News For the Residents of Stone Gate

February 2009 - Volume 2, Issue 2

as a

of the



Submitted by Kelln Rivici

Let me introduce myself: My name is Keith Rivich and, along with my wife Kim and children Michael age 5 and Sarah age 2, have been living in Stone Gate for a little over a year. By profession I am in industrial tool sales but by hobby I have been an avid amateur astronomer for nearly 20 years.

For most of the 20 years I have been involved with the George Observatory (located in Brazos Bend State Park) as a volunteer for public observing and helping professional astronomers collect data on various astronomical objects such as comets, asteroids and variable stars. Part of my duties as a volunteer is to teach young and old alike a bit about astronomy by way of observing through various telescopes as well as using the unaided eye to learn constellations, planets and bright stars.

By looking at the title you may think you can't do a whole lot of astronomy in our light polluted environment but of course you can! The five classical planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) as well as the moon and many of the brighter stars and constellations are easily observable. With a little optical aid, such as a good pair of binoculars or a well-made telescope many other types of objects are there for the looking.

With that in mind lets take a look at what is happening in February. All month long the early evening sky is dominated by brilliant Venus easily located in the southwest sky about 40 degrees above the horizon at sunset. Stunningly bright at magnitude –4.8 Venus easily outshines all other heavenly objects except the sun and moon. By months end Venus will be about 10 degrees lower and a bit more west as it slowly descends into the glare of the sun in the coming months. If you have a telescope take a look. You might expect Venus to appear round, after all it is a planet, but because Venus' orbit is closer to the sun then our earth we see it only partially lit resembling the crescent moon! To see Venus as a round ball it would have to be on the other side of the sun

from us and would thus not be visible as the intense glare of the sun would prevent us from seeing it. Many people have reported seeing Venus as a crescent without using a telescope, can you? Our very own moon is putting on a good show this month with a slew of events destined. On the 3rd the moon will skim along side the bright star cluster known as the Pleides or more popularly known as the "Seven Sisters". Visible with the unaided eye small dipper shaped asterism the Pleides is one

closest gravitationally bound star groups to us. Use binoculars to observe this grazing occultation for a spectacular view. On the 9th the moon will slip into the outer reaches of the earths shadow in what is called a penumbral eclipse. This occurs early in the morning so the sun rises before the moons darkening can be seen. Only observers on the west coast as well as Asia and Australia will have a chance to see this eclipse. The next lunar event occurs on the 22nd as the moon slips into a nice planetary alignment with Mercury, Jupiter and Mars. To view this alignment you will need a low eastern horizon and binoculars. Bundle up and go out at around 6:00AM. Look east and locate the thin crescent moon only 10 degrees above the ground. Work quick as the rising sun will quickly make this more difficult! Once located think of the moon as the center of a clock. Starting from the moon sweep your binoculars very slowly towards the 8:00 position of our imaginary clock. The first bright "star" see will be the planet Mercury next in line is much brighter Jupiter and finally dim Mars. The final moon event is also the most visually impressive. On the 27th it will pass only 2 degrees from Venus. At this distance you can almost cover up both celestial bodies with your outstretched thumb! To see a vivid example of the moons movement through space take a look the day before the conjunction and the day after. On the 26th the moon will be nearly halfway down to the horizon from Venus and on the 28th nearly the same distance above Venus.

Next month we will look at how to locate Saturn and hunt down one of the easiest constellations to recognize; Orion.

(Keywords for this article: stellar magnitude, angular separation, open cluster, Pleides, penumbral eclipse, grazing occultation, planetary conjunction)

Newsletter Information

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Welcome to The Sun

A newsletter for Stone Gate residents

by Stone Gate residents.

The Sun is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Stone Gate residents. Each newsletter will be filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www.PEELinc. com or you can email it <u>articles@peelinc.com</u>.Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome. Our goal is to keep you informed!

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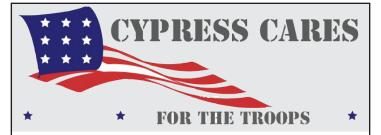
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As 2009 is now underway, Cypress Cares would like to announce the dates that we will be boxing up our care packages for the year. All boxing events will be held at the Cole's Crossing Community Center, located at 13050 Barker Cypress Road at Jarvis Road.

Several of our packing days this year are specifically at times when Cy Fair ISD is not in session so that our students will have an opportunity to be involved as well. The dates are as follows:

> January 31, 10:00 March 14, 10:00 April 25, 10:00 July 8, 12:00 August 17, 2:00 October 3, 10:00 Halloween Treats for Troops November 14, 10:00 Christmas Trees and Decorations December 28, 1:00 Christmas Break Service Project for Cy Fair Students

Cypress Cares has received more thank you notes from the troops who have received packages. Visit our website, www.cypresscares.org to view the troop responses, as well as more current information about upcoming events, donation ideas and more. Our troops need and deserve our support; get involved today!



Newsletter Article Submissions

Interested in submitting an article? You can do so by emailing <u>articles@PEELinc.com</u> 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 The Sun. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations and military service are also welcome.

Cypress Creek High School Celebrates Spring Cougar Day Houston, TX, January 3, 2009

The Cypress Creek High School Athletic Booster Club will be having its annual spring fundraiser, Cougar Day, on Saturday, February 7th, 2009 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The community is invited to participate in the day's festivities, which will take place at the Cypress Creek High School football stadium complex, 9815 Grant Road, Houston.

Featured activities are: Baked Potato Meal Sale, Silent Auction, Concession Stand, Face Painting, Cake Walk, and Cougar Spirit Items sale. The day will also showcase the spring season boys' and girls' sports: Baseball, Soccer, Softball, Track & Field, Swimming, Golf, Wrestling and Tennis. Several of the teams will have scrimmages or do demonstrations.

All funds raised will go directly to support Cypress Creek's boys' and girls' athletic programs.

For further information, please visit the Cypress Creek Athletic Booster club website at www.cycreekabc.com or contact Jeneane Schultz at 832-444-7607.



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Corrie Andrews Ashton Binkley Hannah Cochran Christian Dixon Yvonne Espinoza Andrew Harding Katherine Hulbert Daniel Mueller Jeremy Nguyen Lauren Nugent Jared Pereira Beau Powell

Rebecca Royall Jeffrey Schultz Randal Schultz Amanda Sutherland Anderson Toups Phoebe Toups Austin Ulmer Kristen Walker Kylee Waters

Not Pictured: *Daniel Bunch*

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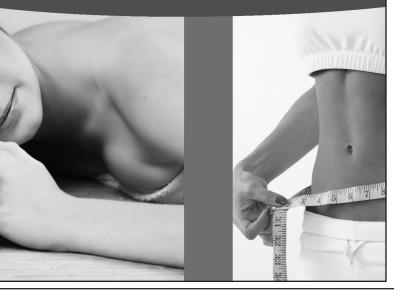


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February is American Heart Month

Submitted by Karen Behrend

February is American Heart Month! Here are some facts and tips to help you keep your heart healthy and help prevent Heart Disease.

COOL HEART FACTS:

- o The heart beats 2.5 billion times in a lifetime (65 yrs) (if you take care of it, maybe more!)
- o It takes 23-24 seconds for a drop of blood to circulate through the entire body
- o Your body pumps 1 million barrels of blood in a lifetime!
- o Your body has 60,000 miles of blood vessels
- Every day over 650 Americans have coronary bypass surgery.

RISK FACTORS:

I. Unalterable Risk Factors you CAN NOT change:

- o Family History (father/brother had heart disease before age 55, or mother/sister before age 65).
- o Gender (men have a higher risk)

Engage minds and hearts

will follow.

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approach unlike any other. Our proprietary,

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o Age (Men over 45 and Women over 55 are at increase risk)

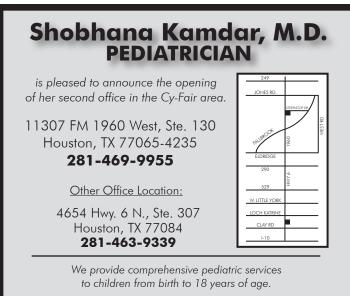
II. Risk Factors you CAN alter:

- o High Blood Pressure (three readings at 140/90 in a month, see your doctor)
- o Smoking (#1 preventable cause of heart attacks in the US. Smokers have a 70% great risk than nonsmokers). Tough habit to break, but sooner or later you will quit!
- o Cholesterol (Blood cholesterol of 200 mg/dl is desirable, 239 mg/dl is borderline and 240 mg/dl+ is high) Know your numbers and get a complete breakdown of your total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and Triglycerides. Have your doctor explain the numbers to you!
- o Obesity (more than 30% of your desirable weight) Eating too much of the wrong foods can make you fat! Focus on 5 fruits or veggies a day for the next 20 days.
- o Physical Inactivity (Choose to move! 30-60 minutes 3-4 times a week!)

III. Other contributing Factors

- o Diabetes
- o Stress/Tension
- o Hormonal Factors
- o Alcohol

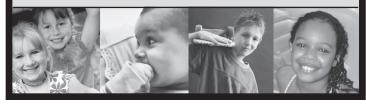
(Continued on page 7)



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Feb. is American Heart Month- (Continued from page 6)

Primary Risk Factors have the strongest relationship to heart disease (family history, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and physical inactivity), when two or more of these are present, the likelihood of heart disease greatly increases.

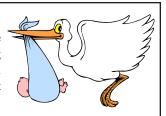
10 TIPS TO HELP DEVELOP HEALTHY HABITS AND PREVENT HEART DISEASE IN YOUR FAMILY

Take care of your heart and your children's hearts by:

- 1. Regular daily physical activity (walk, bike, hike together)
- 2. Participate in age-appropriate sports, lesson or clubs. Let kids try a variety and find what they like
- 3. Participate in household chores (the physical kind)
- 4. Follow a healthy diet; low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates. Be supportive. Focus on positive instead of negative. Praise for a job well done!
- 5. Don't reward kids with food...find other ways to celebrate!
- 6. Be supportive. Focus on positive instead of negative. Praise for a job well done!
- Limit TV, video game and computer time...disconnect from it! 1-2 hours a day max!
- 8. Be a positive role model and practice what you preach
- 9. Set goals and limits. Daily activity, 1-2 desserts a week
- 10. Learn CPR. The next life you save may be someone you love!

Stork Report

If you have a new addition to the family please let us know by emailing <u>articles@PEELinc.com</u> and we will include an announcement to let everyone know!



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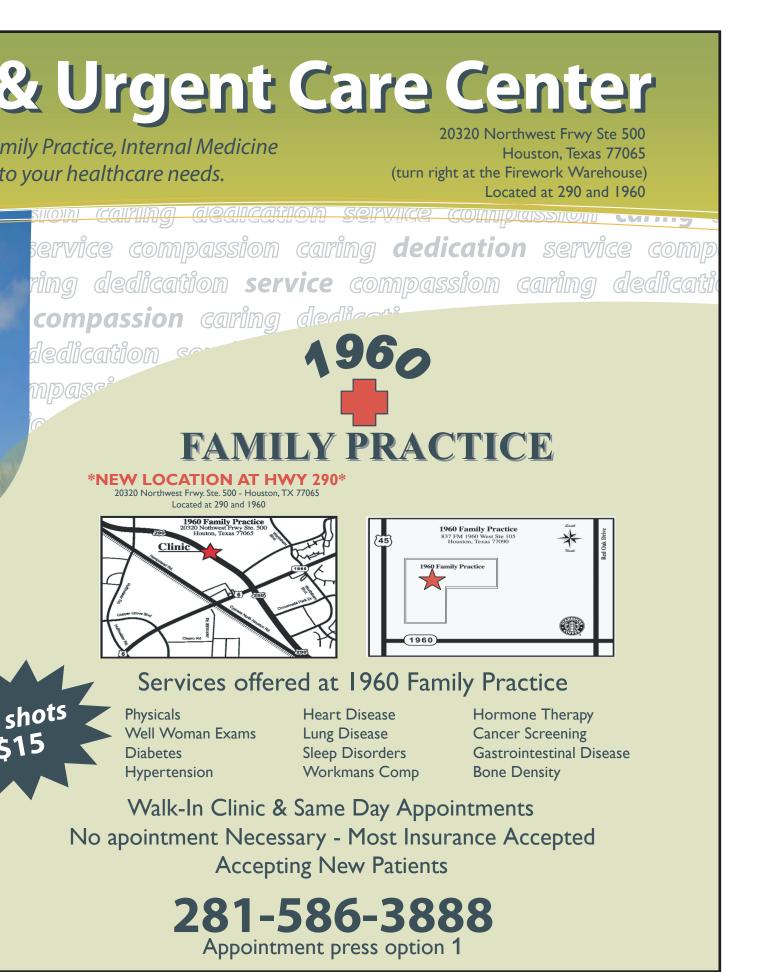
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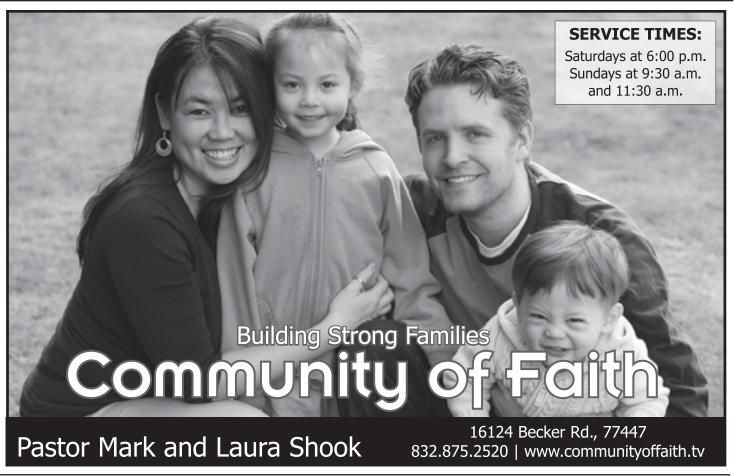
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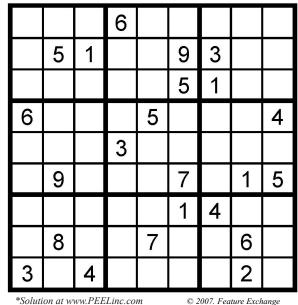
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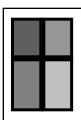
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The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down, and each 3x3 box.





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Meet Rebecka

As we look forward to 2009, maybe we have kids graduating from high school, maybe we ourselves decided to go back to school, or maybe we are looking forward to a career change. Either way, we are looking forward to this year with optimism and hope – hope for health and happiness. Whatever



our goals are for the new year, the children in foster care remain in pretty much the same place, with the same goals. You see, the children were removed from their homes, from their families – not because of something they did, but something their parents did. Now, they live in a temporary foster care system wondering what the future holds. Foster care is a time for these children to heal, but it is not the end. It is supposed to be a temporary system until the children can move on to permanency, and permanency being the safe, stable and loving family that will be there for them forever.

Meet Rebecka. She has been in foster care a few years and has hopes. Her biggest hope is that someone will love her enough to claim her. Her other hopes include the person, or family, being patient enough for her to learn and grow, and catch up for all of the time missed. For some children, they need that one on one time, the time to be special, the time to feel the object of others attention.

Rebecka, 11, is an active, intelligent and engaging child, who needs direction, and assistance in staying focused. Rebecka likes to read, listen to country music, sing, attend church and play with friends. Rebecka is talented, intelligent and a gifted vocalist. She likes to play with kids her age. Rebecka however, at this time, requires supervision while with peers. She vies for attention. She is a young girl with a beautiful smile and a lot of potential. Although she may exhibit challenging behaviors, she will thrive with a committed family.

Rebecka would benefit from being adopted by parents who have strong parenting skills. Rebecka will need time to bond. She would benefit from a permanent placement with a loving, supportive and understanding family where she continue to grow and learn. Rebecka needs consistent care from parents who will promote her future success. If you would like to learn more about adoption from foster care, please contact the Adoption Coalition of Texas at info@ adopttexas.org or 512-301-2825. If you are interested in learning more about Rebecka, contact Grace Lindren, LMSW, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter/Adoption Coalition of Texas

512-687-3209/fax 512-692-2540, gracelindgren@adopttexas.org. If you are interested, you can view a story with Rebecka on News 8 Austin Forever Families ~ just click the link: http://www.news8austin. com/content/living/forever_families/?ArID=226023&SecID=428

Photo Courtesy of the Adoption Coalition of Texas/The Heart Gallery of Central Texas, Photo by HJ Brockway, Photo Gusto



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Long Term Care: Manage the Costs Submitted by Rich Keith

Yearly long term care costs have increased 15% since 2004 to nearly \$75,000 in 2007. And 75% of Americans have no long term care plans.

A recent survey from Genworth Financial's 2007 Cost of Care Survey found the average national cost of care for nursing homes, assisted living facilities and in the home has steadily increased over the past four years and has reached new highs that exceed most household incomes in the U.S. The rising costs of long term

care may, therefore, present difficulties for many Americans should they need to pay for long term care out of their own pockets.

A separate national poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies for Genworth Financial with input from the Alzheimer's Association found that 75 percent of Americans have made no long term care plans and 59 percent expressed concern about being able to pay for long term care. Almost half of the respondents (44 percent) incorrectly believe that Medicare or their private health insurance will pay for their long term care needs. In actuality, health insurance and the federal Medicare program do not generally cover long term care.

Genworth's annual benchmark study surveyed more than 11,000 nursing homes, assisted living facilities and home care providers. It was conducted by CareScout between January and February 2007 to gain a comprehensive view of long term care expenses. The survey is available at www.genworth.com.

According to the survey, the average national cost in 2007 of a single year in a private nursing home room is \$74,806. To put this into context, one year in a private nursing home room costs nearly one and a half times the average full 4-year college degree in the U.S., including tuition, room and board. Note the College Board's national average for public colleges is \$51,184 for four years, making a single year in a nursing home 46 percent more expensive.

The cost of assisted living facilities has also increased sharply in the last four years, by more than 13 percent, to a new annual average cost of \$32,573 for a one-bedroom unit.



If given the choice between care in a facility such as a nursing home or an assisted living facility and care at home, 75% of national poll respondents said they would prefer care at home. However, the hourly rate for a home health aide has increased 2.7 percent since Genworth's 2004 Cost of Care Survey. The average cost for a 40-hour per week home health aide – \$52,977 a year – is more than the median household income in the U.S. of \$46,272.

The Alzheimer's Association recently reported that the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease has increased 10 percent in the last five years and that someone in America develops Alzheimer's every 72 seconds. Seventy-two percent of poll respondents said that the possibility of developing Alzheimer's disease makes planning for their long term care more important to them. Following are key findings from the survey, broken out by major category.

Nursing Homes: The average annual national cost of a private room in a nursing home is \$74,806 or \$204 per day, reflecting a 14.8 percent increase over 2004 rates. This remains the most costly care option.

Assisted Living: A private one-bedroom unit in an assisted living facility has an average annual cost of \$32,573, a 13 percent increase since 2004.

Home Care: The average hourly rate for Medicare/Medicaid certified and state licensed home health aides is \$25.47 an hour, a cost that translates to a \$52,977 per year for 40 hours per week.

With so many Baby Boomers heading into retirement, it's critical that long term care planning be integrated into every adult's retirement strategy. Paying for just a few years of long term care out of pocket can very easily deplete an entire life's savings and retirement. Not planning ahead can also limit the variety of choices available, such as the ability to live independently at home with assistance from a home health aide. Source: Genworth Financial, Inc.



MAKE YOUR OWN CANDY FOR VALENTINE'S DAY!

Valentine's Day is Thursday, February 14 ... and it's a really really big holiday! According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. Since many folks give candy along with their cards, this year you might have fun making your own candy. Put some pieces of homemade white divinity in a clear bag tied with a red or pink ribbon, and your gift is sure to generate sweet thoughts (and probably some hugs and kisses as well)! There are many recipes for divinity, all fairly similar; so pick one from your favorite cookbook or Internet site, and start cooking. It's easy to make; and if you're a WeightWatchers member, this candy won't sabotage your good efforts-it's only one point per piece!

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Divinity

2 egg whites • 1/2 cup water 1/2 cup light corn syrup • 2 cups white sugar

MIX together water and corn syrup in a heavy pan, and bring to a boil. Add sugar and continue boiling until dissolved. Continue cooking over medium heat, without stirring, to the hard-ball stage (about 250° on a candy thermometer).

WHILE syrup mixture is cooking, beat egg whites in a large bowl until they just hold their shape. When the syrup is ready, pour it slowly over the egg whites in a steady thin stream, whipping slowly at the same time. Do not scrape pan.

BEAT candy mixture until candy can be dropped onto waxed paper into pieces that hold their shape. (This can take a while.) YIELD: 40 pieces (about 1-1/2 pounds of candy) WeightWatchers Points: 1 point per piece



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