

The LONGWOOD Letter

May 2010

Volume 4, Issue 5

News For The Residents of Longwood

FINANCIAL FOCUS

By Matt Smith

In the investment world, there aren't many certainties, but here's one of them: prices will always go up and down. As an individual investor, you can't do anything about this volatility. But the way you respond to it could make a big difference in your long-term investment success.

Many investors think they can "beat" volatility by trying to time the market — in other words, by buying when prices are low and selling when prices are high. In theory, this is an excellent strategy, but in reality, it's pretty much impossible to follow — because no one can really predict, with any accuracy, market highs and lows. So instead of attempting to time the market, you're much better off by following a time-tested strategy known as systematic investing.

To systematically invest, you simply put the same amount of money into the same investments at regular intervals. To illustrate, you could put \$100, \$500, \$1000 or more into Investment X on the first of every month. To make it even easier on yourself, you could automatically transfer those dollars from your bank account directly into the investment you've chosen.

In all likelihood, your contribution will buy a different amount of shares of Investment X each month. For example, if Investment X sells for \$100 per share in January, a \$500 investment will buy five shares. In February, if the price has fallen to \$50 per share, your \$500 will buy 10 shares.

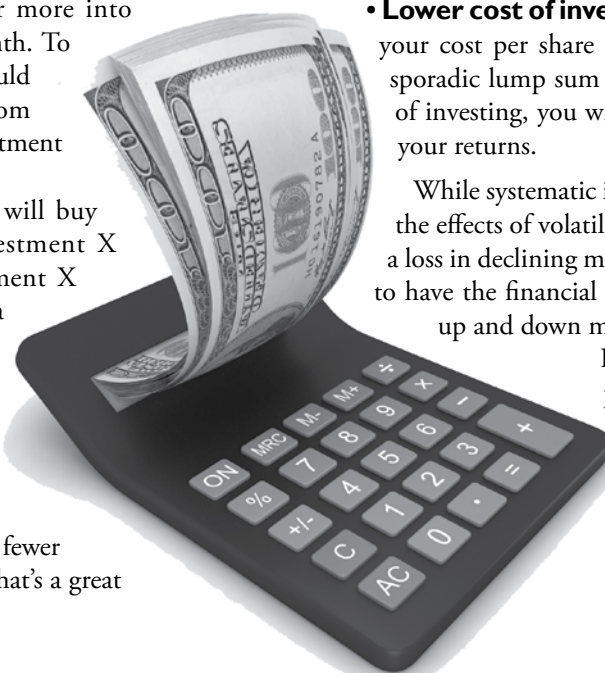
In other words, when you systematically invest, you'll automatically buy more shares when the price is low and fewer shares when the price is higher — and that's a great

way to cope with market volatility. But systematic investing also offers some other advantages, including the following:

- **Efficient share building** — The more shares you own of an investment, the bigger your cumulative gains whenever the price of that investment rises. Consequently, increasing your shares should be a prime objective — and systematic investing is one way of building your share ownership.
- **Investment discipline** — Most people realize the value of investing for their retirement and other long-term goals, but they often put it off each month and find other things to do with the money — and by then, there's often nothing left to invest. But by setting up a bank authorization to invest systematically each month, you'll "pay yourself first."
- **Lower cost of investing** — Through systematic investing, your cost per share likely will be lower than if you made sporadic lump sum investments. And by lowering the cost of investing, you will, in effect have the potential to boost your returns.

While systematic investing is typically a good way to fight the effects of volatility, it can't guarantee a profit or prevent a loss in declining markets. And keep in mind that you need to have the financial wherewithal to keep investing through up and down markets.

But if you have that ability, consider putting systematic investing to work for you. It may not be glitzy or glamorous, but it may work for you.



LONGWOOD LETTER

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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

SCHOOLS

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

OTHER NUMBERS

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

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CY-FAIR KIWANIS CLUB

The Cy-Fair Kiwanis Kids Triathlon will be held MAY 22 at the Langham Creek YMCA. Kids ages 7 through 12 are invited to participate. Children compete in age groups for the events of swimming, biking, and running. Girls compete against girls and boys compete against boys. Every participant will receive a finisher's medal; a t-shirt, and other items. Awards will be given to the top three boys and top three girls in each age group. You may register online for \$25 or at the race for \$30. For links to on-line registration and entry forms, visit www.kiwanishouston sunrise.org. Come join us at the CY-FAIR KIWANIS CLUB and be a part of sponsoring children's activities, such as the Triathlon. CHILDREN PRIORITY ONE is the motto of Kiwanis Clubs worldwide. The Cy-Fair Kiwanis Club sponsors nine Key Clubs in the Cy-Fair Schools; supports the Cerebral Palsy SIRE group, Girl Scout, Boy Scout, and Sea Scout troops and activities; provides scholarships to outstanding Key Club members in our district; assists at Cypress Assistance Ministries, Bear Creek Ministries; the Houston Food Bank; and other charitable groups.

Membership is open to persons of good character who adhere to the standards of good conduct in their community and believe in and subscribe to the objects of Kiwanis International. If you would like to know more about Kiwanis and the programs it promotes, we invite you to be our guest at one of our monthly meetings. The Cy-Fair Kiwanis meet at Hearthstone Country Club on the first, second, and third Tuesday of each month at 12:15 for lunch and informative programs. For more information, call John Carroll (Copperfield and Hearthstone areas) at 281-463-0373; George Crowl (Jersey Village area) at 832-467-1998; or Peggy Presnell (Fairfield and CyRanch) at 281-304-7127. If you live anywhere in the Cy-Fair Communities, you may call any one of the above for information. COME, BE A PART OF OUR FELLOWSHIP.

Cy-Fair Republican Women

Cy-Fair Republican Women is a fun, informative and friendly club that would love to see YOU at our next meeting. We meet at 10:30 a.m., the second Tuesday of every month at Carraba's Italian Grill on Hwy. 6 near Longenbaugh. Texas State Representative Patricia Harless will be speaking on the 2010 Census and redistricting at our April 13th meeting. Don't miss this opportunity to meet this dynamic woman and hear about these important issues. Republican activist and Comedian Eric Golub will be speaking to the group at our May 11th meeting. Come hear his unique perspective our world today – you are sure to be entertained and educated at the same time. For more information, please see our website at CFRW.net or call Mary Moss at 281-550-9415 to RSVP.

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LONGWOOD LETTER

2010 Spring Recruiting Drive

The Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department will host a series of recruiting open houses at three of our fire stations this month to educate and inform those interested in joining one of the largest volunteer fire departments in the nation.

The volunteer fire service was started in this country by Ben Franklin. For more than 250 years the volunteer fire service has continued this tradition of "neighbors helping neighbors". But over the past two decades the number of volunteer firefighters nationally has decreased by around 8%. The Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department has almost 400 volunteers today. The Cy-Fair VFD provides community based fire, EMS, and rescue services for 156 sq miles of Northwest Harris County using 12 fire stations. We provide all the necessary training and equipment needed. We have members from all walks of life including doctors, lawyers, bankers, realtors, career



firefighters, teachers, mechanics, welders, nurses, and stay at home parents. The only requirements are to have your high school diploma or GED, be 18 yrs old, and pass a drug and background check. The volunteers of the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department save the tax payers of our area over \$28 million each year.

For anyone interested in volunteering there are a number of reasons to join:

- The satisfaction of helping others in your community especially when they are in need
 - To gain experience and education in a wide variety of topics including - firefighting, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, fire codes, sprinkler systems and alarm systems
 - Meet and work with others in your community, gain a sense of camaraderie with others by working together
- Whatever your age or physical abilities there is something you can do at your local fire house to help out! While firefighters are needed, there are many other jobs where you could help:
- Drivers and pump operators are essential to all emergency operations (you can't get there without a driver!)
 - Support personnel at the scene to move hoses, get equipment, etc.

(Continued on Page 5)

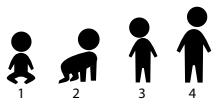


COLIN'S HOPE

Increasing water safety awareness and standards

FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DROWNING

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in children ages 1-4



DROWNING WILL AFFECT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW

Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury-related death ages 1-14.

For more information, check out our website at

www.colinshope.org

DROWNING CAN STILL OCCUR EVEN IF YOU KNOW HOW TO SWIM

NO ONE is "drown proof" - no matter their level of swimming ability.

Falls, entrapments, and injuries lead to drowning regardless of swimming level.

A majority of people overestimate their own and their child's ability to swim, especially in a panic event.

DROWNING IS QUICK AND SILENT



Drowning occurs in as little as 2 minutes.



Irreversible brain damage occurs in as little as 4 minutes.



Most children are out of sight or missing for less than 5 minutes and usually in the presence of 1 or both parents.



Most children die who are submerged for as little as 6-10 minutes.

Children who drown do not **scream, splash, or struggle**. They silently slip beneath the water, even with adults & lifeguards present.

LONGWOOD LETTER

2010 Recruiting Drive - (Continued from Page 4)

- EMS personnel are needed for both first responders and ambulances
 - Fire prevention teachers, people to help with truck maintenance and fire station maintenance are also needed.
 - IT personnel to assist with our computers, network, website, and printers
 - Help with fundraising and other fire company functions
- Please attend one of our open houses and find out how you can help out at your local fire station. If you cannot make one of the dates please call us at 281-550-6663 to speak with a Public Information Officer.

Recruiting Open House Dates and Locations:

- Sun May 23 at 6 pm Station 2 11210 Tower Oaks Blvd, Houston TX 77065 (near Jones Rd and FM 1960)
- Mon May 24 at 7 pm Station 5 16035 Aspenglen North, Houston TX 77084 (Off Hwy 6 just north of Clay Rd)
- Wed May 26 at 7 pm Station 10 11310 Steeplecrest, Houston TX 77065 (near West Rd and Jones RD)

American Business Women's Association Cy-Fair Express Network (CYFEN)

Event: Cy-Fair Express Network Monthly Networking Luncheon
When: May 27, 2010
Time: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm
Where: Houston National Golf Club
16500 Houston National Blvd
Houston, TX. 77095

Networking and Business Luncheon

Cy-Fair Express Network invites you to their monthly meeting and luncheon. Lots of fun, networking, and giveaways. Bring plenty of business cards. Please make reservations by May 21 to Anya Lucas @ (713)459-2331 or anya@lucascare.com. More information @ www.cyfen.org.

Our mission is to bring together businesswomen of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.

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LONGWOOD LETTER



Can the Weather Affect My Child's Asthma?

Weather and Asthma

The effect of weather on asthma symptoms isn't fully understood, but clearly there is a link. Numerous studies have shown a variety of connections, such as increases in asthma-related emergency department visits when certain weather conditions are present. Some people find that their asthma symptoms get worse at specific times of year. For others, a severe storm or sudden weather change may trigger an attack.

Exposure to cold, dry air is a common asthma trigger and can quickly cause severe symptoms. People with exercise-induced asthma who participate in winter sports are especially susceptible. Dry, windy weather can stir up pollen and mold in the air, leading to problems for some people.

Hot, humid air also can trigger asthma symptoms, and wet weather encourages the growth of mold spores, another asthma trigger. In certain areas, heat and sunlight combine with pollutants to create ground-level ozone, which is also an asthma trigger.

Studies have shown that thunderstorms can trigger asthma attacks. One study showed that during thunderstorms, the daily number of emergency department visits for asthma increased by 15%. The study concluded that the problem was caused by the number of fungal spores in the air, which almost doubled. It wasn't rain, but the wind, that caused this increase. Changes in barometric pressure may also be an asthma trigger.

Avoiding Allergy Triggers

If you suspect weather is playing a role in your child's asthma, keep a diary of asthma symptoms and possible triggers and talk to your child's doctor. Once you know what kind of weather triggers asthma symptoms, you can take steps to protect your child:

- Watch the forecast for pollen and mold counts as well as other conditions (extreme cold or heat) that might affect your child's asthma.

- Limit your child's outdoor activities on peak trigger days.
- Make sure your child wears a scarf over his or her mouth and nose outside during very cold weather.
- Keep windows closed at night to keep pollens and molds out. If it's hot, use air conditioning, which cleans, cools, and dries the air.
- Keep your child indoors early in the morning (before 10 AM) when pollen is at its highest levels.
- Your child shouldn't mow the lawn or rake leaves, and should be kept away from freshly cut grass and leaf piles.
- Dry clothes in the dryer (hanging clothes or sheets to dry can allow mold or pollen to collect on them).
- Make sure your child always has rescue medication on hand.

Your child's written asthma action plan should list weather triggers and ways to manage them, including any seasonal increases in medication. A child whose asthma seems to be allergy-related may also need to see an allergist for medication or allergy shots.

Reviewed by: Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD

Date reviewed: June 2007

This information was provided by KidsHealth, one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more articles like this one, visit www.KidsHealth.org or www.TeensHealth.org. ©1995-2006. The Nemours Foundation



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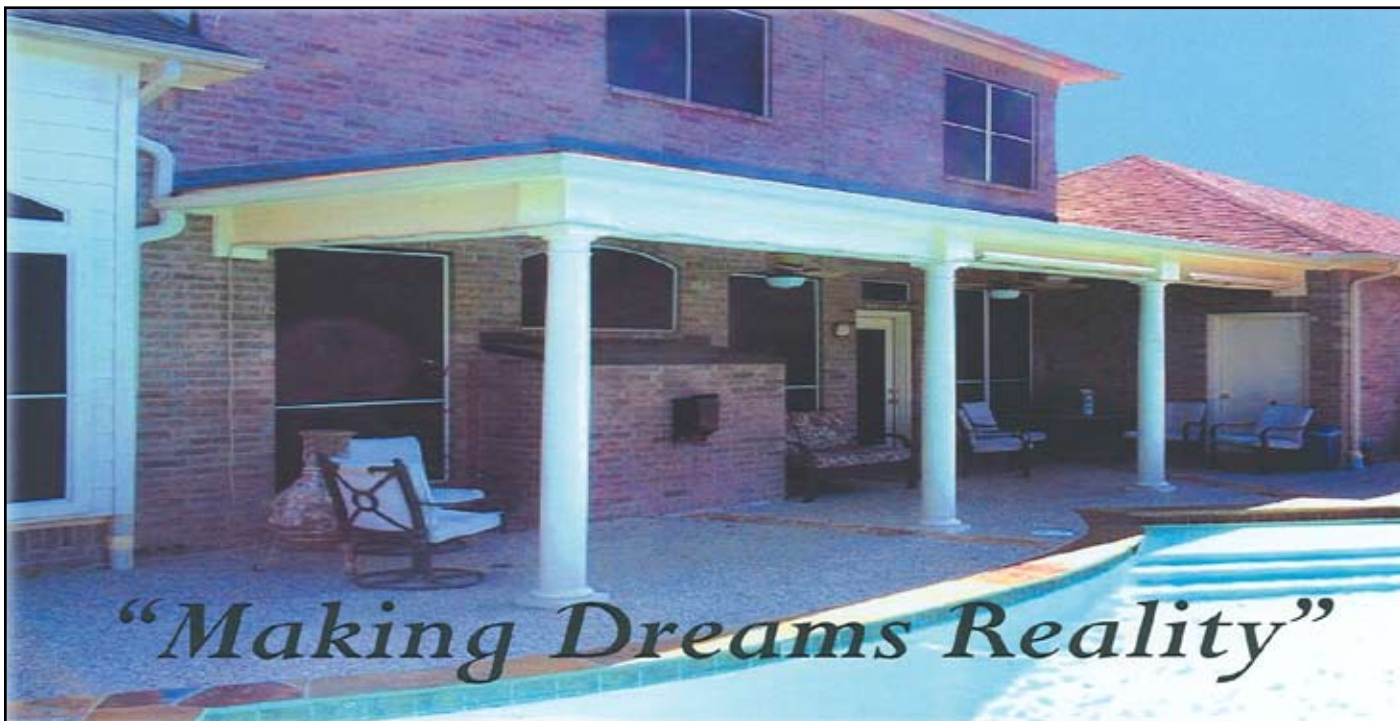
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LONGWOOD LETTER

Annual 12th Russian Children's Folk Festival 2010

Happy Families has been sponsoring orphaned children to participate in our Russian Children's Folk Festival since 1981! We plan to bring 15-20 children ages 6-12 from orphanages in the Kaliningrad region with their chaperones to Houston, TX in June 2010. The children will be staying with host families for 2 weeks.

School age children are one of the most deprived groups of Russian orphans. They have few chances for a bright future in Russia. The festival gives them a unique opportunity to see a different world outside of their orphanages.

These annual events have found much attention from the media, including coverage on ABC's Good Morning America and New York Times and many more. See details at www.happyfamilies.org.

What are the requirements to bring a child? Happy Families needs to raise about \$2,000 to bring each participant. This covers airfare, transportation in Russia, passports, visas, medical insurance, translation and coordination. We are asking for your support and participation in this project. Please contact us for additional information on how you can help.

Sincerely,

Svetlana Startz

Director, Russian Children's Festival

Svetlana@happyfamilies.org

281-871-8008

Trinh Le, Ph.D.

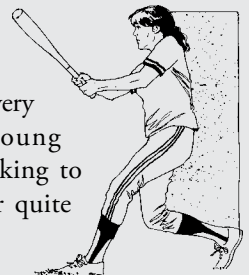
Parent Volunteer

trinhtole@hotmail.com

281-304-4361

Cy-Fair Storm

The 2002 Cy-Fair Storm is looking for 2 - 3 solid players to complete our roster. We practice 3 times a week at Dyess Park and will play 1 to 2 tournaments a month. We are a very competitive, young team that is looking to stay together for quite some time.



Cy-Fair Girls Athletic Association

A.D. Dyess Park

16822 Kitzman Road

Cypress, Texas

Contact: CFSTORM2002@yahoo.com

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Oil & Gas Networking

If you work in any aspect of the Oil & Gas Industry and would like to network and meet your Cypress neighbors in your field, please come say Hi!

We will meet the 1st Monday of each month at IHOP on Hwy 290 (Next to CVS on Fry Road) between 5:30 am and 8:00 am.

Come by have a cup of coffee and get the latest events and happenings in the Industry. If you have any questions please feel free to email me at Kevin.Kays@sbcglobal.net

The Daughters of the American Revolution

Elisha Roberts Chapter, NSDAR meets every third Thursday at Meson 1910 Mexican Restaurant on Mason Rd. The Daughters of the American Revolution is open to any woman 18 years or older who can prove direct lineage to an ancestor who fought in the American Revolution or provided patriot service. Our new chapter is looking for members. If you are interested in joining, please stop by and say hello...meetings start at 7 pm. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: Laura Neal at lizardsareicky@sbcglobal.net or 281-256-3545.



The Cooper Foundation

*A Non-Profit Organization
for grieving families*

The Cooper Foundation is looking for volunteer facilitators to assist with peer support groups for grieving children and teens. No special skills are required, all training is provided. The volunteer time commitment is three hours, every other week, during the school year.

The next training sessions will be held on April 20th and May 4th, from 6:00pm - 9:00pm. You must attend both sessions. For more information, please e-mail Jaime@thecooperfoundation.org, or visit our web-site at www.Thecooperfoundation.org.



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LONGWOOD LETTER



May Texas Events

- 15—HOUSTON:** Birding Walk & Talk Begins at 8:30 a.m. Sheldon Lake State Park. 281/456-2800 ext. 222
- 15—HOUSTON:** Houston Masterworks Chorus World-class orchestra and singers present The Brahms Requiem at 7:30 p.m. Morris Cultural Arts Center Houston Baptist University. www.houstonmasterworks.org 713/529-8900
- 15—NEEDVILLE:** Junior Angler Education Workshop Learn the basics of fishing through hands-on instruction. Brazos Bend State Park. 979/553-5124
- 15—PORT ARTHUR:** Cajun Celebration Includes bands and dancing. Jefferson County Singles Club. 409/983-5118
- 15—VICTORIA:** Market Day Special Events Area — Riverside Park. www.victoriatx.org 361/485-3200
- 15-16—HOUSTON:** Houston Scottish Highland Games & Celtic Festival This event helps foster an interest in the culture and heritage of Scotland and preserve Scottish and Celtic traditions. Farm & Ranch Club. www.houstonhighlandgames.com 713/871-0061
- 15-16—ORANGE:** Texas Cajun Heritage Festival & Speckled Trout USA Fishing Tournament Features live Cajun bands, Cajun foods, Cajun arts & crafts, dancing, carnival and trout tournament. 1000 Simmons Drive. www.orangetexas.org 409/883-1011
- 15-16—PORT ARANSAS:** Anglers on Wheels This fishing tournament is for families and friends of physically challenged individuals. Woody's Sport Center. www.ditwtexas.org 210/254-2310
- 15-17—PORT ARANSAS:** Songwriters Showcase/Art Festival Arts & crafts booths are scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. Local singers/songwriters perform on Monday evening. Tarpon Inn Courtyard. www.thetarponinn.com 361/749-7334
- 16—HOUSTON:** Annual GTO Car Show Features more than 75 muscle cars on display and competition. Cars of all sorts show up — from GTOs and Corvettes, to Malibus, Firebirds and classics from the 1920s. Traders Village. www.tradersvillage.com 281/890-5500
- 16—LA PORTE:** 20th Annual Monumental Bug Bash All makes and models of VWs are welcome. San Jacinto State Park. www.bayareavwclub.com 832/205-2300
- 16—NEEDVILLE:** Sunday Morning Birding Hikes Begins at 8 a.m. Brazos Bend State Park. 979/553-5124
- 21-Jun. 20—HOUSTON:** Mrs. Mannerly Alley Theatre. 713/228-9341
- 21-Jul. 3—VICTORIA:** Exhibit: Maurice Robert's Photography Traffic Report Nave Museum. www.victorialregionalmuseum.com 361/575-8227
- 22—LAKE JACKSON:** Brazosport Symphony Orchestra Concert Begins at 7:30 p.m. The Clarion. www.clarion.brazosport.edu 979/230-3658
- 22-23—HOUSTON:** Ninth Annual Country Roots Music Festival Takes the audience back to the roots of "real" country, with two afternoons of juke box covers and original tunes reminiscent of the honky tonk days. Traders Village. www.tradersvillage.com 281/890-5500
- 22-23—ROCKPORT:** Festival of Wines Texas Maritime Museum. www.texasmaritimemuseum.org 361/729-1271
- 23—CORPUS CHRISTI:** Cathedral's Silver Anniversary Gala Concert Features members of the Cathedral Music Ministry and the Cathedral Festival Orchestra. Begins at 6 p.m. Corpus Christi Cathedral. 361/888-7444

(Continued on Page 11)

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LONGWOOD LETTER



May Texas Events - (Continued from Page 10)

25—SAN BENITO: San Benito High School Conjunto Band Concerts Enjoy the traditional sounds of Conjunto music by San Benito's young musicians at 6:30 p.m. W.H. Heavin Amphitheater. 956/361-3804 ext. 302

27, 29-30—HOUSTON: Pecos Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center. www.houstonballet.org 713/523-6300

29—SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: Memorial Weekend Fireworks Begins at 9:15 p.m. Between Marlin & Red Snapper Street on Laguna Madre Bay. 956/761-6433

29-30—CORPUS CHRISTI: Art in the Gardens Includes art & craft items by local artisans for sale. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. www.stxbot.org 361/852-2100

29-30—PORT ARTHUR: S.A.L.T. Fishing Rodeo Enjoy a fishing tournament — inshore and offshore — with a children's category. Pleasure Island. 409/963-0433

29-30—SOUTH PADRE ISLAND: SPI Beach Volleyball Tournament Boomerang Billy's at Surf Motel. 956/761-3005

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

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LONGWOOD LETTER

Houston Premium Outlets® Begins Construction For Expansion *Upscale Outlet Center to Expand to 145 Stores*

Just over two years after its successful opening, Houston Premium Outlets® has started construction on a major expansion. The center's Phase II expansion will bring the total number of stores at the center to 145 designer and name-brand outlet stores, adding 114,000 square feet of gross leasable area (GLA) bringing the center to 541,000 square feet. New stores will be open in time for the Holiday 2010 shopping season. More than 25 new stores will be added including Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th which will become the center's largest store, A/X Armani Exchange, Esprit, J.Crew, Joe's Jeans, Lacoste, Talbots and many others to be announced at a later date. Houston Premium Outlets is part of the Premium Outlets portfolio of outlet centers owned by Simon Property Group.

With 120 stores, Houston Premium Outlets offers savvy shoppers upscale outlet shopping, with an impressive collection of brands including Adidas, Ann Taylor, BCBG Max Azria, Brooks Brothers, Burberry, Calphalon Kitchen Outlet, Coach, Cole Haan, Elie Tahari, Juicy Couture, Kate Spade, Kenneth Cole, Le Creuset, Michael Kors, Nike, Tag Heuer, Tommy Hilfiger, True Religion and more. With everyday savings of 25 to 65 percent, this outdoor center has quickly

become a shopping destination for fashion and value-conscious shoppers.

Houston Premium Outlets offers discerning shoppers an impressive variety of merchandise including designer apparel for women, men and children, shoes, fashion accessories, high quality leather goods, housewares, gifts and more. The single level outdoor village has a southwest architectural and creates a pleasant, upscale atmosphere for shoppers. While pedestrian courtyards are outdoors, there is sufficient coverage to provide all-weather shopping comfort. Individual outlet stores are reminiscent of boutiques found in the finest shopping districts of the world.

"We are pleased to be expanding Houston Premium Outlets not only to fulfill merchant demand for space, but also to satisfy shoppers' desire to have an even greater selection of brands at impressive savings," said Michele Rothstein, Senior Vice President - Marketing for Premium Outlets, the outlet division of Simon Property Group. In addition to the more than 500 jobs being created during construction, this expansion will add over 250 new retail jobs

(Continued on Page 13)

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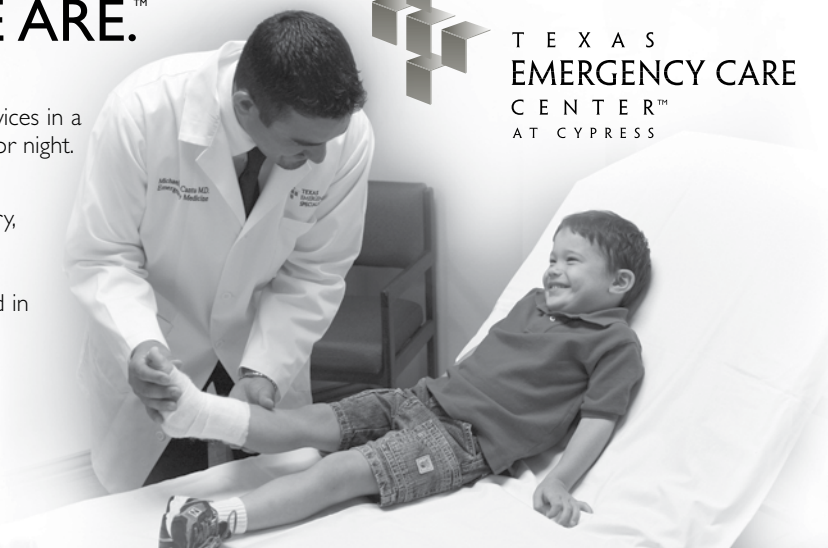
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LONGWOOD LETTER

Houston Premium Outlets - (Continued from Page 12)

to the community. "We are thrilled that our center is providing not only great outlet shopping but is also supporting the community by creating new jobs and assisting in the overall economic growth for the area. The expansion of the center will enable us to enhance these benefits."

The center has a centrally located food court, and offers a wide range of customer services including an Information Center providing area and merchant information, stroller and wheelchair rentals, gift cards and ATMs. The center offers special benefits to tours and groups. An online VIP Shopper Club offers members added savings with no fee to join. Members can enter the online VIP Lounge and download exclusive savings offers from merchants, coupon book vouchers – worth hundreds of dollars of additional savings, find shopping tips and more.

Houston Premium Outlets is conveniently located off of U.S. Highway 290 between Mason Road and Fairfield Place in Cypress, TX. Information about Houston Premium Outlets is available online at www.premiumoutlets.com/houston.



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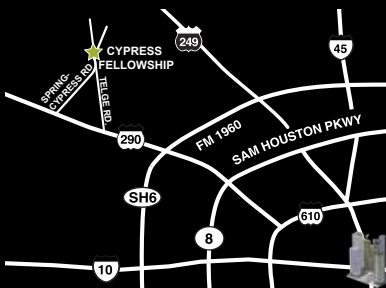


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9:45am



YEAH YEAH, BACKUP BACKUP, *Nag Nag!*

OK, my clients are used to hearing it, “backup backup backup.” I can say it often but it’s never too often. Let me put it another way, how much pain are you willing to endure? The hard drive in your computer WILL fail someday. So WHEN it does, how are you going to feel? School’s almost out for the summer. How will you feel when that final paper or report disappears right before you’re ready to submit it to the teacher or professor?

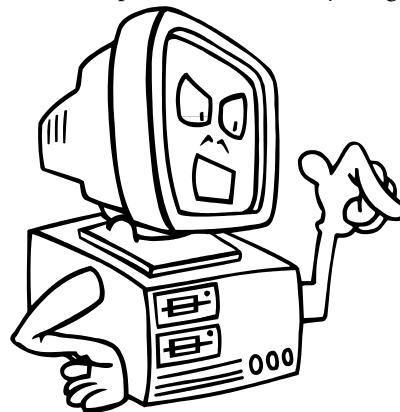
Maybe you’re a young family, and you have thousands of digital photos and videos recording everything your babies have done their first few years. Their first haircut, first birthday, first Christmas, the first time they walk, their FIRST WORDS! All in a pristine, digital format that is very easy to duplicate, yet all GONE, possibly never to be seen by anyone again.

You use something like Quicken or Microsoft Money and keep your banking records on your computer, or you own your own business and ALL your financial records are stored on your hard drive. It’s almost tax time and the information can’t be retrieved. You now have to spend days or weeks recreating your records as best you can (this happened to a client of mine.) The “computer ate my homework” won’t fly with the IRS.

So I’ll ask you again, how much pain are you willing to endure? You do have a few options to backing up your valuable data. One way is to do it yourself (I’ll go into more detail later.) Another way to preserve your memories is to pay someone else to do it. Yet a third way is probably the most common way, intentional or not – prayer. No plan, no system, just the hope that nothing goes wrong with their computer. Since I’m not aware of a Patron Saint of the PC, I’ll concentrate on the first two methods – you’re on your own for the third option.

Want to do it yourself? Purchase an inexpensive external hard drive and plug it into your computer’s USB port. You can pick up a 500GB (that’s gigabyte) external hard drive at Best Buy for around \$80, and maybe a terabyte drive (that’s 1,000 gigabytes) for \$100. If you like to shop around online you can probably find something even cheaper. Just about anything you buy will include backup

software. If you don’t like it, you can try downloading my favorite, SyncBack. Go to 2BrightSparks.com, click on “Downloads” and choose their freeware. Download SyncBack in whatever language you like and go at it.



(Continued on Page 15)

Yeah Yeah, Backup Backup - (Continued from Page 14)

Of course, if you're not inclined for any reason to do it yourself, you can always pay someone to do the above for you. Also, you can keep the "upfront" cost to a minimum by going with an online solution. Two advantages are you don't have to spend very much up front, and the other is that even in the event of burglary, fire, etc. you can buy a new computer and download all your backed up files. The two most well known services are Mozy and Carbonite, they cost about the same (\$55 a year.) Mac users also have me.com as an option (though it is a little more expensive.)

Now, not all hope is lost if your hard drive should fail. There are services available that will take your hard drive, have employees in "bunny suits" take it into a "clean room" (much cleaner than an operating room), disassemble it, remove the platters (the parts with the information) and rebuild it with matching parts in an attempt to extract the data. IF they are successful, plan on spending approximately \$2,000 to get the data back. It that's a lot of money to you, then look at doing it yourself or hire an expert to do it for you. It's not hard at all to do – but you need to do it. If you don't, you're going to remember how you were "nagged" and didn't do anything when you could have, and there will be a geek waiting for your phone call.


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