

# The LONGWOOD Letter

September 2008

Volume 2, Issue 9

News For The Residents of Longwood

## Local Students Contributes To The National Young Scholars Program Hands-on Activities Highlight Unique Learning Opportunity

*Submitted by Susan Thornburg*

Lee Maddox, Section 11 and Eric Thornburg, Section 19 – Both Hamilton Middle School students (6th grade) and Longwood residents attended NYSP at Schreiner University in Kerrville.

“The National Young Scholars Program provides students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on interactive learning, while challenging them in an intellectually stimulating environment outside of the regular classroom,” said Dr. Donna Snyder, a former classroom teacher, elementary school principal and university professor, who designed the Program’s curriculum.

NYSP gives students the change to unleash their full learning potential as they further their interest in specific areas of study such as environmental science, architecture, weather, world exploration, forensic science and medicine. Throughout the Program, young scholars engage in challenging coursework, gain a greater sense of independence and experience a renaissance of learning. The Program culminates with student-created projects tying in leadership skills learned with the discoveries made in their specific area of study.

Activities such as investigating a balanced

environment, exploring customs from around the world, embarking on a fascinating journey into the human body and solving a “whodunit” through work in a model forensics lab are just a few highlights of the innovative curriculum. Simulation activities and role-play encourage scholars to develop their leadership skills, while introducing them to the concepts of team-building, problem-solving, public speaking and goal-setting.

“NYSP taps into the natural curiosity that students at this young age already have,” said Dr. Snyder. “This program will help them continue down a path toward a lifelong love of learning.”

NYSP is sponsored by the National Center for Early Academic Excellence (NCEAE), an independent educational organization dedicated to identifying, inspiring and honoring the nation’s most promising elementary school students. NCEAE is comprised of highly successful practitioners in the field of elementary education who boast over 20 years of experience in implementing successful education programs for students.

For additional information, visit us at [www.nationalyoungscholars.org](http://www.nationalyoungscholars.org).



## Dog Walking Is Charity for Breast Cancer Research

Does your dog need to be walked? We are walking 20-40 miles a week in order to prepare for a breast cancer 3-day walk of 60 miles in Dallas, TX Nov, 7-9th ([the3day.org](http://the3day.org)). We must each raise \$2200.00 for this charity. We are offering our services to walk your dog / dogs while we train for this event. All money raised will go to this wonderful charity. Minimum charitable donation \$10.00/1/2 hour or \$15.00/ hour. References available. 713-385-1314



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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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Fire .....	911
Ambulance .....	911
Constable .....	281-376-3472
Sheriff - Non-emergency .....	713-221-6000
- Burglary & Theft .....	713-967-5770
- Auto Theft .....	281-550-0458
- Homicide/Assault .....	713-967-5810
- Child Abuse .....	713-529-4216
- Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence .....	713-967-5743
- Runaway Unit .....	713-755-7427
Poison Control .....	800-764-7661
Traffic Light Issues .....	713-881-3210

### SCHOOLS

Cypress Fairbanks ISD Administration .....	281-897-4000
Cypress Fairbanks ISD Transportation .....	281-897-4380
Cypress Fairbanks Senior High .....	281-897-4600
Goodson Middle School .....	281-373-2350
Hamilton Elementary .....	281-370-0990

### OTHER NUMBERS

Animal Control .....	281-999-3191
Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center .....	281-890-4285
Harris County Health Department .....	713-439-6260
Post Office Box Assignment – Cypress .....	1-800-275-8777
Street Lights - CenterPoint Energy .....	713-207-2222
- not working (Report Number on Pole)	
Trash Removal .....	281-446-2030

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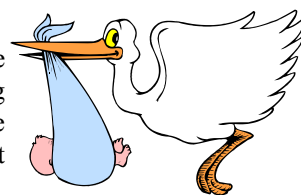
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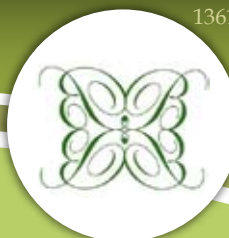
### Stork Report

If you have a new addition to the family please let us know by emailing [longwoodletter@peelinc.com](mailto:longwoodletter@peelinc.com) and we will include an announcement to let everyone know!



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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## September Landscaping

*Submitted By Ron Kerwin*

September is the startup time for planning some cool season activity. It is about time, right? We need to continue with all the things we have been doing to get through another summer; watering at 1 inch per week, good layers of mulch etc.

Now is a good time to raise tree canopies and thin them out. Dead limbs are obvious now, which will not be the case after leaf drop. Many property owners still have curb area trees with limbs prohibiting cars or trucks from parking in front of the home without paint damage to the roofs. These same trees often endanger passersby on the sidewalk from being poked in the eyes. They also usually have dead grass underneath caused by lack of sunlight to the turf area. Other trees on your properties can benefit from canopy raising and thinning. Wax myrtles and some other "shrubs" can be treed up so they have visible trunks and more resemble trees than shrubs, a totally different look.

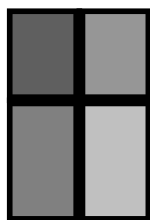
Historically Septembers are still very hot. If you are wearing down, you can still hire a lawn service (like mine) to get you through the season. Lawn Companies should be happy to take you on as new clients even this late in the season. If you desire to have an attractive and green lawn all winter, you can put down ryegrass seed late in the



month or in October. Your property will stand out in the neighborhood as people drive by and see your green lawn amongst all the dormant grass lawns.

Buy your spring bulbs through catalogs or local nurseries. DO NOT plant them yet. You can get a better selection now. Hybrid tulips and hyacinth bulbs should be placed in the vegetable crisper section in your refrigerator for a necessary pre-chill period prior to planting them. Wait until October/November to plant any bulbs. You can however prepare the beds for the bulbs, add organic matter & turn over the soil.

You can cut back your roses early in the month, but do it sparingly. You will get a rose display this fall if you have maintained your roses well over the summer heat. You can actually plant a fall vegetable garden now. For a list of veggies recommended and their varieties for this area call the Texas Extension office at 817-884-1945 and ask for the free list. The Extension Office has a surprising quantity of free information available, so ask for answers to several questions. The volunteer Master Gardeners there will try hard to get you the right publications.



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### SUNDAY'S AT SAINT AIDAN'S

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6pm – Dinner  
6:30pm – Worship  
6:45pm – Classes for All Ages  
Nursery available. The evening ends by 7:30pm.

**Check us out on the web at [www.staidanshouston.org](http://www.staidanshouston.org)**



**Parenting Workshop**  
**Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**4-7pm**

Workshops on Parenting Children;  
Parenting Teens; His, Hers, and/or Ours;  
and Parenting Parents. Childcare provided.  
Dinner will be served.

**Father Justin,  
our Priest, is  
looking forward  
to seeing you at  
church!**



# LONGWOOD LETTER



General Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Cy-Woods commons on the following dates:

Make plans to attend these meetings and earn 5000 WRAP Bucks!

(to find out what WRAP Bucks are - visit the WRAP website.)

## MEETING DATES:

Aug 12, 2008  
Sept 9, 2008  
Oct 14, 2008  
Nov 11, 2008  
Dec 9, 2008  
Jan 13, 2009  
Feb 10, 2009  
Mar 10, 2009  
Apr 14, 2009  
May 12, 2009

## WHAT IS WRAP?

WRAP is Cy-Woods High School's parent-driven Project Prom organization. The purpose of WRAP is to provide a drug- and alcohol-free all-night party for the graduating seniors and their guests after their prom. Held at the CFISD Berry Center on May 22, 2009, from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., it is a fun-filled evening of shows, games, activities, food, gifts and prizes!

WRAP can only be a success if there is participation of parents, businesses, and corporations. WRAP is totally dependent on donations to raise the funds necessary to host an event of this size

Other WRAP Fundraising Projects:

- Senior Faces
- Recyclables
- Scrips
- Wildcat Sports Fan
- Senior Parent t-shirts
- Jeans & Jewels
- Mr. Wildcat (spring 2009)

## PAVE A PATH TO WOODS PROGRAM

Help a CyWoods Senior leave a lasting memory of their time at CyWoods with a walk/wall of bricks by sponsoring them. Order forms for \$100 sponsorships are available on the WRAP website. What a great gift this would be!



(sample only)

For more information:  
Visit  
[WWW.CYWOODSWRAP.ORG](http://WWW.CYWOODSWRAP.ORG)

WRAP  
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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## Cypress Assistance Ministries

11202 Huffmeister

281-955-7684

[www.cypressassistance.org](http://www.cypressassistance.org)

### Volunteers Needed

When you volunteer you are giving to your community, but did you realize volunteering also benefits you as an individual? CAM volunteers often let us know the fun they are having, the friends they have made and the fulfillment they receive from helping others.

The services provided at CAM, are made possible by many dedicated volunteers. If you enjoy working with the public, decorating or merchandising, then serving in CAM's resale shop, Angels' Attic, is the place for you. Our busy community donation area, the Cellar, is looking for people willing to serve by processing donations and restocking Angels' Attic. Please plan to attend a volunteer tour and orientation by calling Lisa Bassett at 281-955-7684 or e-mail at [cam-lisa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cam-lisa@sbcglobal.net).

For a description of the services provided at Cypress Assistance Ministries, Food Pantry requests, and a detailed description of volunteer opportunities, please see our web site, [www.cypressassistance.org](http://www.cypressassistance.org).

## Judy Dierker Holiday Market

A Shopper's Heaven on Earth! The Foundry United Methodist Church will host over 100 vendors at its annual Judy Dierker Holiday Market on Saturday, October 18, 2008, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You'll find terrific values on a wide array of goods from vendors offering handcrafted items, fall & Christmas specialties, gourmet baked goods, children's toys, clothing, jewelry and more in a fun and friendly marketplace. You can also shop The Foundry General Store where every cent you spend benefits local and foreign missions. And, when you're hungry, be sure to stop by our Texas Tea Room, open 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and enjoy salads, desserts, and coffees. Admission to the market is FREE; purchase tea room tickets at the event for \$10 each (all proceeds benefiting missions). Come rain or shine! Foundry is located at 8350 Jones Road, 1-½ blocks north of Hwy 290. For more information, call 713-937-9388 or see [www.foundryfamily.org](http://www.foundryfamily.org).

### Walk Now For Autism

Saturday, October 18, 2008 • Reliant Park

Walk Starts: 10:00 am

For more information on joining a team and helping to find a cure, contact: Kim Moore @ 281-414-0218

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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## A Prosperous Retirement - Five Strategies You Can Use Now

*Submitted by Rich Keith*

How do you envision retirement? While each of us answers that question differently, everyone can use these five strategies to help ensure a prosperous retirement.

### **Think of social security as a supplement**

Social Security currently pays the average retiree only about 40% of preretirement earnings; yet financial experts estimate that most people will require about 70% of their current annual income to maintain their lifestyle. In addition, Social Security benefits may be reduced as baby boomers retire, leaving fewer workers to pay taxes. The Social Security Administration (SSA) mails annual statements which provide an estimate of your monthly benefit, depending on your age when you retire. You may begin collecting reduced benefits at age 62, and your full-benefit retirement age depends on your birth year. Visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) for detailed eligibility information.

### **Don't pay the price of procrastination**

As you plan for retirement, time can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Procrastination can be expensive. The longer you wait to begin saving for retirement, the more you'll have to save each month to build an adequate nest egg. Also keep in mind that inflation nibbles constantly at your nest egg. Even modest inflation means that each dollar you save today will be worth less in the future.

A 3% annual rate of inflation reduces the buying power of \$1,000 to just \$544 over a 20-year period.

### **Invest in a retirement plan**

A tax-deferred retirement plan offers potential for faster earnings growth, as well as other advantages, including:

- **Pretax savings:** Since contributions are deducted from your salary before taxes are taken out, you pay less federal tax on the money you're investing.
- **Tax-deferred compounding:** Your money grows faster because you pay no current tax on your investment earnings. And the growth may compound tax-deferred until you withdraw them as retirement income. Other plans allow you to save after-tax money, and your savings will not be taxed by the IRS at retirement.
- **Your contributions are yours to keep.** You can roll over the money you've saved in a retirement plan into another company's plan or into your own IRA if you change jobs.

### **Consider dollar-cost averaging**

Commit to investing a fixed amount of money at a regular interval. The advantages are: You make the most of market highs and lows because you automatically buy more shares when prices are low and

*(Continued on page 7)*

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***A Prosperous Retirement - (Continued from page 6)***

fewer when prices are high; your average cost per share over a period of time may be less than the average price per share; and you are less tempted to make decisions based on short-term market fluctuations or emotions.

**Educate yourself and talk to a financial professional**

The key to a prosperous retirement is a practical investment strategy, and vigorous protection for your family's income and assets. Partner with a financial professional and become educated about your "retirement environment."

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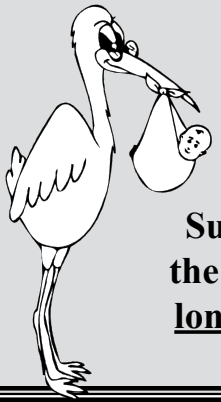
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## Stork Report in Longwood

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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

School is back in session. Please be aware of children walking and biking to and from school. Of course, we want all children to be safe and school buses are relatively safe. However, accidents and injuries involving school buses do happen. More often than not these injuries happen when children are entering or exiting the bus. Here are some safety tips for school bus riders.

- Have a safe place to wait for the bus, away from traffic and the street.
- Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter.
- Hold onto the handrails when entering or exiting the bus.
- Once on the bus, take your seat and remain seated face forward.
- Talk quietly so that you don't distract the driver.
- Never throw things on the bus and keep your hands to yourself.



- When you exit the bus, take ten giant steps away from the bus. When you are closer than 10 feet from the bus, the driver might not see you. This is known as the DANGER ZONE.
- If you forget something on the bus, do not return to the bus to get it. The driver might not see you.
- Be aware of the street traffic around you.
- If you need to cross the street, cross in front

of the bus never behind the bus.

Motorists should follow safety rules around school buses. Yellow flashing lights indicate that the bus is preparing to stop. Motorists should slow down and be prepared to stop. Red flashing lights indicate that the bus has stopped and that children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red flashing lights are turned off. Here are a few more traffic safety tips for motorists.

- When backing out of the driveway or garage, watch out for children.
- When driving through neighborhoods and especially in school zones, watch out for children. Children don't always pay attention to traffic and don't always know that motorists have trouble seeing them.
- Slow down. Watch out for children walking or playing in the street.
- Be alert and ready to stop. Children sometimes dart into the street.

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Owner Direct: 832.257.0725  
[www.corehouston.net](http://www.corehouston.net)





## Cypress Christian School Students receive honors at TAPPS State Art Competition

Cypress Christian School students recently received awards at the TAPPS State Art Contest at Concordia University. CCS students entered eight pieces of work in the competition and received six ribbons.

Recognition was given to the following students:

- Cat Crozier-Honorable Mention in on-site drawing
- Payton Lambert-4th place in on-site photography
- Sarah Longridge-Honorable mention in on-site drawing
- Courtney Middleton-Honorable mention in kitchen floor plan
- Michelle Van Rieg-6th place in bedroom floor plan and model
- Nick Yalamanchili-Honorable mention in on-site photography

Other students who participated included Kate Bennett, Tony Lozoda, Charis Medendorp, Jenifer Nguyen, and Rachel Reed.

## Newsletter Article Submissions

Interested in submitting an article? You can do so by emailing [longwoodletter@peelinc.com](mailto:longwoodletter@peelinc.com) or by going to <http://www.peelinc.com/articleSubmit.php>. All news must be received by the 9th of the month prior to the issue. So if you are involved with a school group, scouts, sports etc – please submit your articles for Longwood Letter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations and military service are also welcome.



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- Elementary



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"Frank's leaving competitive coaching was a tremendous loss to American gymnastics, but an even greater gain to American children through his specialized and creative program." – YOICHI TOMITA, 1988 & 2000 US OLYMPIC COACH

Frank Thompson is the one "who I give the credit of instilling the love of gymnastics within me." – RAJ BHAVSAR, 2008 OLYMPIAN

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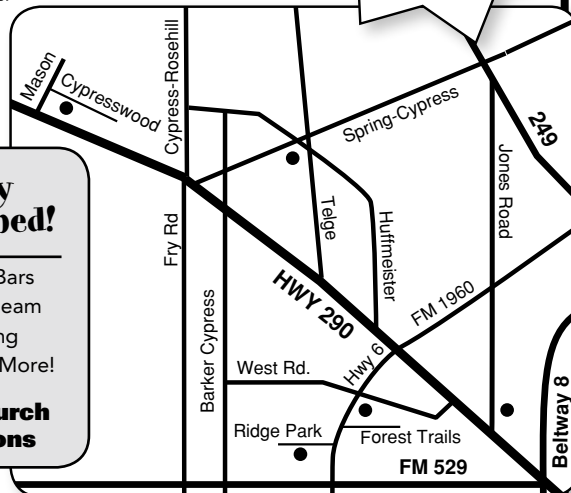
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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## Cy-Fair Lacrosse Introductory

*Lacrosse Clinic*

Cy-fair Lacrosse will be hosting a FREE introductory lacrosse clinic on September 13, 2008 from 9 am to 11 am at the East side of Matzke Park (13207 Copeland) for boys Grades 4 to 8. The purpose of the clinic will be to introduce potential players to the sport and promote lacrosse in the Cy-fair area. Equipment will be on loan for the clinic. Just bring yourself, your running shoes, and a parent / guardian.

### Why Lacrosse?

Lacrosse is a great option for someone looking for a fast paced alternative to the "traditional" team sports. Lacrosse is the original team sport of North America. It was initially played by Native Americans as a way to resolve conflicts.

Lacrosse is a combination of soccer, basketball, and hockey all in one. It is a fast paced and exciting game to play and to watch.

Lacrosse is currently one of the fastest growing team sports in the US. For the past 10 years Lacrosse has been the fastest growing High School sport in the nation and the fastest growing NCAA sport for the past 6 years with a 10% annual player participation growth rate.

So come and see what all the excitement's about! We'll be there, just LAX'n.

For more information please visit our web-site at:  
[www.cyfairlacrosse.org](http://www.cyfairlacrosse.org)

## Come On Out to Our Back to School Market Featuring Your Favorite Vendors:

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**Taste of Home Entertaining**

**Tastefully Simple**

**Usborne Books** – Free shipping & handling with any order! There will be raffle prizes, and great food to sample! Enjoy a leisurely afternoon of shopping to find perfect gifts for teachers, upcoming birthdays, weddings or baby showers. You can even get all of your Christmas shopping done early this year!

**September 6, 2008 • 1-4pm**

**20910 E Cameron Ridge Dr**

**Cypress, TX**

**(Lakes of Fairhaven)**

## The Foot Wellness Center



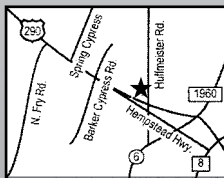
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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## Lone Star College-CyFair Perspective

### Fall Fun in the Gallery and on Stage

The Bosque Gallery presents IMP(LIE)D LI(N)E : Faculty Art Exhibition Sept. 9 – Sept. 25 with an opening reception Sept. 11. A Clay Houston Exhibition is set for Oct. 7 – Oct. 30 with an opening reception Oct. 9. Go to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu/bosquegallery](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu/bosquegallery) for hours and information. Also coming up in October are a string orchestra concert Oct. 13, Jazz Band Concert Oct. 17 and a choral “Nothing But Opera” show Oct. 31 – Nov. 1. For tickets and information call 281-290-5201 or go to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu/boxoffice](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu/boxoffice).

### Register for Second Start Classes

Registration is available for Second Start classes which start in September and October. Register for online, weekend, evening or distance learning courses by phone, 281-290-3200 or 832-782-5000; online to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu); or in person at one of our conveniently located campuses at 9191 Barker Cypress or 14955 Northwest Freeway.

### Mark Your Calendars for Fourth Annual Cy-Fest

Lone Star College-CyFair will host the fourth annual community day for all ages in the Cy-Fair community Saturday, Oct. 11. Cy-Fest, the college’s gift to the community, is a day of free food, festivities and family fun! For information go online to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu).

### L.I.F.E. Lessons in September

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 September, learn secrets of ancient Chinese herbal medicine Sept. 3; get survival tips to start a fire without matches Sept. 10; examine the economic and social importance of

China’s city of Hangzhou past and present Sept. 17; get the scoop on all things hummingbird Sept. 24. Call the library at 281-290-3213 for L.I.F.E. program information or go online to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu/library](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu/library).

## Send Us Your Event Pictures!!

Do you have a picture of an event that you would like to run in the Longwood Letter? Send it to us and we will publish it in the next issue. Email the picture to [longwoodletter@peelinc.com](mailto:longwoodletter@peelinc.com). Be sure to include the text that you would like to have as the caption. Pictures will appear in color online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com).



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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fairfield

## 5K for Life

Benefiting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

It's a Run! It's a Walk! It's a Party!

**Date:** Saturday, Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Rain or Shine.

**Time:** 5K begins at 8:00 a.m. 50-yard dash begins at 8:45 a.m. Festivities follow with refreshments, prize drawings, and awards.

**Place:** Fairfield Athletic Center, 16055 Mason Road

**Race packet pickup:** 7 to 8 p.m. Friday evening at the Fairfield Athletic Club; 7:00 a.m. race day

**Awards:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Male & Female overall; Boy under 12 & Girl under 12 (5K)

**Fees:** 5K--\$20 before 10/11; \$25 after 10/11

50-yard dash for kids 10 and under--\$10 before 10/11; \$15 after 10/11

**Questions:** Call Kelley Armstrong at 281-796-6577 or email at [kdabrazofuerte@yahoo.com](mailto:kdabrazofuerte@yahoo.com)

**Visit the website @** <http://www.fairfield5k.apluscompsci.com>

Online registration is available via Active.com (enter through our website).

One registrant per form. Copies accepted. Sorry, no refunds. Entrants will receive T-shirts, chances to win prize drawings, and refreshments. Additional chances for prizes can be purchased the day of the race, so bring your dollars! Jogging strollers are welcome.

Sorry, no bikes, rollerblades, or scooters allowed!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle shirt size:      Youth L      Adult S      Adult M      Adult L      Adult XL

**Please mail or deliver form to: Race director, 15418 Coral Leaf Trail, Cypress, TX 77433**

**Make checks payable to Kelley Armstrong.**

**ENTRY FORM MUST BE SIGNED BELOW TO ENTER RACE**

Release of Liability. In consideration of acceptance of this entry, I waive and release any and all claims for myself and my heirs against Friendswood Development, Fairfield Athletic Club, Kelley Armstrong, all sponsors and their representatives for any and all injuries suffered by me in this event. I attest and verify that I am physically fit and have sufficiently trained for this event and my physical condition has been recently verified by a licensed medical doctor. Further, I hereby grant full permission to any and all of the foregoing to use photographs or images taken during this event for legitimate purpose. I agree to abide by the rules of this event and show good sportsmanship.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## Fall Registration Starts Sept. 12 for Active Seniors in Cy-Fair Community

Free and reduced rate Academy for Lifelong Learning classes available at LSC-CyFair

Cypress, Texas (Aug. 11, 2008) Check out the new fall schedule for the Academy for Lifelong Learning (A.L.L.) at Lone Star College-CyFair geared for area seniors age 50 and better.

More than 40 classes are scheduled with brand new offerings such as AARP Driver Safety Class, Election 2008 and The Hobby Corner. Among typical A.L.L. class offerings are health and fitness, history, art, music, films, personal growth, government and many other subjects.

An open house with light refreshments is set for 3 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12 in the Technology Building, rooms 101 and 102 on the LSC-CyFair Barker Cypress campus. Fall registration follows from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Technology Building, rooms 104 A and B. Registration continues Monday, Sept. 15 and Tuesday, Sept. 16 from 9 a.m. to noon in student registration, located in the Learning Commons building.

A.L.L. is an organization for active adults, 50 plus years of age, offering classes and social activities for continued intellectual and personal growth. For an annual membership fee of \$10, members can take A.L.L. courses free of charge or at a reduced fee.

For information, call 281-290-5273 or go to [CyFair.LoneStar.edu/ALL](http://CyFair.LoneStar.edu/ALL).

## Houston Horizon Chorus

Learn Christmas songs in 4 part acapella (barbershop) style with Houston Horizon Chorus and perform with us in our Christmas concert December 16th at Grace Presbyterian Church. No experience necessary; just be able to carry a tune

### Rehearsals:

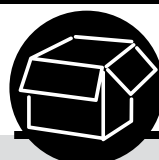
When: Tuesdays, October 7th to December 9th, 7-9 pm

Where: Unity Church of Christianity

2819 Hillcroft, Houston (near Westheimer)

Cost: FREE!!!!!!!

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# LONGWOOD LETTER

## What Everyone Needs to Know About Flip-Flops

Throwing on a pair of flip-flops is an integral part of summer for many people in Austin. Flip-flops may be throwing off your stride and causing pain in your legs and feet. Wearing flip-flops can not only cause dysfunctional changes and pain in your foot, these changes can resonate all the way up to your head, neck and jaw causing headaches and neck pain; reported in an article published in the June 2008 USA Today by the American College of Sports Medicine.

Researchers at Auburn University in Alabama recruited 39 college-age men and women, and measured how the participants walked on a special platform wearing thong flip-flops. On another day, the same participants walked across the platform wearing their own athletic shoes.

When the participants wore flip-flops, they took shorter strides and their heels hit the ground with less vertical force. When walking in flip-flops, they apparently alter their gait, which explains why lower leg and foot problems can occur in people who wear such shoes frequently.

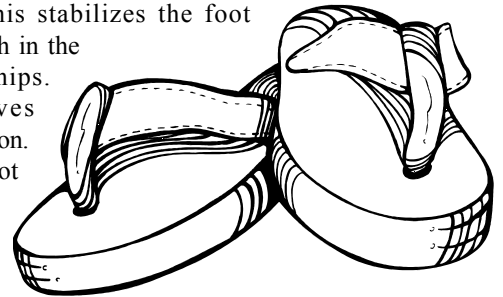
Let me explain how this happens. Your toes try to grip into bottom of the flip-flop to hold them on your feet. Look at your toes in flip-flops. The distal part of your toe is trying to flex down (planter flex) to hold the flip-flop on, while the other part of your toe (middle) is trying to bridge up (dorsi flex). This is the opposite of what your toes should be doing at that time. This improper toe action shortens natural stride, prevents the natural "locking" of your foot and forces your hip and leg musculature to work harder, forcing some muscles to shut down.

Due to this unnatural gait, wearing flip-flops over time will increase chances of bunion formation and hammer toes. Practicing in Boston, MA, where 7 months out of the year people don't usually wear flip-flops, I have to say that I did not see as many patients that presented to my clinic with these problems than I do here practicing in Austin, TX.

Wearing flip-flops around the house, in the backyard, on the beach, and around the pool is fine, but running errands where you are on your feet for long periods of time should be avoided with flip-flops, especially if there is physical activity involved. This is extremely important in kids where they are still developing and establishing their gait patterns.

Going barefoot is a good idea where possible (ie. in the home, backyard). Walking barefoot strengthens foot muscles and increases proprioception. This stabilizes the foot and increases strength in the ankle, knees, and hips. Thus, this improves balance and coordination.

So walking barefoot could be an easy way to contribute to your overall health.



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Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

[This information will only be used to notify you or your parents if your artwork was selected.]



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