cox, alert@CypressLostPetAlert.com

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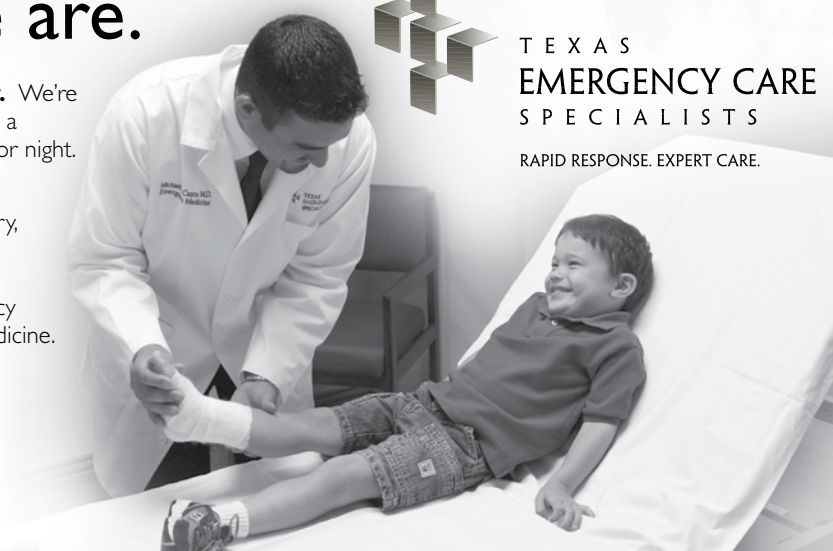
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Lone Star College-CyFair "Perspective"

Summer Fun in the Gallery and on Stage - The Bosque Gallery presents a University of Houston MFA Exhibition (July 15 - July 31) and a photo exhibition titled "IN-SITU: In the Place. - Italy Summer Study Abroad 2008" (Aug. 12 - Aug. 28). Go to CyFair.LoneStar.edu/bosquegallery for hours and artists reception. Don't miss this year's children's shows "Thaddeus and 'Tila" continuing through July 25 and "Go, Dog. Go!" Aug. 4 through Aug. 15. Then bring the family for Elton John and Tim Rice's "Aida" July 17 through July 27. The contemporary musical version of a classic tale of love and devotion tells the tale of the forbidden love between an Egyptian soldier and an enslaved Nubian princess. For tickets and information call 281-290-5201 or go to CyFair.LoneStar.edu/boxoffice.

Register and Pay Early For Free Tuition - Register and pay (or execute an installment payment plan) for fall credit courses before the close of business Thursday, Aug. 4 and automatically be entered to win free tuition, IPOD Shuffle or \$250 book voucher. The grand prize covers payment of tuition and fees up to \$1,000 for credit classes at the Barker Cypress and Fairbanks campuses. Funds will be posted to the student's account. All winners will be notified and announced by Aug. 13. Call 281-290-3200 or 832-782-5000 for information; go online to CyFair.LoneStar.edu; or visit one of our conveniently located campuses at 9191 Barker Cypress or 14955 Northwest Freeway.

Free New Student Orientation and Family Orientations! - Incoming new students and their family members will receive campus tours and

learn about academic and student life. Choose among full-day and half day programs that also include My Records training, advising presentation and class registration, or mini orientation programs that include student panel, student activities information and a question and answer session. Programs are available in July and August. Register at CyFair.LoneStar.edu/orientation.

Family Story Time and Reading Programs Available - Families that read together, can succeed together to earn certificates, gift cards and other incentives as participants in the LSC-CyFair Library's Summer Reading Program. Be part of the Texas Reading Club Jubilee: 1958-2008! and help Texas celebrate 50 years of reading through numerous child, teen and adult programs. The Kids Corner also hosts the return of a weekly Family Story Time. Go to CyFair.LoneStar.edu/library for information.

L.I.F.E. Lessons in July - The Learning, Inspiration, Fellowship and Enrichment (L.I.F.E.) programs are free and held Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Lone Star College-CyFair Branch Library (Room 131.) In July, the programs include a book discussion on "Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation" July 2; French pastry lesson July 9; a talk on the JFK assassination July 16; accenting your garden with color July 23 and cool, light summer meal ideas July 30. Call the library at 281-290-3213 for L.I.F.E. program information or go online to CyFair.LoneStar.edu/library.



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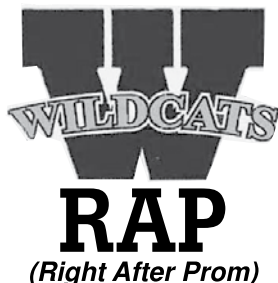
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Cy-Woods High School's project prom group of parents is busy raising funds for their first post prom celebration in May 2009. With about 930 seniors, WRAP has set a fundraising goal of \$100,000. Kicking off fundraising is the "Pave A Path To Woods" program. By purchasing a brick engraved with a senior student's name, a lasting memory of this first graduating class will be left at the school and project prom will earn funds at the same time. Bricks are \$100 each and the deadline to purchase is October 1st. Parents, relatives, friends and businesses can participate by buying a brick for their deserving senior. To purchase a brick, contact Cindy Theut c.theut@sbeglobal.net.

Parents can join WRAP by coming to the monthly meetings held on the second Tuesday of the month in the Cy-Woods High School Commons at 7pm or check out our website at cywoodswrap.org Start earning WRAP bucks now--\$10,000 WRAP bucks for a brick and \$5000 for attending a meeting! See you there!

July Landscaping

Submitted by Ron Kerwin

July heat will take its toll on our lawns, and everything in our lawns if we fail to use water properly. Water less frequently and deeper with each application. Our lawns need one inch of water per week. Do not water so much per application that it runs off into the street curbs, but do water as much as possible per each application. Put any straight-sided container out in the lawn, water for a specific period of time, and then simply measure the amount of water you caught in the container for that period of time. You now can figure an easy formula for the goal of 1 inch per week. Your lawn turf roots will seek a deeper soil level if you water longer with each application. Deeper roots will be healthier and less drought susceptible.

If your lawn turf is getting sparse under your trees, you might take at look at the following as a possible solution. Dead or damaged limbs in your trees are very visible right now. Remove them for a healthier and better looking tree. Raising the tree canopy will allow more sunlight to reach the lawn turf underneath. Raising the canopy means you simply remove the lower limbs from the tree trunk base upward to a point. This height varies with tree variety and it is basically up to your desires. After working on the canopy, you can work at thinning the tree. This involves removing the small diameter growths from each branch starting at the bottom limbs and working upward. Depending on the overall tree size you can remove these small growths out about 1/3 of the limb length from the main trunk. Removing all this will allow more light to get through to your soil. It also allows for an increase in air circulation through the tree, which is also a benefit to the tree. Another option would be to construct a bed and plant ground cover (Asian Jasmine or English Ivy) as examples of shade loving plants.

This is a good month to remove rose bush branches that are sickly or dead. A light pruning now will increase your fall flower production. Get a good thick layer of mulch down in all your beds to help your flowers and shrubs survive the heat we all know is coming. It is easy to figure your needs. Most mulch comes in 2 cubic foot bags. Take the length of your bed times it width, multiply by .17 (2 inch depth of mulch), or by .25 (3 inch depth of mulch), and divide by 2 cubic feet per bag. The result is how many bags you need to buy. Your shrubs bases take up some space so you can subtract one or two bags and still get by fine. Example- your bed is 5 feet by 25 feet. $5 \times 25 \times .17/2 = 10.6$ bags, buy 10 and you'll be just fine.

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Students at Cypress Christian School Serving our Soldiers



“Want to send your support to a soldier in harm’s way, but have no idea of what to send, who to send it to, or how to send it?”

In the fall of the 2007-2008 school year, Mrs. Carolyn Morgan, fifth grade teacher at Cypress

Christian School, asked this same question when planning a class service project. Mrs. Morgan desired for her class to communicate with a soldier and bless him/her in whatever way possible. She logged on to AnySoldier.com to find volunteer soldier “contacts” on the “Where to Send” page. All the soldiers on this web site are military men and women stationed in areas that are in harm’s way. She searched through the names and selected Major Christopher Lindner (shown at left).

Mrs. Morgan sent a few packages of goodies and supplies along with letters from her students to the address for Major Lindner. Upon receiving the packages, Major Lindner thanked Mrs. Morgan and her students via email and handwritten thank you cards. Mrs. Morgan began regularly corresponding with Major Lindner to determine his specific needs and requests. CCS students and parents jumped at the opportunity to continue blessing their “special” soldier. The back of Mrs. Morgan’s classroom was piled with donations which filled nineteen boxes – all to be shipped to Iraq. Donations included study materials, snack items, toiletries, white socks (which soldiers go through quickly), cards, letters and more. Major Lindner received so much that he was able to share the gifts with “his” soldiers serving alongside him in Iraq. He was even able to use some of the items in the Christmas stockings for his troops.

(Continued on page 8)

Cypress N Houston @ Barker Cypress

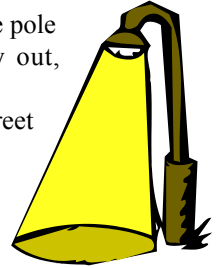
The engineer for HCMUD #196 has informed us that within the next few weeks the county will begin extending Cypress N Houston on the west side of Barker Cypress. It will extend west far enough for Riata West to utilize their main entrance. At that time they will be putting traffic lights in at that intersection which will make it easier to turn south onto Barker Cypress from Cypress N Houston. At the same time, they will be making Cypress N Houston on our side of Barker Cypress 4 lane divided back to the first storm drain. Prior to this we will be taking down the three columns at that entrance along with the flower beds. We will be constructing a new entrance once the road work is complete. The county will not work around the columns. If we don’t take them down, the utility crews will.

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.
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Or you can report it on the internet. Go to www.riataranch.net and click on “Report Street Light Outages”.



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Riata Ranch

Students - (Continued from page 7)



The fifth graders made it a priority to not only bless their special soldier with material items but to bless him through prayer. Major Lindner emailed specific prayer requests for his situation, his troops and his family back home in Colorado. In response to notes and

cards sent by the students, Major Lindner wrote Mrs. Morgan saying, "I'm in awe of the love and grace that your children obviously have for God's people. They are truly an inspiration to me, that's for sure." (Shown at right are some of the fifth graders who were involved in this service project. On the last day of school they posed for a picture while holding photos, cards and letters from Major Lindner.)

Some may call this a coincidence but Mrs. Morgan gives all the credit to God for directing her to this godly man who needed encouragement while serving his country in a foreign land. Major Lindner said in an email to Mrs. Morgan, "I don't know if I speak for

everyone, but there are many types of people who provide immense value for our country and we are just a small piece. So many people get overlooked regarding their contribution and value to our future. I do miss my family so much, but I know that God has a plan for me and I have to trust that He will take care of the things I cannot. It's tough wanting to be there for my children and wife to provide that something that only a father can provide. However, I've had to realize that God can do that even better than I." What an example of faith this godly man was to our students!

Special Surprise: When the students who participated in this service project return to school in the fall, they have a special surprise awaiting them. Major Lindner sent the classes an American flag which was accompanied by a Certificate of Appreciation which states that the flag was flown at the Camp Remembrance II Theatre Internment Facility, Baghdad, Iraq, on February 22, 2008 in honor of Cypress Christian School.

We "salute" the men and women serving in the military and say "thank you" for sacrificial service!

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Some Like It Hot!

Structure of Receptor for Hot Chili Pepper and Pain Revealed

Baylor College of Medicine

HOUSTON – (May 19, 2008) –You can now not only feel the spicy kick of a jalapeno pepper, you can also see it in full 3D, thanks to researchers at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Using sophisticated equipment, the research team led by Dr Theodore G. Wensel, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at BCM, generated the first three dimensional view of the protein that allows you to sense the heat of a hot pepper. The report appears in the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“This protein, known as TRPV1, not only senses spicy foods, but also makes it possible to feel real heat and the pain and inflammation related to other medical conditions,” said Wensel, senior author on the study. “This method of viewing the protein now gives us the chance to clearly see the functional relationship between outside stimuli and the nerve cell.”

The outside stimulus used in this study was the heat of a chili pepper. It has been known for years that the burning sensation results from the action of a chemical known as capsaicin on TRPV1 found on the nerve cell membrane. TRPV1 is an ion channel, a tiny pore on the cell membrane that allows chemicals such as calcium to flux in and out.

“Any time you feel a burn or pain sensation, it is mediated by a TRPV1 channel. Different levels of heat are mediated by different TRP channels,” said Dr. Vera Moiseenkova-Bell, a postdoctoral associate in Wensel’s laboratory at BCM and first author of the study. “They are all related but each is regulated in a different manner.”

Wensel said the three-dimensional image of TRPV1 revealed surprising information about its structure. It is made up of a pore domain embedded in the cell membrane, and a “hanging basket” of regulatory domains that extend into the interior of the cell.

“It’s an unusual thing. There is a whole hollow ‘basket’ area but we don’t know what’s that’s for,” Wensel said. “Now the search is on to understand how the ‘basket’ area regulates the channel.”

Isolating TRPV1 gives researchers an idea of how other channels are structured as well.

“Visualization of TRPV1 gives us insight on other TRP channels since they are structurally similar,” said Moiseenkova-Bell. “Pharmaceutical companies target these TRP channels to make sure the drug binds properly. With this first structure we can start to build models of binding sites and hopefully in the future design more effective pharmaceuticals for a wide range of medical conditions.”

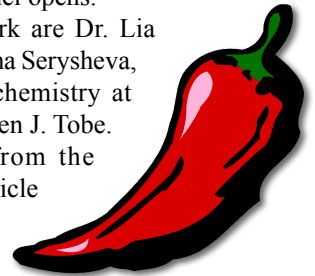
Studying these channels is nothing new. In the past, scientists could measure the activity in the cells but it was unclear what each channel was responding to. Determining which proteins interacted with TRPV1, however, required Wensel’s lab to create a purified model.

The protein had to be removed from cells, purified, and reconstituted in a synthetic membrane so researchers could control channel activity.

“Since calcium is involved in cell signaling, following the calcium movement confirmed the protein is active,” said Wensel. “We are the first group to purify a TRPV1 channel and control what goes in and out when the channel opens.”

Others who took part in this work are Dr. Lia Stanicu, of Purdue University, Dr. Irina Serysheva, adjunct associate professor of biochemistry at BCM, and BCM graduate student, Ben J. Tobe.

Funding for this work came from the National Institutes of Health. The article is available at www.pnas.org



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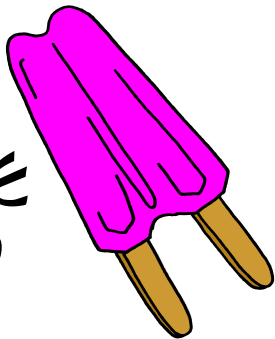


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STARTING THE DAY OFF ON A DELICIOUS NOTE

(NAPSA)-How you spend the morning hours can set the tone for the remainder of the day.

Fortunately, there are many easy ways to get your day off to a great start. Here are a few simple suggestions:

- Take a brisk walk. A walk first thing in the morning can reduce stress and generate energy for the rest of the day. Having a buddy to walk with and talk to can also be a mood booster.
- Listen to music. Your favorite music can create a sense of peace or fun that sets the mood. If you walk, take your iPod.
- Practice yoga. Yoga provides good stress management and exercise. Even fitting in a few minutes of yoga stretching each morning can benefit you.
- Stretch during the shower. Hot water can loosen muscles and relieve tension.
- Eat breakfast. Start your day off with delicious, nutritious food. Eating breakfast has been shown to help people concentrate during the day and help them maintain a healthy weight.



Start your day with a delicious, nutritious treat such as nectarine juice, which is high in vitamin C and antioxidants.

Photo credit: California Tree Fruit Agreement

Vary what you eat so every morning offers tasty treats. For example, substitute nectarine juice for orange juice. A new pure-pressed process makes it easier to extract not-from-concentrate nectarine juice from nectarines.

Starting with only the finest California-grown nectarines, the process gently steams the nectarines in a "spa treatment" to relax and tenderly release the pit, skin and flesh. The process yields 100 percent pure Sun Shower nectarine juice, capturing all the flavor, color, sweetness and nutrition. Drinking only eight ounces of nectarine juice means you get two servings of fruit for the day.

Nectarine juice has no added sugar or preservatives and is high in potassium, vitamin C, antioxidants and phytonutrients. It is rich in beta carotene and is fat free and cholesterol free. It's less acidic than orange juice and, having only 90 calories per serving, has 20 percent fewer calories. For more information, visit www.nbi.juiceworks.com.

- Start your day the night before. Lay out your clothes and everything you have to take with you in the morning, so you won't have to rush around looking for things when you're not quite awake.



Meet Austin

DOB March 2001

Austin is a playful and loving boy who enjoys playing in the water. He also loves Sesame Street books and his favorite character is the Cookie Monster. Austin is diagnosed with Autism and is learning how to communicate through sign language. He is also working on potty training. Austin is in special education and in kindergarten. His teacher reports that she enjoys having him in her class and that he has made a lot of progress. Austin is legally free for adoption and would do well with parents who can make an unconditional commitment to him.

For more information please contact:

Vanessa Coppola, MSSW

Adoption Coalition of Texas/Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

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Planning The "Perfect" Picnic

(NAPSA)-Ah, the signs of summer: leisurely afternoons, melting ice cream and the scent of freshly mown grass. For many people, it's time to enjoy the splendors of the outdoors-and one great way to do so is with a festive picnic.

Whether planning a romantic twosome at dusk or a family reunion for 30, the following tips can help make such a gathering a success:

Picnic Packing

They're trendy, they're fun and they're easy to find: Picnic baskets come in many different styles and sizes, from traditional wicker to insulated backpacks with separate compartments for silverware, stemware and plates. Wine and cheese totes come in handy for a romantic walk on the beach or an evening concert in the park. Splurge on a generous-sized ice chest for longer trips, but for shorter hauls, store-bought Styrofoam coolers work just as well.

Summer Specialties

Eating outdoors opens up a wonderful world of good taste and great memories. For an elegant outdoor concert or a day of waves, sun and sand, consider grilling center-cut, bone-in ham steaks paired with fresh summer produce. Ham steaks-premium cut steaks taken from the leanest center of the ham-are a convenient choice for picnic-goers



Summertime picnics provide plenty of atmosphere-and opportunity for creative cuisine.

who want to add a spark to any picnic dish.

The versatility and convenience of ham steaks also make them easy to dice and toss into pasta salads or shred into strips for ham and havarti cheese tortilla wraps. On each tortilla, arrange layers of ham strips topped with cheese, honey Dijon mustard and tomatoes and roll up for a light and easy summer meal that can be made ahead of time and frozen until needed.

Safety Tips

Don't forget to keep food safety in mind when planning and packing for picnics. Foods cooked ahead should be chilled thoroughly in the refrigerator and transferred directly into the cooler. To keep foods cooler longer, use icepacks rather than ice cubes, or freeze individually packaged drinks to keep foods cold during travel. Remember, storing coolers in the shade and away from direct sunlight will also help keep foods as cool as possible. And don't forget to replenish the ice once it melts.

Just about any meal seems to taste better when enjoyed outdoors, but planning the perfect picnic shouldn't be a burden. Make life easier by jotting down a quick checklist of all the picnic essentials, including sunscreen and bug spray. Once everything's checked off, don't forget the most important item for the picnic: fun!

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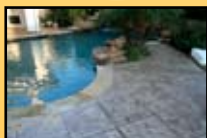
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