

THE STAR

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 4

APRIL 2009

AUSTIN TOROS

Submitted by Barry Klassen



Local Youth Team Wins Statewide Baseball Tournament

The Austin Toros, a local 8 year old and under coach pitch baseball team, won a prestigious statewide "Nations Baseball" Elite tournament in Houston in February. The "Presidents Day Qualifier" matched 14 of the top teams from across the state. Matthew Klassen (#99 in photo), a Steiner Ranch resident, played a key role at shortstop, leading the Toros to a perfect 6-0 record for the weekend. In the quarterfinals of the tournament, the Toros were forced to survive a walk off grand slam in the top of the last inning that tied the game at 10, only to win on a sacrifice fly to center field, and a close play at the plate that barely beat a perfect throw. The semifinals brought the top

(Continued on Page 11)

Run The Ranch

Submitted by Heather Van Stavern

Saturday, March 7th was the fourth annual Steiner Run the Ranch 5K, Kids K and Health Fair at the Towne Square Community Center. Over 380 runners laced up their shoes, with a record-breaking number of Kids K participants! Hill Country Bible Church was the title sponsor and, as usual, provided friendly, helpful volunteers. Gene Arant Real Estate provided all the awards for the winners.

After working up an appetite, runners crossed the finish line to enjoy delicious food including Rudy's breakfast tacos, sweets from the Steiner Steak House, cup cakes from Rise and Shine Bakery, fruit from Lamb's Tire and Automotive and a Fuze drink. Once they refueled, there was plenty more fun to be had, including two bounce houses, a children's obstacle course, dancing with the Chick-fil-A cow, and a visit to the Health Fair for information and fun freebies from a variety of healthcare professionals.

You won't want to miss Run the Ranch 2010, so mark your calendars for March 6th 2010!

GARAGE SALE
Spring Garage Sale
Saturday, April 18th
8:00am – 12:00pm

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance	911
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Travis County ESD No.6/Lake Travis Fire Rescue Administration Office.....	512.266.2533

SCHOOLS

Leander ISD.....	512-434-5000
Cedar Park High School.....	512-435-8300
Canyon Ridge Middle School	512-424-7500
Laura Welch Bush Elementary.....	512-435-4750
Steiner Ranch Elementary	512-434-7100

UTILITIES

Travis County WCID # 17.....	512-266-1111
City of Austin Electric.....	512-494-9400
Texas Gas Service Custom Service.....	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies.....	512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig.....	512-472-2822
AT&T New Service.....	1-800-464-7928
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Time Warner Cable Customer Service.....	512-485-5555
Repairs.....	512-485-5080
IESI (Trash).....	512-282-3508

OTHER NUMBERS

Lake Travis Postal Office.....	512-263-2458
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NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc.	512-263-9181
Editor - Kelly Peel	thestar@peelinc.com
Advertising.....	advertising@peelinc.com

MISSION STATEMENT

The Star, For Steiner Ranch

The mission of The Star is to provide the Steiner Ranch community with one source of local news content that is provided by Steiner Ranch residents. Our goal is to help build Steiner Ranch by connecting local businesses with residents and residents with relevant neighborhood information.

"Be the Community."

ADVERTISING INFO

Please support the advertisers that make The Star possible. If you are interested in advertising, please contact our sales office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@PEELinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 10th of the month prior to the issue.

ARTICLE INFO

The Star is mailed monthly to all Steiner Ranch residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for The Star please email it to thestar@peelinc.com. The deadline is the 9th of the month prior to the issue.

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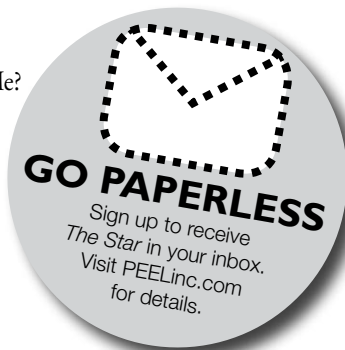
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The Eggstravaganza is from 9:30am to 11:00am
at the John Simpson Park. The Egg Hunt starts at
10:00am SHARP – Don't be late!

*Bring your camera for photo opportunities
with the Easter Bunny.*

Email photos of your little ones to thestar@peelinc.com to
be included in the May newsletter!

Age Groups:

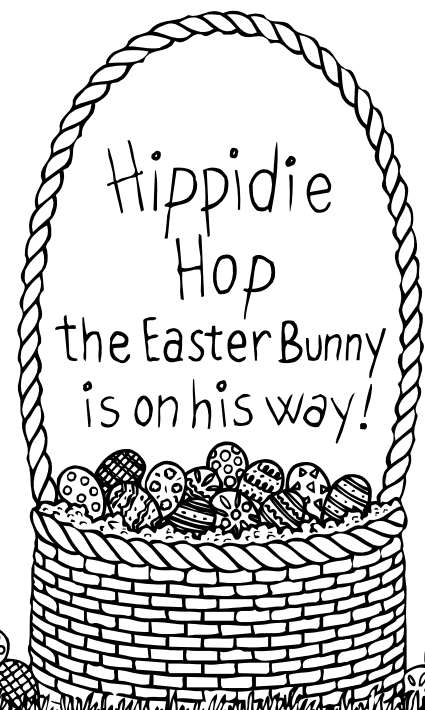
There will be specific egg hunt areas for
different age groups. They include:

2 Years and under (accompanied by
parent) – Grass area between the two
mailbox kiosks

3-4 Yr Olds – Left of the Volleyball Court

5-6 Yr Olds – Right of the Volleyball Court

7-10 Yr Olds – In the Playground





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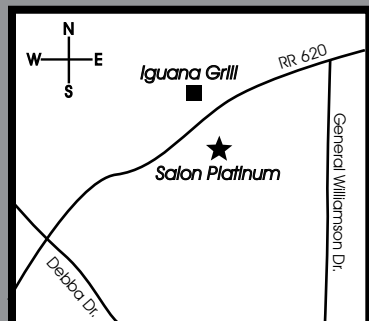
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Palm Sunday, April 5

7:45a Holy Eucharist, Rite I

9a Holy Eucharist, Rite II, with Liturgy of the Palms

Choir, Festival Anthem with ELLECOMBE

11:30a Holy Eucharist, Rite II, with Liturgy of the Palms

Music by Renewal Music Group

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, April 6 - 8

Noon Holy Eucharist

Maundy Thursday, April 9

8p Holy Eucharist, Rite I, with Stripping of the Altar

(Organ and Choir)

Good Friday, April 10

Noon Good Friday Liturgy

(Organ and Choir)

Easter Services: April 11th-12th

Easter Eve, April 11

8p The Great Vigil of Easter,

The Lighting of the Paschal Candle, Baptisms,

The First Eucharist of Easter

(Organ and Choir)

Easter Sunday, April 12

7:30a Holy Eucharist, Rite I

9a Holy Eucharist, Rite II

(Organ, Choir, Brass, and Percussion)

11:30a Holy Eucharist, Rite II

(Special Music by Renewal Music Group)

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Around Steiner

Air Soft Wars and the Little Voice

Submitted by Cathi Pendleton, Steiner Ranch Resident

There seems to be an "Air Soft Mania" happening in neighborhoods around Austin. Kids running neighborhoods with air soft guns, having air soft play dates, and air soft birthday parties. Please take time to read what our family recently experienced...

Have you ever had one of those moments when you heard "the little voice" as a parent? Did you listen to the voice as it told you stop your child from doing something he or she shouldn't be doing? I have always been a firm believer in the power of that little voice--an innate gift we all receive with the birth of our children. But all it takes is ignoring it just one time to realize how powerful it truly is.

Our family experienced the aftermath and shock waves of me ignoring the voice, and our son's life will be forever altered. A group of 5th grade boys running the neighborhood with air soft guns seemed manageable with some rules firmly in place. Repeated commands of "make sure you have your eye gear in place" and "don't shoot anyone who's too close to you" were, in hindsight, just too lofty an expectation to have. Our son lowered his eye wear to see where another boy was hiding, and was hit in the eye with one of the air soft pellets. It all happened right outside our back door, on our deck.

The force of the pellet on his eye was unbelievable. It ripped a hole through his retina as well as partially detached it. We are now

at the tail end of a grueling 2 week recovery process from vitrectomy surgery --the patient is required to be face down so that a gas bubble inserted in the eye will be in proper position. You can only imagine how difficult this was for a 10 year old boy. Children who undergo this surgery have a 50% chance for the return of their vision (interestingly, adults have a 90% success rate). Currently, he has no sight in the eye. We should know within 3 months what his vision will ultimately be. In the meantime, we are celebrating small daily victories such as, "I can open my eye all the way". Long term, there will be restrictions on certain sports and physical activities. We can only hope and pray that some of his vision returns. .

Our son has been amazingly strong and optimistic throughout the whole ordeal. I only wish I had listened to the "little voice" so that he wouldn't have to be my hero. After all, isn't that what we, as parents, are supposed to be for our children? So the next time you hear the voice, do yourself and your family a favor--listen to it. I didn't and our lives will be never be the same.

Note: The air soft gun that injured our son's eye was purchased on the internet and is a "high powered sniper rifle". Please carefully consider what you purchase for your children and ask yourself "is it worth it?"

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Around Steiner

Steiner Ranch Annual Spring Clothing Drive To Benefit Dress for Success - Austin and The Arc of the Capital Area

Submitted by Tom Henry

During the weeks of April 6 - 19, Steiner Ranch will be holding it's annual spring charity clothing drive to benefit the Austin Chapter of Dress for Success. <http://dressforsuccess.org> and The Arc of the Capital Area <http://www.arcofthecapitalarea.org>

Dress for Success Austin (DFSA) is a nonprofit organization that provides interview suits, confidence boosts and career development to low-income women seeking employment who are referred by other nonprofits, and government agencies.

The Arc of the Capital Area, a non-profit organization, is committed to promoting independence and choice by providing individualized services to adults and children with developmental disabilities

WHAT WE NEED:

For Dress For Success:

- new or gently-worn ladies' professional suits or separates (dry-cleaned)

- blouses and shells (dry-cleaned or laundered)
- jewelry and other accessories
- new pantyhose
- scarves
- handbags
- new or gently-worn, close-toed professional shoes

For Arc of the Capital Area:

- Gently used Children, Women, and Men's clothing of all sizes

WHERE TO DONATE:

Your donations can be dropped off during normal business hours at the **Steiner Ranch Welcome Center; Steiner Ranch Community Association offices; 4 Sons' Quality Cleaners** at 4300 N. Quinlan Park; or at **Cups and Cones**.

Please clearly mark which charity your items are designated for.

Please ensure that your donations for Dress For Success have been dry-cleaned and any repairs have been made prior to drop-off.

4 Sons' Quality Cleaners is offering a special price for cleaning services of \$2 per suit or item received for donation at their Quinlan Park location.

If you require assistance or pick up please contact us, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

We are also working with Arc of the Capital to co-ordinate a neighborhood-wide curbside pick-up and onsite Donation Truck to follow the Steiner Ranch Garage Sale on April 18th.

For more information or assistance please contact: Tom or Cathy Henry at tomcathenry@gmail.com OR Jennifer Swenson at jenniferswen@netscape.net

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Steiner Ranch HOA Expires 9/30/09

Austin Toros- (Continued from Cover Page)

ranked team in the country, the Avengers VI Force. After going down by a score of 5-2 at the end of the first inning, the Toros raced back by outscoring the Avengers 16-4 the rest of the way for an 18-9 win. The excitement continued into the late hours of the night in the Championship game against the 26-0 Kings Black 8U, the second ranked team in the US. With the game tied at six going into the last inning, the Toros managed to score 5 runs in the top of the sixth. The Kings answered by scoring 3 runs to draw to within 2, and had runners on 1st and 2nd with 2 outs. In a dramatic moment, they hit a shot that would have been out earlier in the night, but stayed in the park thanks to a breeze that had picked up throughout the night. Managing to keep runners at first and second, with the score now just 11-10, Klassen made a diving stop on a ball hit sharply in the hole, and got the force out at second base to secure the championship. The victory qualifies the Toros for the Nations Baseball National Championship tournament to be held in Houston in July.

Steiner Birthdays

April 1st – Madison Chance Brondel

April 23rd - Tamara Hodges

April 24th - Martin Hodges

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Steiner Ranch History Corner

Submitted by Rich Keith



In Steiner Ranch, Runnels Court is named after Hardin R. Runnels, a former Texas governor and legislator, who was born in 1820 in Mississippi. His father died when he was 18, and in 1842 he moved with his mother, his three brothers, and his uncle to Texas. The family first settled on the Brazos River, but Runnels soon moved with his family to Bowie County, where they established a cotton plantation on the Red River. From 1847 to 1855 he served as state representative in the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth legislatures. He was speaker of the House during his final term. In 1855 he was elected lieutenant governor. During these years he acquired a reputation as a loyal member of the Democratic party and a staunch supporter of states' rights. He was the son of a prominent and wealthy family and

also became a wealthy man in his own right. By 1860 his real and personal property was worth an estimated \$85,000 and included thirty-nine slaves. In May 1857 leading Democrats wished to prevent Sam Houston's election as governor and nominated Runnels because of his support of Southern positions and his party loyalty. Runnels won and became the only person ever to defeat Sam Houston in an election.

During his term Runnels consistently supported Southern positions. He frequently asserted that Texas might be forced to secede from the Union, supported the unsuccessful effort to put the Texas legislature on record in favor of reopening the African slave trade, and signed into law a bill allowing free blacks to choose a master and become slaves. He also signed into law the bill that appropriated financial support to establish the University

of Texas and the bill establishing the State Geological Survey. The most vexing problem Runnels faced during his term as governor was the problem of protecting frontier settlers against Indian issues. The year he took office there was a marked upsurge in Indian attacks, generally by the Comanches. Although Runnels raised temporary ranger battalions to meet the emergency, he opposed efforts to form permanent battalions on the grounds that the state could not afford them and that the federal government was responsible for protecting the frontier. When angry settlers took matters in their own hands and retaliated against Indians on the Brazos Indian Reservation, they clashed with the army. Runnels's efforts to make peace failed. In 1859 the state Democratic convention renominated Runnels, and Houston again

(Continued on Page 13)



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History Corner - (Continued from Page 12)

declared himself a candidate. This time however, Houston defeated Runnels by a vote of 36,227 to 27,500.

Runnels retired to his plantation in Bowie County but remained active in the Democratic party, where he was a vigorous supporter of the secession resolution. After the Civil War, although he had not yet received a pardon from the president, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1866. At this convention he was one of about eleven delegates who were often termed the "aggressive secessionists" or the "irreconcilables." In the 1850s Runnels built an impressive Greek Revival mansion near Old Boston and furnished it in anticipation of his approaching marriage. For some reason the wedding never took place, and he remained a bachelor for the rest of his life. When the Texas Historical Society was organized in Houston on May 23, 1870, Runnels was elected one of its vice presidents. He was also a member of St. John's Masonic Lodge. He died in 1873, and was buried in the Runnels family cemetery in Bowie County. Sources: Daniel and Blodgett, Texas Governor's Mansion (TX State Library, 1984); Cecil Harper, Jr. Tshaonline; Frances Richard Lubbock, Jones, 1900; Hardin Runnels Records, TX State Archives.



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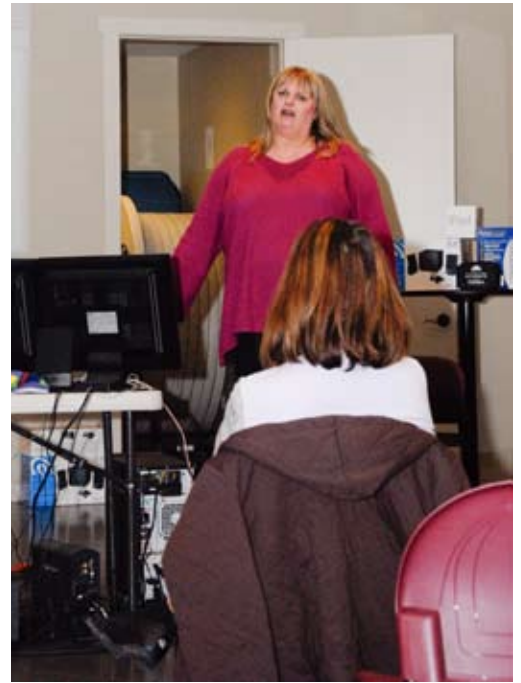
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Around Steiner

Cool Computing Tips and Tricks! *Hosted by Steiner Ranch's Laurie Scott*



On unlucky Friday March 13th, many Steiner Ranch residents were lucky to attend a free seminar, Cool Computing Tips & Tricks, presented by Laurie Scott of Tek-Chic Systems. Laurie Scott is a Steiner Ranch Resident who is passionate about helping individuals and businesses develop systems to use technology smarter and safer.

A system isn't about buying things; it's about DOING things - or not doing things as the case may be. For example, everybody has a system for protecting their data from loss. For some it's saying a prayer every night that their computer will work the next day, for others it's burning a copy of important files to a CD or DVD. And for some it's uploading files to a server on the Internet. Whatever your system, you DO have one. Laurie can help make sure it's a smart and safe system.

Laurie began the evening by teaching residents about Email Scams and protecting yourself from web viruses, spyware, adware. They all are generically known as malware - bad stuff you don't want on your computer. She continued with advice for, "What to do About My Tired PC?" and exploring the Dangers of Wireless Networking.



Laptop computers have made computing mobile and convenient. However hotspots like Starbucks, airports and hotels present a significant risk to your privacy and economic security unless you take some simple precautions. It doesn't matter if the hotspot is free or you're paying for it, whether unencrypted or encrypted, anyone on the same network can "sniff" your traffic and steal your passwords, read your email, and even download files from your computers.

As for online shopping and doing it safely, Laurie explained that there are of course hazards to online shopping, but with basic safeguards you can take advantage of the variety and cost savings the Internet can provide. She also shared the secrets of fireproof backups for 25 cents a month, and tips & tricks to make computing easier along with dozens of Steiner Ranch Web Resources.



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LEANDER ISD

Leander ISD 2009-2010 School Year Registration

Leander ISD's Pre-Kindergarten registration for the 2009 - 2010 school year will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009, from 7:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. at all LISD elementary campuses. Students zoned to attend the new Ronald Reagan Elementary (#22) will register at Cox Elementary, while students slated for the new River Ridge Elementary (#23) should register at Laura Bush Elementary.

To be eligible for the half-day Pre-K program children must:

1. Be 4 years of age on or before September 1, 2009; AND
2. Be a resident of Leander Independent School District; AND
3. Meet immunization requirements; AND
4. Meet at least one of the following conditions:
 - Child is unable to speak and comprehend the English language; OR
 - Child is homeless; OR
 - Child has a parent or official guardian who is an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; OR
 - Child has a parent or official guardian who is a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; OR
 - Child has ever been in foster care; OR
 - Child is eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program due to limited family income.
- NOTE: Due to federal guidelines, income status must be verified on or after June 24, 2009. Until that time, a space will be reserved for the child.

Transportation is provided for the Pre-K program in accordance with district guidelines.

Parents wishing to register their child for Pre-K must bring the child's birth certificate, social security card, immunization records, a photo ID of parent/guardian, and proof of residency, (i.e. an electric bill, water bill, etc...).

Please note: Pre-K registration is ongoing in Leander ISD. If you are unable to make the above date, please register your student(s) at your earliest convenience prior to August 1.

LISD Kindergarten Registration

Leander ISD's Kindergarten registration for the 2009 - 2010 school year will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009, from 7:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. at all LISD elementary campuses. Students zoned to attend the new Ronald Reagan Elementary (#22) will register at Cox Elementary, while students slated for the new River Ridge Elementary (#23) should register at Laura Bush Elementary. To be eligible for Kindergarten children must:

1. Be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2009; AND
2. Be a resident of Leander Independent School District; AND
3. Meet immunization requirements.

Parents wishing to register their child for Kindergarten must bring the child's birth certificate, social security card, immunization records, a photo ID of parent/guardian, and proof of residency, (i.e. an electric bill, water bill, etc...).

Please note: Kindergarten registration is ongoing in Leander ISD. If you are unable to make the above date, please register your student(s) at your earliest convenience prior to the June 1.



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Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 11 / 10 am

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Toddlers through Fifth Grade

One Had to Rise - Easter Musical

Saturday, April 11 / 7:00 pm / Great Hall

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Easter Services

Sunday, April 12

9:30 am - Choir & Orchestra

11:00 am - Praise Band

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LEANDER ISD

Connecting U:A Conference for Parents and the Community

Leander ISD, in partnership with the Cedar Park Regional Medical Center and several local organizations, will be hosting Connecting U: A Conference for Parents and the Community on Friday, April 3rd from 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The community event will be held at Hill Country Bible Church, off of 620 (Map to Church).

The Connecting U conference is open to everyone, including parents, community members, business owners, volunteers, etc... The conference will include a full day of fun and interesting sessions that will help you connect with your child, your family and your community. This year's session topics include:

- Kids Dealing with Divorce
- What is AVID?
- True Colors
- What Does Special Education Mean for MY Child?
- Partnering with Your School in Discipline Matters
- Nutrition in Childhood
- Financial Aid 101
- Understanding Temperaments
- Community Resources & School Resource Officers
- How to Enhance the Performance of Your Child's Brain?
- Too Much Stuff?: Dealing with Stress
- What is IB?
- How Full is Your Bucket?
- Whining, Temper Tantrums and Power Struggles
- Introducing Concordia University Texas: Your Hometown University
- Partnering as Parents
- I-Safe Parents
- Planning for College
- Parenting Teens with Love & Logic
- Boosting Your Child's Success with the 40 Developmental Assets
- CATCH Me if You Can: Building a Healthy Home Environment Through Play

If you are interested in attending Connecting U, please pre-register by visiting the LISD website at www.leanderisd.org. The cost is \$5, which includes a continental breakfast, boxed lunch and conference materials, and is payable at the door. Conference check-in will begin at 7:45 a.m.

Cedar Park/Leander/Austin community businesses and organizations will also be showcased, giving participants an opportunity to learn more about programs, resources and benefits within the community.

Questions? Please contact the LISD School/Community Relations Department at 434-5098.

Education: Go Get It

Education: Go Get It Week is coming! During the week of April 14-18, parents and students are encouraged to learn more about the benefits of higher education and how to prepare for it academically and financially.

The kick-off event, focusing on post-high school opportunities, is open to all Leander ISD parents. It will be held at Cedar Park High School on April 14 from 6:00—8:30 PM. Topics will include: Getting In—what is needed; Financial Aid; and a Panel Discussion with College Admissions Officers.

In addition to our district wide event, each school will provide various campus-level activities to increase awareness of available resources and services. Please refer to individual campus websites for more information. For more information, contact Lu Ann Bowman Coordinator of Guidance and Counseling for LISD at 434-5000 ext. 11306.

Notice to Leander I.S.D. Parents & Students

Examination for Acceleration, Grades 1-12

Examination for Acceleration allows students, who without direct instruction have already mastered all content and skills in a particular grade level or course, to advance to the next level or course. These exams are available at no cost to eligible students who test during the district's testing periods.

Students are expected to complete each exam they have registered for. Families are requested to plan accordingly during the summer to ensure students complete each exam. Note: The District does not receive reimbursement for tests not taken.

2009 testing dates are as follows:

Testing Period	Testing Dates	Time	Application Due Date
I	June 9-11, 2009	8:30 am – 3:30 pm	April 17, 2009
II	July 7-9, 2009	8:30 am – 3:30 pm	June 1, 2009

Students will complete an application form and take a designated criterion referenced test which covers the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and major learning for the course for which they wish credit. For all of its Examination for Acceleration, the district uses tests developed by the University of Texas Extension, Instruction, and Materials Center. Students should contact the campus counselor for applications and additional information.



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Lake Travis Falls

Submitted by Connie Ripley



...and there she goes! The descent of Lake Travis has been gradual since her irrigation water began flowing to the farms in Matagorda and Wharton Counties on February 25. This year LCRA will begin early and take equal amounts from Lake Buchanan so that the fall will not be so abrupt!

Drought is plaguing Central Texas for a second year in a row. Last year the lake was brimming full at 681 msl (mean sea level) when this agricultural release started. This year Lake Travis was at 654 msl. It was much wider in 2008, so its descent was much slower. (At 681 msl, the lake is about 180 feet deep in its deepest parts.)

Why are the rice farmers taking all this water when the lake is so low? LCRA has a trigger point to curtail the amount of water the rice farmers get. On January 1, 2009, the lakes were slightly above this trigger point.

On January 1, 2006, the lakes were below the trigger point. Rice farmers were curtailed. Their families and farms were going to suffer. Then the rains came. The rice farmers received a lot more water than they had wished for...

LCRA expects "lower than average lake elevations and forecasts of continued drought

conditions". Not much hope for a rain bomb this year.

Trigger points are trigger points—no gray area. Maybe this drought will show LCRA that raising its curtailment trigger points will protect the greatest economic driver in Central Texas—the Highland Lakes system. No Lake Travis is definitely a way to slow growth in Travis County.

If our weather pattern continues, Lake Travis is forecast to fall to the 625 to 630 msl by September, taking Lake Buchanan with it. Where will the marinas be? No ramps will be open. What will happen to the businesses that depend on our recreation for their livelihood?

Will restaurants, boat dealers, fishing guides and even some convenience stores be forced to close? (After all, convenience stores around the lake depend on selling premium gasoline to fill boats, and lots of ice and beverages to fill people.) All businesses depending on the lakes will suffer and many will close. Can our already slowing economy survive the loss of its single largest economic driver?

No taking your boat to see the fireworks on the lake on July 4th! No fresh fish for dinner! No tubing, skiing, wakeboarding or

boating. Boats cannot be launched from a cliff. Peaceful water views will become dry, barren rocks.

The rice farmers will get their water this year at the expense of the businesses and recreation in Travis and Burnet Counties—all because of a rigid trigger point—no room for compromise here.

The situation is much more serious than the farmers' livelihood vs. the Travis and Burnet County business livelihood. Let's do the numbers...

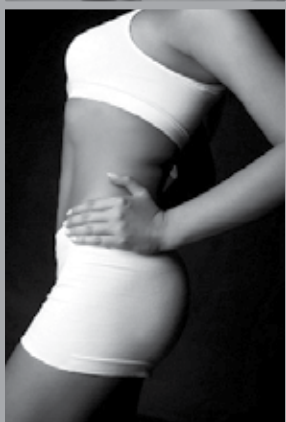
LCRA states that Lakes Travis and Buchanan are holding about 1 million acre feet (AF) right now. (1 AF equals 325,851 gallons or enough for 2 conservative families of 4 for a year.) Lower basin agricultural irrigation is forecast to take about 300,000 AF—same as last year. The last 90,000 to 100,000 AF of water in Buchanan will be below the flood gate level and cannot be released. The bottom 100,000 AF in Lake Travis is probably not usable. Municipal and power plant usage will probably take about 150,000 AF this year. Guess that means both lakes together will have about 350,000 AF of usable water in them at the end of this year, if our weather pattern continues.

The agricultural irrigation water will go this year—no stopping that! What can we do now with the water we have left? We must begin to realize that every drop of water we use comes out of Lakes Travis and Buchanan. No more hoping for rain!

Atlanta keeps hoping for rain to fill Lake Lanier. Marinas and lake recreational businesses are already closed. Farmers cannot not irrigate. Bet they wish they could get water from somewhere else or at least have a rain bomb like we had in 2007.

LCRA spends little on conservation. LCRA's water operations have just moved into a big new building at Red Bud Trail and Lake Austin Blvd. It sports an enormous, state-of-the-art flood monitoring room (River Operations Center [ROC]). LCRA can monitor every drop of water coming into and leaving the Lower Colorado

(Continued on Page 22)



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Around Steiner

Lake Travis Falls - (Continued from Page 20)

River system. This is great for our next rain bomb—whenever that may be... Right now monitoring the “leaving” water is more important.

The Red Bud Center and grounds feature equally impressive water conservation efforts. Air conditioner condensate is captured and used to flush all the low-flush toilets. The grounds are landscaped with drought-tolerant plants. Their rain water collection system is one to be copied—if we have any rain. LCRA clearly knows how to conserve.

Instead of a big, new building, what if that money had gone to conservation? A recent study has shown that lining the irrigation canals, removing the brush, and upgrading the turn-arounds and gates in the lower basin would save a lot of water. Nothing has been done.

The public would cut their water usage, if they just knew how and maybe had a little help from their water suppliers. (Austin has just shown impressive water conservation with their mandatory scheduling and plumbing rebate programs.) LCRA has the ability to require stronger conservation from their wholesalers, if they will just do it.

Think how much water would be saved if all apartment complexes and hotels would install low-flush toilets and water efficient

showerheads and faucets. Sprinkler water should not be running in the streets from commercial landscapes—especially during the day.

LCRA just had a water rate increase from \$126 per acre foot (AF) to \$138 AF. Maybe, just maybe, LCRA might use some of this increase on conservation...before it's too late.

Rain dances, anyone? (They may not work.) We can Save Water. Save Lake Travis.

Go to www.drainingLakeTravis.org for more.

Pedernales River 2008. No water will flow into Lake Travis in 2009 without rain.



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*C.A.S.T. for Kids
needs boats, captains
for disabled, disadvantaged
youth fishing day April 25*

The fourth annual Catch a Special Thrill (C.A.S.T.) needs captains and boats to help create a once-in-a-lifetime fishing event for disabled and disadvantaged children on Saturday, April 25, at Lake Bastrop's North Shore Park from 7 a.m. until 1 p.m.

In addition to the rewarding experience of giving special-needs children the chance to enjoy the sport of fishing and the outdoors, volunteers will receive a free breakfast and lunch.

LCRA, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are jointly sponsoring the event, which was created 17 years ago by the national C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation.

The C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation was formed to join volunteers who love to fish with disabled and disadvantaged children for a day of fishing in the outdoors. The C.A.S.T. for Kids event was designed to create an environment whereby both children and adults could benefit, each taking from the day their own lessons. Children and adults could leave their problems on shore and share a day of fun on the water.

Today, the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation hosts about 50 such events in 22 states to help increase awareness of disabled and disadvantaged children in our communities. It also teaches appreciation for natural resources. To learn more about the foundation and its programs, go to www.castforkids.org.

To volunteer your fishing, pontoon, bass or ski boat for the event, call Laurel Srp at (512) 303-5073, Ext. 8037, or send e-mail to laurel.srp@lcra.org.

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HILL COUNTRY RIDE FOR AIDS

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Hill Country Ride:

*Get out, get fit
and make a difference!*

By Lori Barrett

Ever thought about riding your bicycle to get rolling on those New Year's Resolutions? Considered doing a charity ride to give yourself a goal, and a group of people to ride with? The Hill Country Ride for AIDS, coming up April 25th, was listed one of the 10 best rides in Texas by Austin Monthly, and is registering riders and teams for the 2009 ride!

With routes of 10, 45, 65 and 100 miles, staging just outside of Austin, the Hill Country Ride has a route for everyone. Get the whole family involved! Kids age 8 and up can ride with a parent or guardian who is also registered to ride, and children of all ages are welcome at the Kids' Adventure, a festive and activity-filled area. Expanding for 2009, the Kids' Adventure will have a bouncy house, obstacle courses and a variety of activity areas, including hat-making and bike part art stations.

Many riders join the Hill Country Ride because they've heard about the great people involved, and the crucial services it supports. Some riders join because they want their charitable donations to stay local to Texas. Still others join because, hey, it's cheaper than a gym membership, and what better way to get fit, than rolling through the beautiful Texas Hill Country? Throw in free, fully-supported training rides, and you even have a workout plan for the first few months of the year.

(Continued on Page 27)

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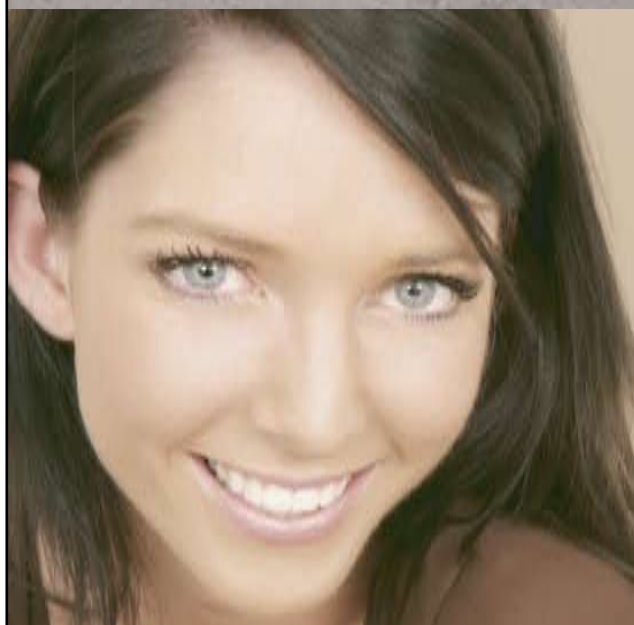
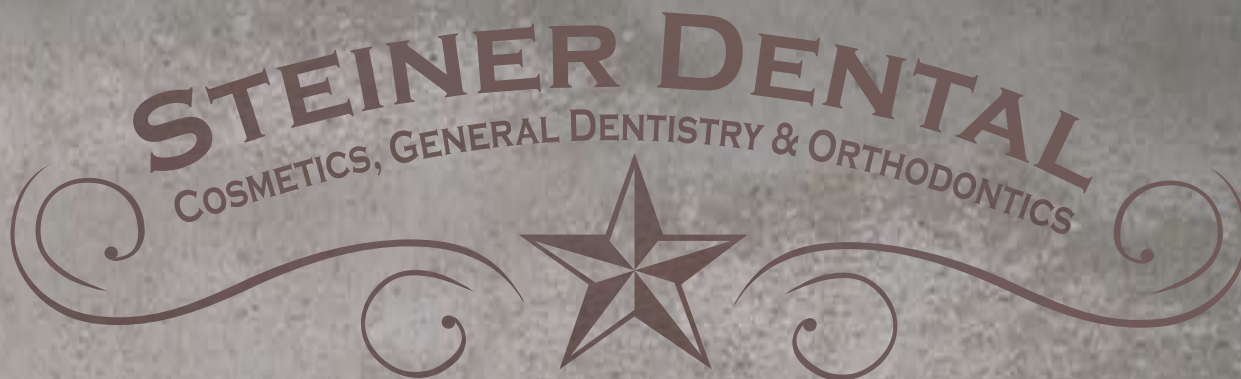
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Although we're all anxious to get home to be with our families, speeding and reckless driving is against the law and endangers everyone. Steiner Ranch is a family oriented community with many children; for that reason before you speed or park on the street, please consider their well-being. Also, children playing in the street can unknowingly create a dangerous situation, especially on heavily traveled streets; the driver may not see the child, especially in the evening or after dark.

We all know that children have a tendency to move about impulsively and may inadvertently run into the street. Please don't let a tragedy happen before parking your vehicle off the street or obeying the speed limit. For the benefit of all the residents and children, and the overall appearance of your neighborhood, please do not park on the street. Make accommodations in your garage or driveway for your vehicles and keep your streets clear and safe for all and please, **DO NOT SPEED IN STEINER RANCH.**

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Hill Country Ride - (Continued from Page 24)

Add all these up, and you have a strong argument that the Hill Country Ride for AIDS is one of the best charity bike rides around! With a moderate-sized group of 500 or so participants, ride organizers are able to treat riders like their guests, offering complimentary massage and chiropractic work after the ride is finished. Also compelling is the beautiful start/finish site of Krause's Springs, listed as one of the most beautiful swimming holes in the state by TexasOutside.com. Finish enjoying the sprawling vistas of the ride, take a dip and relax spring-side before enjoying a quick massage, while supper is being laid out for all of the riders.

Now in its 10th year, the Hill Country Ride has raised over 3 million dollars for HIV/AIDS service organizations in central Texas, providing life-saving support to our central Texas neighbors. Beyond that, the Hill Country Ride is a remarkable event that offers participants an opportunity to challenge themselves, make a difference in our community and experience some of the most beautiful countryside in Texas. Contact the ride office with any questions: 512.371.RIDE (7433) or info@HillCountryRide.org. Register yourself, your family or your Neighborhood Association Team now: HillCountryRide.org. See you at the Start line!

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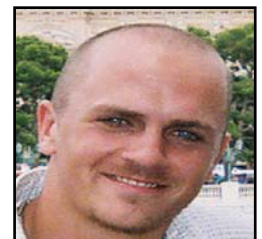
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New Mothers' Support Group

Come join other new moms (and babies) at the new Mothers' Support Group! It's a time to share the joys and frustrations of being a new mother and a good reason for getting out of the house.

Motherhood is a tough job but we know you can do it! If you need a little advice, an ear to vent to, or a little friendly conversation then this group is the perfect place for you.

The new mothers' support group is open to all new moms with babies up to 1 year old. There is no sign up or registration required and the group is free to attend.

We meet weekly from 9:30am - 11:00am Mondays beginning January 12th at the Towne Square Community Center, 12550 Country Trails Lane.

Steiner With Out Kids Social Group (SWOK)

Submitted by Paula Kaisner

Did you know there is a social group in Steiner called Steiner w/o Kids (SWOK). We have been established since January 2006 and have had many couples join who've made new friendships. Whether you've never had kids or you have grown children you are welcome to join this fun social group. We get together once a month at someone's home in Steiner for food and drinks along with making new friends and/or enjoying old friends! It's a great way to meet other couples and form new relationships with people who also don't have children at home. For more information please email Paula Kaisner at paula@kaisner.org

Steiner TechNet Wants You!

Submitted by David Dyke

If you work in technology and live in Steiner Ranch, we have a new community for you. This includes a quarterly social mixer in Steiner with opportunities to meet new neighbors, discuss business issues, find job opportunities and share best practice ideas, etc.

For more information, email David Dyke at ddyke@i-hire.com and join LinkedIn Groups Steiner TechNet.

STEINER RANCH COMMUNITY GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS

Are you a member of a community group or organization here in Steiner? Email the information about your group to thestar@peelinc.com and it will be included in each issue. Feel free to submit post event write-ups and photos.

Announcing New Job-Seekers Group

Submitted by Nancy Phillips

Are you out of work, indefinitely furloughed, or perhaps you have a neighbor or friend that is? If so, please read on...

St Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church, www.stlukesonthelake.org, is forming a new small group focused on job-seekers. "New Horizons" is a weekly gathering of job-seekers and new career-changers.

Time: Wednesdays at 8:30a

Location: St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church, 5600 RR 620N, 266.2455, "The Annex"

The goals of the group go beyond the obvious job-search aspects to also include mental and spiritual needs and challenges. Much will be defined as the group defines itself but considerations include:

- Prayer, devotional readings, and discussion to strengthen perspectives and resolve
- Job search tools, networking, job fair promotions, resume writing, interviewing, etc.
- Discussions around books and resources like "The Purpose-Driven Life", "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People", "What Color is Your Parachute", etc. to help discern life's priorities.
- Focus groups formed to help address specific growth areas:
 - Locate/ invite motivational speakers
 - Develop constructive ideas for using new found-time for volunteer groups, charities, etc. o
 - Discuss possible how-to's for starting a new business or career
 - ID low-cost family entertainment, living suggestions, and group social activities
 - Corporate self-help: identify needs vs. skills and what can we do for each other
 - Maintain archive of material references compiled for new arrivals o
 - Arrange networking meetings with other community job-seeker groups

Totally open to the community at large, this is a Christian-based support group with all members sharing the reality of being unemployed. We will be regularly calling on God for guidance and support as well as helping hold each other accountable for using the time God is giving to discern life's priorities and next career moves. Those interested can contact Gary Cook at 751.5478 or gcook4@austin.rr.com for more information.

COMMUNITY GROUPS CONTINUED

Pack 203

*Welcome all Steiner Ranch Boys!!
Grades 1st-5th*

Do you know what Cub Scouts and Scouting is all about? Pack 203 at LWBE does fun things with fellow scouting friends every month? We get together as a PACK to wear our cool uniforms, show off our scout spirit, and participate in exciting scouting activities. As a cub scout, you will get to go camping with your family, shoot BB guns, sleep over on a real Naval Aircraft Carrier and do archery! We play all kinds of sports and build cool race cars and spaceships to race. Do you want to learn the secret scouting code and earn really cool patches? Do you want to learn more about nature and your community? Then, come find out how enriching being a Cub Scout can be!

Contact Kim Skelton for more information at nelson2930@austin.rr.com



Girl Scout Registration is Open

Submitted by Carmen Tucker

Girl Scouts of Central Texas registration is open year-round to girls in grades K-12. Now is the perfect time to register in order to take advantage of summer experiences like overnight camp, robotics day camp, backpacking trips and more. Registration is \$10 per year and girls can choose to join a troop or participate as individuals.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. Through fun, informal and educational experiences girls can discover their potential, connect with others and take action to make the world a better place. Girl Scouts provides a wide variety of experiences for interests such as the arts, science, technology, nature, athletics, community service, health, leadership and more. To learn more or to register, contact Carmen Tucker at CarmenT@gscctx.org or (512) 490-2360. Discover Girl Scouts online at www.gscctx.org.



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Calendar of Events

APRIL 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Women & Finance ♻️	3	4
5	6 Free Yoga	7	8	9 ♻️	10	11 Easter Egg Hunt
12	13 Free Yoga	14 Social Committee Meeting	15	16 College Education Funding ♻️	17	18 Spring Garage Sale
19	20 Free Yoga	21	22	23 ♻️	24	25
26	27 Free Yoga	28 SRMA Board Meeting	29	30 SRROA Board Meeting ♻️		

MAY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ANNOUNCE YOUR EVENT <i>Are you a member of a community group or organization here in Steiner?</i> <i>Email the information about your group's event to</i> <i>thestar@peelinc.com and it will be included on the calendar.</i>					1	2
3	4 Free Yoga	5	6	7 ♻️	8	9
10	11 Free Yoga	12 Social Committee Meeting	13	14 New Retirement Strategies ♻️	15	16
17	18 Free Yoga	19 Estate Planning & Long Term Care	20	21 ♻️	22	23
24 31	25 Free Yoga	26	27	28 SRROA Board Meeting ♻️	29	30

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Steiner Ranch Market Statistics			
Price Range	As of Mar 10, 2009		Jan-Feb '09
	# For Sale	#Pending	# Sold
	Avg LS / sf Avg DOM	Avg LS / sf Avg DOM	Avg SS / sf Avg DOM
\$200K-\$300K	37 /\$118/60	3/\$103/89	7/\$100/156
\$300K-\$400K	46/\$125/70	2/\$132/34	3/\$102/155
\$400K-\$500K	21/\$142/83	2/\$122/61	2/\$135/129
\$500K-\$600K	20/\$144/123	1/\$140/18	1/\$129/67
\$600K-\$700K	13/\$155/111	4/\$150/42	3/\$142/141
\$700K-\$800K	13/\$191/177	0	3/\$150/190
\$800K-\$900K	9/\$195/170	1/\$164/70	1/\$144/333
\$900K-\$1M	1/\$188/26	0	0
\$1M-\$2M	4/\$264/145	0	0
\$2M and up	1/\$429/144	0	0

*statistics based on the Austin MLS



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Women and Finance

Submitted by Rich Keith

If you've not stopped to consider what your life could be like in retirement, consider these facts: Women live longer. The average life expectancy for baby girls in the U.S. is now 80 years old, compared to 75 for boys. Some estimates show more than one-third of America women will live to at least age 90, meaning today's women will spend more time in retirement and need more resources.

Women earn less. It's a sad reality that women still earn 76 cents for every dollar a man makes. The average Social Security check for men and women reflects the disparity in income and working years: Women received \$867 in December 2006, while men received \$1,148. 30% of unmarried women 65 and older currently live on Social Security alone.

Women take time off to care for others. Not only are women more likely to take time off to have and raise children, they are also more likely to interrupt their working years to care for ailing parents or other relatives. Seven out of ten unpaid caregivers are women, and more than 50% of caregivers modify their work status because of it. This includes working fewer hours or taking unpaid leaves of absence – all of which affect their career paths, contributions to retirement accounts and accumulated Social Security benefits.

Women aren't saving enough – if at all. Even though women

will spend more years in retirement than men, women still lag behind in their retirement savings. According to new studies from the Employee Benefit Research Institute, just 53% of women are currently saving for retirement, compared to 62% of men. And 37 of women are currently participating in a company 401(k) or other workplace plan, compared to 41% of men; and just 37% of women are likely to hold an IRA or other non-workplace retirement account, compared to 46% of men.

Women are more likely to retire in poverty. For all of the reasons listed above, is it really a surprise that women are 71% more likely than men to live below the poverty line in retirement?

It's critical for women to have a plan. Women need to save more money than men because they cycle in and out of the workplace more often. Over 75% of women are widowed at an average age of 56, and 1 in 4 of these women are broke within two months of being widowed. What do you want your retirement years to look like? Do start now. The earlier you start, the easier it will be to reach your retirement goals. Time is a powerful key to achieving financial security. Source: Primerica Financial Services Inc. 2008





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Free Educational Seminars in Personal Finance

- Women and Finance, April 2 – Special considerations for women.
- College Education Funding, April 16 – Know the plans and their advantages and disadvantages.
- New Retirement Strategies, May 14 – You “retirement environment” revealed.
- Estate Planning and Long Term Care – May 19 and May 21

All seminars are free, educational and with no obligation. Seminars are held in Steiner Ranch. To RSVP contact rkeith@primerica.com Rich Keith (512) 266-8498.

Three Business Networking Groups in the Area

Are you looking to grow your business in 2009? If so, you might be interested in a few of the business networking groups in the area. There are a few to choose from: **Steiner Ranch Referrals BNI Group**

Meetings are on Thursday mornings from 8:00 to 9:30 at Thai Harmony in Steiner Ranch. Visitors are welcome! If you are interested in visiting a meeting please contact Mark Taylor at marktaylor@actioncoach.com for more information or visit www.BNIAustin.com.

Four Points BNI

Meetings are on Wednesday at lunch from 11:30 to 1:00 at the River Place Country Club. Visitors are welcome! If you are interested in visiting a meeting please contact Amy Oehler at Amy@Lending360.net or visit www.BNIAustin.com.

A Business Referral Group Made Fun

Networking Northwest Austin is expanding its member base of businesses in our area. NWNWA members build close business and personal relationships. We believe in business by referrals and having a limited member base (not duplicating professions), so you will not see your competitors here. We have a caring, positive, involved group of people who not only wish to build their business, but also want to build the strength of our networking group. NWNWA meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday at Waterloo Ice House, 360 & FM 2222 from 7:00 am – 8:30am. And a fun happy hour once per month at a beautiful location. Come to a breakfast or call Dorothy Scarborough – President dscarborough5@austin.rr.com, 512-589-3678.

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Spring is Upon Us...



Make Sure Your Irrigation System is Ready

Article submitted by Jacob Johnson, Austin Water Utility, Water Conservation Division

Spring is quickly approaching and now is the time to make sure your irrigation system is ready to start working again after being off all winter. How? Follow the tips below:

See For Yourself

The fastest way to check your irrigation system is to check it yourself. Here's how:

- First, set your controller to operate a two-minute test program. (If the controller does not have a pre-programmed test program, set each zone to come on for only two minutes using the C or D program that may not be normally used.)
- Start the program manually and then watch the system as it runs through each station.
- Look for heads that are broken or leaking, heads that are misaligned and not watering what they ought to, or heads that are clogged or obstructed by grass runners or shrubs.

Ideally, the test program should be run monthly to keep track of how the system is functioning. This may also prevent increases in your water bill caused by leaks or multiple broken heads. To keep your irrigation system running as efficiently as possible, call a licensed irrigator to fix the problems for you.

Don't Overdo It

Your spring watering schedule should be half of what you'd water during the summer. Yet, in their eagerness to see new green grass, spring is when people are most likely to overwater plants and turf. With cool temperatures in the evenings and mornings,

it is not necessary to water as frequently as you would during the summer.

- Beginning in March or April, we recommend watering once every 7 to 10 days with one start time.
- Remember, the mandatory watering schedule begins on May 1st each year. Any irrigation with an automatic system or hose-end sprinkler must be used on an assigned watering day.
- Set controllers to run before 10 a.m. or after 7 p.m. It's a more effective use of water, and it's the law.
- Hand-held hoses can be used any time on any day. If an area of your landscape needs extra attention, it's best to spot-water as needed.

Get Some Help

How can you tell if you may be overwatering? If your water bills exceed 25,000 gallons per month, you might benefit from professional help. The Water Conservation Division offers free irrigation system evaluations to check out your system and provide you with a recommend watering schedule based on your plants, the amount of light the yard receives, and the type of sprinkler heads installed. The service is available to all City of Austin water customers or eligible MUD customers, and is ideal for new owners of irrigation systems as well as those who just aren't sure about their lawn's water needs. Call Water Conservation at 974-2199 to schedule your free irrigation system audit, or to talk with a licensed irrigator about your system. You can also schedule audits online at www.waterwiseaustin.org.



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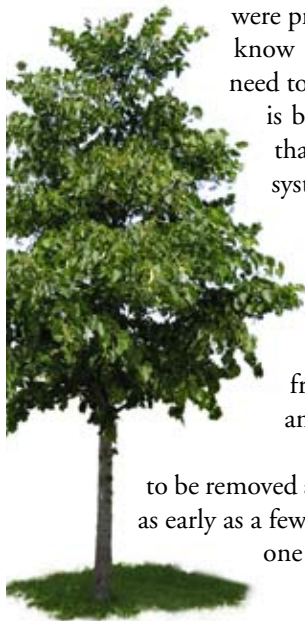
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Colin Schneider, Steiner Ranch Resident

What's at Stake? *The Health of Your Trees*



Most of us have trees in our front yards that were provided by our home builders. Did you know that the stakes supporting these trees need to be removed within the first year? This is because stakes provide artificial support that replaces a supportive trunk and root system.

Movement of the trunk helps strengthen the tree by thickening it and giving it taper from bottom to top. Trunk movement also stimulates root growth. The artificial support from the stakes leaves tree trunks weak and their root systems less developed.

Bottom line - all staking material needs to be removed after roots have established. This can be as early as a few months, but should be no longer than one growing season.

Spring Is In the Air *Time to Start Your Own Organic Garden*

Submitted by LCRA

In a world of iPod's, computer games, and DVDs, gardens are our nearest gateway to nature. Planting an organic garden with your family or friends builds relationships as well as stronger connections to the land, weather, and plants of Texas.

When looking for a garden site in your yard, choose an area with a good six to eight hours of sunlight and access to water. If you have shallow or poor soil, consider creating raised beds. Decide the garden's design by drawing shapes on paper and thinking about how you might arrange flowers, herbs, and vegetables within those shapes.

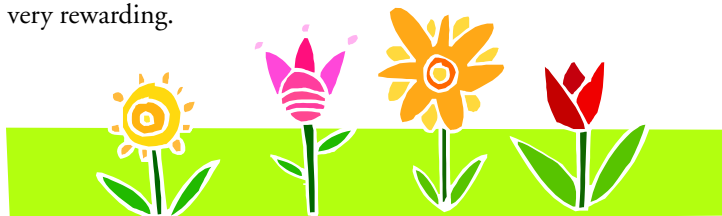
You may want to read through regional gardening books and seed catalogs when choosing plants. Native plants will be much easier to grow and keep healthy, and native flowering plants attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Avoid toxic plants, and consider aromatic herbs and edible plants. If you choose to start some plants from seed, create garden markers using either names or drawings to help recognize the plants when they germinate.

Find sturdy gardening tools. Many nurseries and garden centers sell spades and rakes in various sizes - make sure you find one that fits you best. Avoid digging with hand trowels unless the soil is very friable, or you are working in pots—small hands and wrists tire easily.

Use soaker hoses with timers to keep soil moist while your seeds are germinating. Keep a calendar to record when you plant seeds and when they germinate. Place a rain gauge in the garden to keep track of showers. Find a magnifying glass to peer at leaves, flowers, and insects in your garden.

Keep your garden safe for everyone by avoiding the use of toxic landscape chemicals. Visit www.growgreen.org for information on less toxic landscaping.

Finally, celebrate your harvest of wildflower bouquets, herbs for cooking, and tasty vegetables. Organic gardening is a lot of fun and very rewarding.



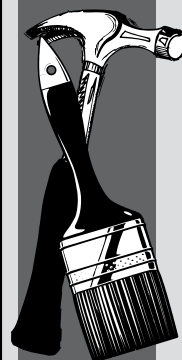
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Nature Watch

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Surprises After a Rain

Magical things happen when it rains in the Texas hill country! Historically, spring and fall generally bring the most amount of precipitation to our area, and the flora and fauna respond accordingly. Exotic-looking rain lilies pop up and bloom a few days after a good rain, but what you might not know is that there are two species of this delicate plant that are native to central Texas.

Cooperia pedunculata, or hill country rain lily, tends to have a main spring bloom season after significant rains occurring March through early August, although it can bloom sporadically over the rest of the growing season. These lilies begin to open slowly at dusk and are fully opened the next morning. An all white bloom with three petals and three sepals, the flower is trumpet-shaped, roughly two inches across, and is at the top of a single unbranched blue-green stem about five to nine inches high. The leaves are thin, long, and branch away from the stem at the base. The slightly fragrant bloom lasts only a day or two, turning from white to light pink as it fades.

Often found in groups in meadows, open woodlands, and even roadsides, these lilies can be grown easily from seeds or bulbs and combine well with groundcovers or plants that have naturally short foliage. They are native to east and southwest Texas as well as adjacent Mexico, and have since spread east to Louisiana.

Cooperia drummondii, or evening rain lily, tends to have a slightly later bloom season, occurring from late May through September, with the most frequent flowering in late

(Continued on Page 38)



Hill country rain lily
(Photo: Michael Dana)



Evening rain lily
(Photo: Joseph A. Marcus)

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News You Can Use

Nature Watch - (Continued from Page 37)

summer and fall after a substantial rain. The solitary, fragrant, and ephemeral white flower is made up of six petals and tops a leafless, twelve inch stem. It too opens in the evening, and after two to four days the flower turns pink and withers. After it fades, the smooth, gray-green, grass-like leaves elongate. The bloom is quite similar to the hill country rain lily, but slightly smaller in terms of size.

Originally native to northern Mexico, the western two-thirds of Texas to New Mexico, and southeast Kansas and Louisiana, the evening rain lily has expanded its range to Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. It gets its species name from Thomas Drummond, a naturalist born in Scotland that arrived in Weslaco, Texas in 1833. He spent twenty-one months working the area between Galveston Island and the Edwards Plateau, focusing on plants and birds along the Brazos, Guadalupe, and Colorado rivers, and contributing extensively to natural history collections for museums and scientific institutions around the world.

The next time you see some of these elegant beauties gracing an open field or a grassy area on the side of a road, think of them as a treasured gift given to you by a recent rain and a reminder that rain brings more than just rainbows!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them.

Healthier Homes

By Charles & Michelle Bubnis

Have you ever walked around the neighborhood and looked at some lawns and thought "I wish my yard looked that good"? Well, here are some tips to get your yard looking great by creating a healthier turf.

Don't use Weed and Feed. 2,4-D the pesticide in most Weed and Feed product is neurotoxic and contains half of the ingredients found in Agent Orange. Studies have shown that lawn chemicals are tracked or drift inside where they remain on surfaces or in the carpet for up to a year when they are not exposed to direct sunlight (little children spend lots of time playing/crawling on carpet). Also, Weed and Feed can actually hurt the health of the lawn by killing beneficial microorganisms, insects and earth worms that maintain a healthy grass.

Instead, consider building up the health of the soil through yearly aeration and organic compost application (ex. Farm Style Compost from Natural Gardener). Corn Gluten can be applied for pre-emergent weed control. Biological controls for insects can be used if necessary such as nematodes to get rid of grubs. Apply annually a slow release nitrogen organic fertilizer as commercial fertilizers frequently contain toxic herbicides such as 2,4-D mentioned earlier.

You are on your way to transitioning to a natural lawn care with these easy steps. If you are looking for or currently have a lawn care service, ask them to adopt these methods. If they wish to use IPM (Integrated Pest Management) be wary because these usually include the use of toxic pesticides.

Within a short time you too will have a robust looking lawn but more importantly, you will know that it truly is healthier and safer for your family too.

Resources:

Natural Gardener 288-6113

www.beyondpesticides.org

www.grassrootsinfo.org

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April Events at the *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center*

WILDFLOWER DAYS™ MARCH 16 TO MAY 31.

The Center is open every day 9 a.m to 5:30 p.m.

JEAN ANDREWS LECTURE SERIES --

"Growing Forests and Feeding Families in the Amazon and Andes of Peru."

Wednesday, April 1. Speaker: Toby Pennington of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Admission free. 7 p.m.

A CHILD'S GARDEN

Saturday, April 4

Molly Dannenmeier signs *A Child's Garden* in the store. Noon to 3 p.m.

SPRING PLANT SALE & GARDENING FESTIVAL

Members Preview, 1 to 7 p.m. Friday, April 10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 11 and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 12

Thousands of favorite and hard-to-find native plants as well as advice from experts. Check out the plant list at www.wildflower.org. At the store, Mary Catherine Gardner signs her Wildflower Days™ poster and Lawrence Parent signs Portrait of Austin, 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday. Celebrate Easter Sunday with your children at a special Wildflower Center egg hunt starting at noon Sunday. Book signings at the store, 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

NATURE NIGHTS: WILD ABOUT WILDFLOWERS

Thursday, April 16

Explore wildflower legends and lore. Take guided hikes with plant identification. \$1 admission. 6 to 9 p.m.

SCULPTURE DEMONSTRATION

Saturday, April 18

The artists of the Texas Society of Sculptors show how to work in many media. The exhibit of 38 sculptures in our gardens continues through May 31. 1 to 4 p.m.



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News You Can Use

Austin SPD Kids

Submitted by Terri Cruz-Beck

Austin SPD Kids, a non-profit parent support group, is hosting a resource fair, on Saturday, April 4th, 2009, at Hill Country Bible Church Northwest, 12124 RR 620, from 2 to 5PM, to raise awareness of and showcase opportunities for families of children with sensory processing disorders. All proceeds from this event will benefit the Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation (www.kidfoundation.org). Admission is free.

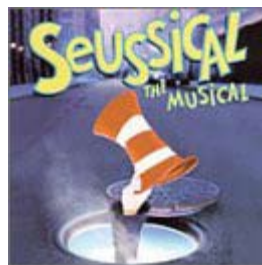
Contact: Kecia or Leslie at austinspdkids@yahoo.com for more information

SpringFest 2009

Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, April 25, 11 AM - 9 PM

The Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce SpringFest is the premier event in the South Lake Travis area. Including 100+ vendor booths, kids activities, BBQ cook-off and live music all day by the Carson Brock Band, Andrea Marie and the Magnolia Band, Two Tons of Steel, Jason Allen Band and Eleven Hundred Springs. SpringFest is April 25th at the Hill Country Galleria. For more information visit www.laketravisspringfest.com.



Seussical

River Place Elementary Theatre Club

River Place Elementary Theatre Club proudly presents the musical production of Seussical, Jr., a musical by Lynn Ahrens, Eric Idle and Stephen Flaherty.

Seussical, Jr. is a whirlwind tour of Dr. Seuss stories including, "Horton Hears A Who", and "Gertrude McFuzz". Set to a variety of musical styles, ranging from Latin to pop, swing to gospel, and R&B to funk, all ages will enjoy this unforgettable celebration of the greatest children's literature of all time.

Seussical Jr. lovingly brings to life our favorite Dr. Seuss characters including Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Mayzie, and all of Whoville! The Cat and Jojo, a boy Who and "thinker of strange and wonderful thinks," seamlessly bring together these colorful tales. Dr. Seuss's themes are relevant and universal, making this a musical to appeal to all ages.

Performances are at The Church at Canyon Creek located at 9001 E.M. 620 North in Austin, Friday, April 3rd at 7:00 PM and Saturday, April 4th at 10:00 and 2:00PM Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and \$5 for children at the door.

Bring the whole family to enjoy kids of all ages singing, dancing and acting out your favorite books.



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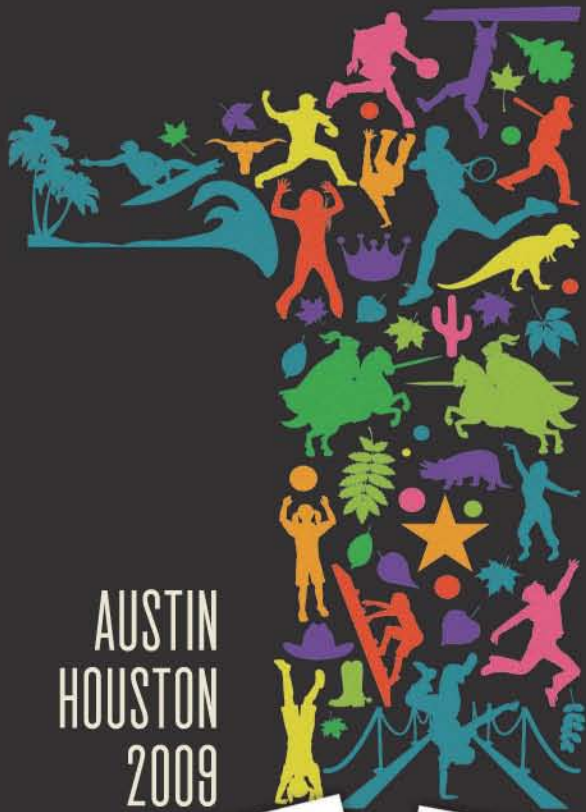
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News You Can Use

Learn to Laugh in Another Language

Submitted by Erin Mccauley

Open your heart and home to a high school foreign exchange student. INTO EdVentures High School Exchange Organization is a non-profit organization looking to place high school students from overseas with caring, responsible American families who will welcome them into their family. Our student will need a loving, caring home, food and a bedroom. They can share a room with a sibling close in age. You will be able to choose a student who has similar interests to your own. Our students are supervised by a local representative throughout their stay.

Our students come from over 57 countries in Europe, Asia and South America...and are between the ages of 15-18. Our students are carefully screened for maturity, academic ability, English comprehension, character,

versatility, and a desire to study in the United States. They receive extensive preparation and orientations before they arrive. Our students have health and accident insurance as well as their own spending money.

If you have children at home, they can learn so much and make a lifelong friend. IF you do not have children at home, you will LOVE the new dimensions an exchange student can add to your life, and the new life they will give to your home. You can make a huge difference in a young person's life and bring understanding between nations... you can change the world, and LEARN TO LAUGH IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE!!

Contact Mikki Hunt Toll free (866) 616-4837 or email: txintoteam@aol.com.

Newsletter Article Submissions

Interested in submitting an article? You can do so by emailing thestar@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 The Star. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations and military service are also welcome.

Classified Ads

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

Business classifieds (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$50, limit 40 words, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales Office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@PEELinc.com.

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Dishin' with... Molly Fowler



Berries ~ The Perfect Dessert for Spring!

Luscious berries are now available in grocery stores and farmer's markets. Showcase them in this yummy, and easy dessert! Lemon curd is a key ingredient to this recipe. It is a cooked, creamy mixture made from sugar, egg yolks, lemon juice, and butter. It is a delicious spread for biscuits or muffins. You'll find it near the jams and jellies in your better supermarkets, or in gourmet stores to purchase.

Lemon Berry Delight

Serves 4

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------|
| 2 Cups | Mixed fresh berries |
| ¼ Cup | Sugar (or more to taste) |
| ½ Cup | Lemon curd |
| 1½ tsp | Lemon zest |
| ½ Cup | Heavy whipping cream |
| ½ tsp | Pure vanilla extract |
| | Mind sprigs to garnish |

Gently combine mixed berries with sugar and refrigerate about 30 minutes. In a large bowl, stir together the lemon curd and the lemon zest. In the bowl of an electric mixer, whip the cream with the wire whip until stiff peaks form. Stir in vanilla. Gently fold the whipped cream into the lemon mixture. In parfait glasses or dessert dishes, alternate layers of cream mixture with berries. Garnish with mint sprigs and serve.

Happy Spring!

Molly

www.thediningdiva.com

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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.

		2				1		
		1		5	4			
	9	7		6		3		
9	3				5		6	
					7			
			9			2		
5		6	2	3				
2								
			7		6			5

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News You Can Use

Britt's Book Buzz: Thirteen Moons *An Adventure for the Reader*

Thirteen Moons is the second novel by author Charles Frazier (his first novel was *Cold Mountain*). The book caught my eye because I enjoyed reading *Cold Mountain* and when I read the back cover of *Thirteen Moons*, I was intrigued by the subject matter—a young orphan is sent to the unknown territory of the Cherokee Indians.

The book takes the reader on a journey into the mid-1800's, interweaving actual historic events and people (the Indian Removal Act, The Trail of Tears and Davey Crockett) with a detailed, fictional and personal tale that is true adventure for the reader.

The narrator, Will Cooper, is obligated to run a trading post. It is here where he meets Bear, a Cherokee chief, and together they fight to keep the land on which their tribe is living (at this time, Indians were being forced to move West). Will meets many other characters along his journey, all very memorable due to the ensuing conversation ("whiskey camaraderie"), expeditions, gun fights and chivalry that take place.

I always love books that make me revisit our American history. I was talking about this book to our babysitter and she was actually in the middle of studying Indians and trading posts. To refresh my

memory, I did a bit of research on the Indian Removal Act, Andrew Jackson and the Trail of Tears. Did you know:

- The Indian Removal Act was passed in 1830—it offered the Indians land west of the Mississippi in return for evacuation of their tribal homes in the east.
- Andrew Jackson, the 7th president, was in office during this time
- In 1838-1839 Georgia evicted the Cherokees and forced them to march west. About twenty-five percent of the Indians were dead before they reached their new lands in Oklahoma. The Indians refer to this march as the "Trail of Tears"
- Source: <http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/nc/bio/public/Jackson.htm>

One of the amazing things about this book (and is characteristic of the author) is the subtle and intelligent humor interspersed throughout the book and integrated into the characters. I find humor very hard to portray through the written word, but Frazier nails it!

Feel free to comment on this review or your thoughts on the book or suggest a book for me to review at brittanyjed@hotmail.com.

HILL COUNTRY PEDIATRICS



Pictured left to right: Elizabeth Bartlett, M.D., F.A.A.P.; Natalie Tarrant, M.D., F.A.A.P.; and Leslie Wells, M.D., F.A.A.P.

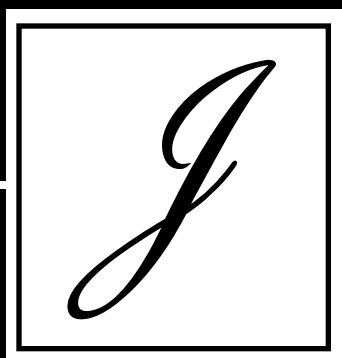
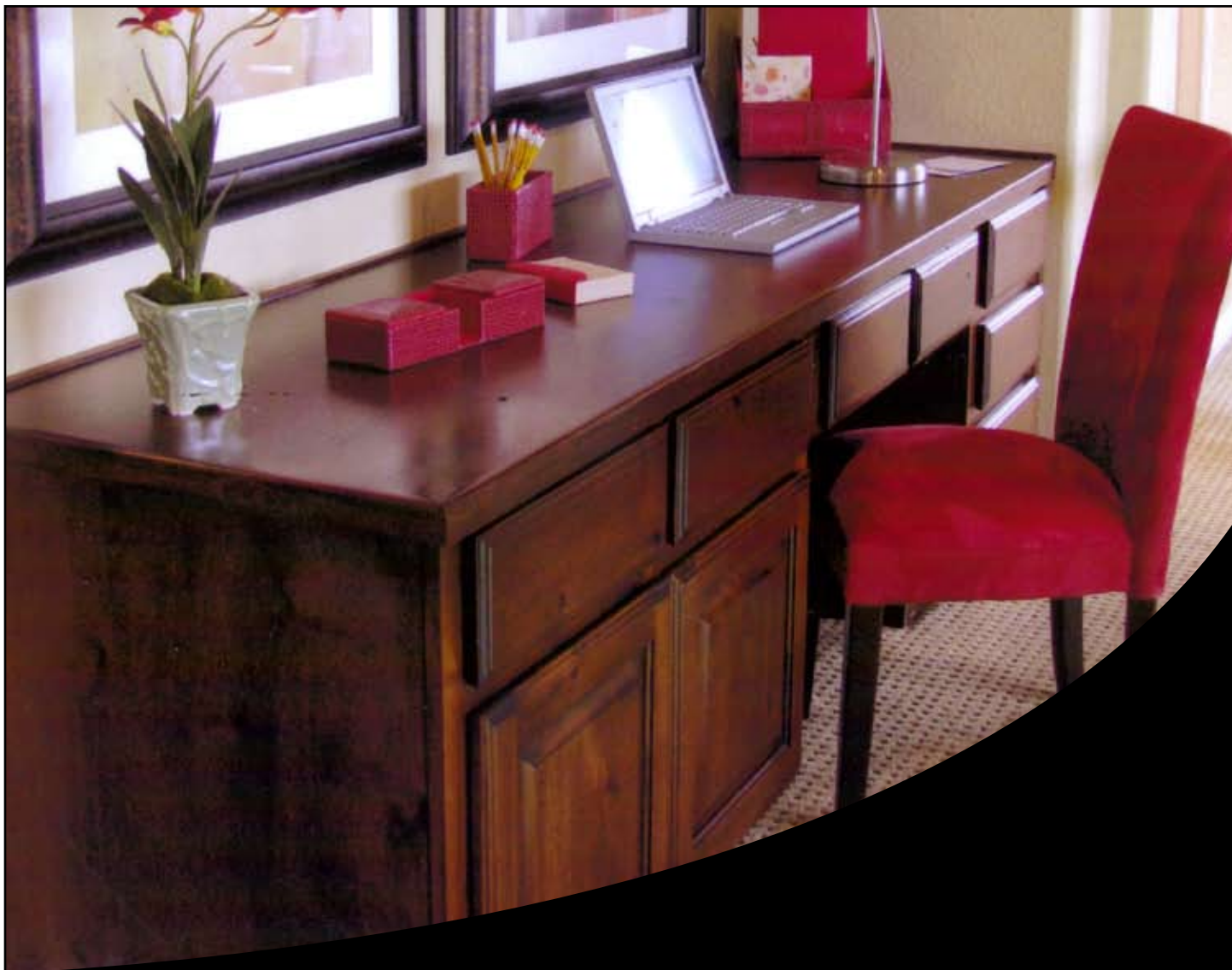
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Hill Country Pediatrics was started in 1997 by Dr. Elizabeth Bartlett, recognized three times in the past as one of Austin's "Best Doctors" by *Austin Monthly*. We are pleased to congratulate Dr. Leslie Wells, who joined the list of Austin's "Best Doctors" this year!



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Kids' Club

View the Kids' Club Contest
Winners online each month at
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AT&T to Improve Wireless Coverage with “Mega-cell” Service

Apr. 1 2009 In an attempt to satisfy its many wireless customers who constantly suffer from dropped phone calls within northwest Austin, AT&T has decided to add an additional tower that will greatly improve the coverage for the community's cell phone users. The location for the new tower is going to be located on Phobos, one of the two moons of Mars using AT&T's new Mega-cell transmission service. A spokesman for AT&T who insisted on being anonymous said that after much research, it was determined that the residents of northwest Austin would never get a good wireless signal without an unobstructed line of site to the tower, and as they found it impossible to do on land, they chose Mars to locate their new “Megatower”. The tower will be 5 miles tall, and will be powered by a

solar collector approximately twice the size of Houston. Once installation is complete, the Megatower will be turn on and controlled remotely from Earth, since the high power needed to send a signal so far would instantly evaporate anyone within 40,000 miles. Though eager to implement the additional coverage, AT&T says there is still the technical issue of the 18 minute delay between someone talking on one end of the conversation and then hearing the other end. But since the additional air time would only add minutes to each bill improve AT&T's profit margin, they currently have only one high school student working part-time on the problem alone during weekends. When asked

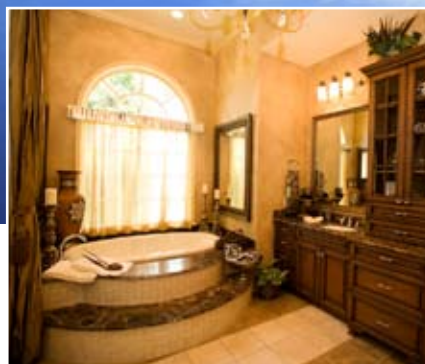
why not use the moon since it was closer, AT&T responded “Sprint already purchased the rights to the moon from NASA and will be sponsoring the first low-gravity NASCAR race to be held along the Sea of Tranquility.”

If you're still scratching your head over this, then just remember these words... “April Fools!”
-Laurie Scott



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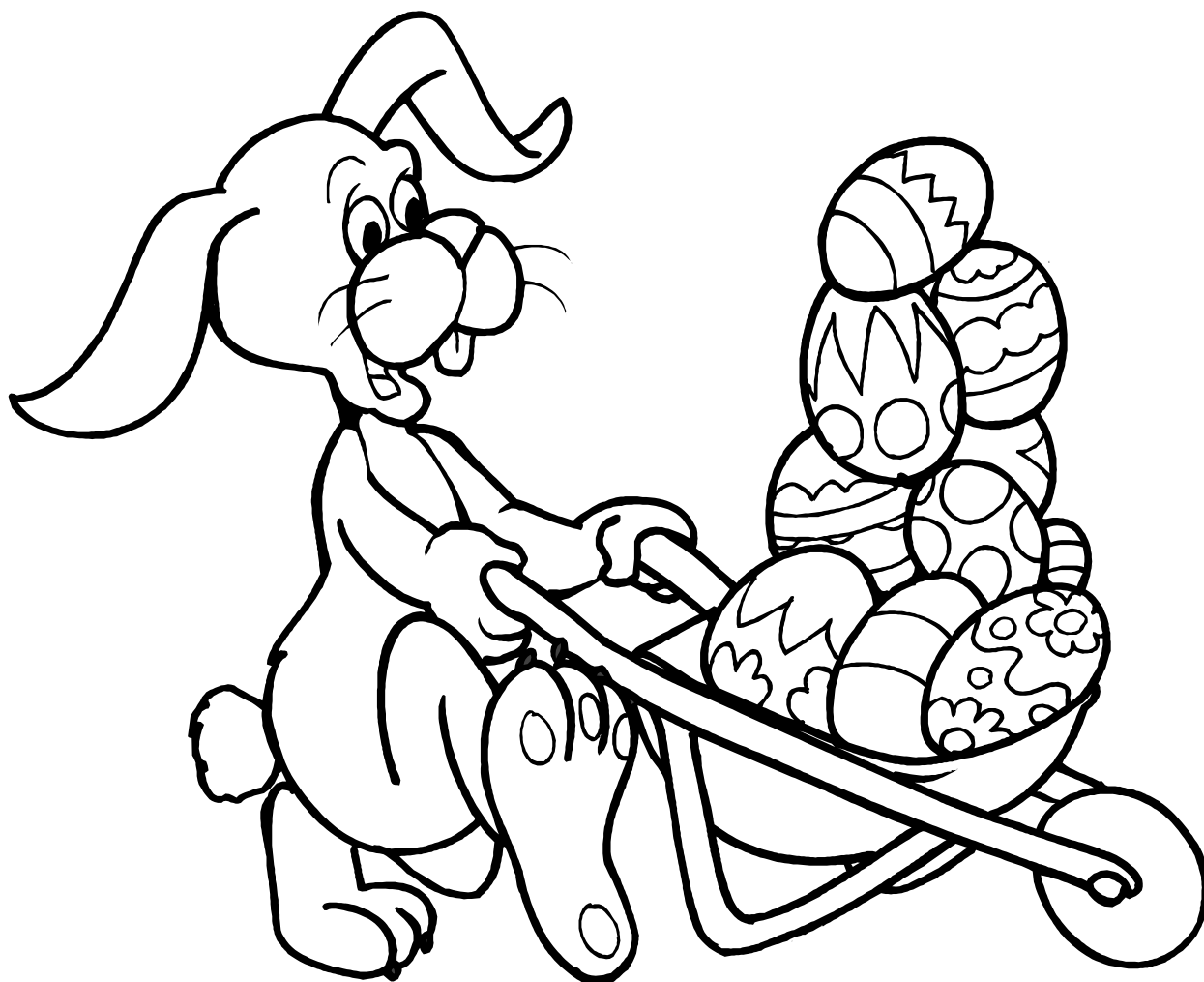
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Every summer Kidsave brings older orphaned children to Austin, and other U.S. cities, to participate in our 5-week Summer Miracles program. Summer Miracles “shines a light” on children the world has forgotten.

The children stay with volunteer host families, experience family life, attend day camp, and meet families who may want to adopt them. Over 90% of the children now have families, hope and love because of Summer Miracles.

Approximately ten orphaned children will be coming to the Austin area to participate in Summer Miracles 2009. For more information about how you can help or host one of these children, please call Stephanie Karasick at 512-415-7082, or email stephanie@austinkidsave.org.

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