

Courtyard Homeowners Association, Inc.

August 2010

Volume 6, Number 8

Community Picnic

LABOR DAY WEEKEND SAT., SEPTEMBER 4 AT 11 A.M. (RESCHEDULED FROM JULY 3)

Come celebrate Labor Day weekend with your neighbors. Join in the fun on the water slide, moonwalk, clown, and face painting.

Brave the waters of Bull Creek on a canoe or kayak ride. Dine on the finest picnic fare in town.

INTERESTED IN HELPING OUT???

Contact event chairperson, John Mannix (293-1279) or john.mannix@att.net



BOARD MESSAGE

In our August messages, we usually write about what a good time we had at our annual July 4 celebration. Unfortunately, as those of you know who came out to participate in or watch the parade, this year's celebration did not take place due to weather conditions. For this, we are very sorry since our Fourth of July celebration is the Courtyard's best attended and most popular neighborhood "gathering" of the year.

Please know that this decision was not undertaken lightly. Hoping conditions would improve, we waited until late Friday afternoon for a final assessment of our chances of success on Saturday. In deciding what to do, we considered the preceding two days of rain, multiple radar reports that showed continued heavy rain through Friday night and all day Saturday, the very wet and muddy condition of the Park, and the fact that if we didn't cancel on Friday and the weather continued as predicted, the rain would have canceled festivities for us. This would have resulted in a good portion of the monies in our social budget being spent to pay for entertainment and food that none of us would get to enjoy. Although we felt the decision was correct based on what we knew at the time, it was with a heavy heart and some trepidation, that we decided not to go ahead with final preparations Friday evening and canceled this year's event. Thank you to everyone we talked to that morning for their kind and understanding reaction to the news. Special thanks to all the volunteers who were prepared to help out that day. Hold onto that generous volunteering spirit because you are still needed. And now for the GOOD NEWS!

MARK YOU CALENDARS FOR 11 A.M., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4.

To make best use of those unspent social event monies from July, plans are underway to throw ourselves an end-of-summer, beginning-of-school year, start of football season (call it what you will) **Labor Day weekend picnic celebration.** Expect all the usual things – water slide, moonwalk, face painting, clown, canoe and kayak rides and, of course, mouthwatering picnic fare. Notices have been placed on the website. Signs will be posted at the entrances as we get closer to the end of this month. Volunteers are needed to help with the general planning and boat rides. Please contact John Mannix (293-1279, john.mannix@att.net), Waneen Spirduso (345-5078, spirduso@mail.utexas.edu), or any Board member.

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and and happy August, and we hope to see you all soon at the picnic in the Park on Saturday, September 4.

Keep Up Your Good Efforts to Drive Slowly in the Courtyard. Your Courtyard Homeowners' Association Board of Directors

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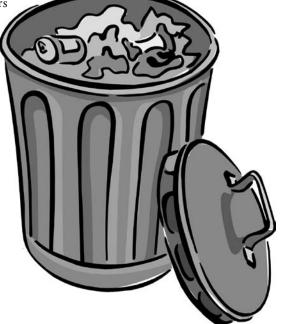
OUT OF SIGHT TRASH CONTAINERS

No, this is not a 60's description of extremely "cool" trash containers. This is just a quick reminder of where everyone's containers should be unless they are sitting at the curb waiting to be emptied on trash collection day. To the long term residents who should know and to our newcomers who might not yet be aware, please note that the Courtyard's deed restrictions set out certain requirements for the maintenance of trash containers. In essence, no garbage or trash should be left sitting out where people can see it unless it's in a covered container, and in no event should those containers be kept in a place where they are visible from neighboring property. This means they should be OUT OF SIGHT. (See, Second Restated Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions, ART. VIII, Sec.10)

If you get home on Friday night after work, don't leave your trash container(s) out in your driveway until Sunday night. Put them away Friday night or Saturday morning. If you are away for the weekend, try to make arrangements with a neighbor to bring your containers at least up to the side of your garage or home. If you are collecting materials for one of the City's bulk pick-ups, those items do not need to be in containers and may be placed at the curb for periods of up to a week around the approximate date on the City's notice. (Note: last bulk pick-up was July 12)

The vast majority of Courtyard residents are responsible neighbors that make the effort to follow these rules. Sadly, there are a persistent few who refuse to comply and continually leave their containers outside in plain view -- week after week after week. In response to numerous complaints, the Board is continuing efforts to work with continual violators to achieve compliance without resorting to the more formal remedies provided in the Declaration. At

some point, however, these perpetual offenders may leave no other alternative.



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SMILES ALL AROUND

You are invited to visit our office or our website for more information. Our fun and friendly office is specially designed with kids in mind, including video games and toys for all ages.

Discover the difference. As always, thank you for your continued referrals to family and friends. We hope to see you soon.

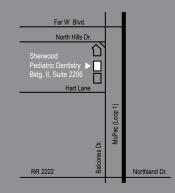


Stephen Sherwood, DDS

6500 North MoPac, Bldg. II, Suite 2206 Austin, Texas 78731 Tel: 512.454.6936 Fax: 512.454.0437 www.drsherwood.net

OFFICE HOURS Convenient office hours are

Monday 9 am - 5 pm Tuesday – Thursday 8 am - 5 pm Fridays are reserved for surgical procedures.



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Book Club

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1:00 P.M. AT THE COURTYARD TENNIS & SWIM CLUB

The focus of our August meeting is the blockbuster bestseller, *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson. With summer heat at its peak, a good, steamy mystery centered in Sweden, just might be what you need to "chill out." As you may be aware, this is the first book in what the author, a magazine editor and journalist, called his Millennium trilogy – three unpublished novels left behind upon Larsson's untimely death in November 2004. All three books have became posthumous international best-sellers.

The dominant character in the first book is, surprisingly, not Lizbeth Salander, the girl with the dragon tattoo. Rather, it is Mikael Bloomkvist, a disgraced journalist, who is hired by a elderly wealthy financier to solve the decades old mystery of the disappearance of his niece. The plot takes countless unanticipated twists and turns while encountering numerous intriguing characters. Of these, Lizbeth Salander is the most memorable – a young, brilliant, computer hacker and social misfit who has been under state supervision since the death of her mother. It is Lizbeth who becomes Bloomkvist's indispensable assistant and ally in the investigation and who goes on to play the central role in the remaining novels.

If you want to get started on September's reading, check out *Amigoland* by Oscar Casares.

Amigoland is the 2010 Austin Mayor's Book Club selection and should be readily available in area libraries.

For information or questions about the Book Club, contact Jean Heath at (512) 231-9412 or healthcjb@yahoo.com.

AUSTIN NEWCOMERS

Club Luncheon for August
Austin Newcomers is a social organization dedicated to introducing

Austin Newcomers is a social organization dedicated to introducing residents to the Austin Community and giving them the opportunity to meet and make new friends. Join us at our monthly luncheon as well as take the opportunity to learn about and become involved in many varied fun Interest groups.

Time: 11:00 AM Social - 12 Noon Luncheon

Date: August 18, 2010

(Reservations required by Thursday, August 12)

For Luncheon Reservations email: Luncheon Director@Austin Newcomers.com

For other Newcomers information

visit www.austinnewcomers.com or call 512-314-5100

August Program: William "Bill" Gibbens - Forensic Science Services Manger, Austin Police Department

Bill will discuss the Austin Police Department Crime Lab, its capabilities and how it supports the officers on investigations that directly impact the citizens of Austin. He will also allow time for questions and a few stories.

Bill is the last of a dying breed. He entered the field of forensic science when a degree was not required and there was very little interest. Those two things have surely changed over the past 20 years. Bill now holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management and is currently pursuing his Masters Degree in Public Administration.

In 1996 Bill accepted a position as the Identification Manager of the Austin Police Department, of which he was responsible for the Crime Scene, Crime Records, and Latent Print Sections. In 2002 he was promoted to Forensic Science Services Manager and is responsible for a 65 employee crime lab with a \$6 million annual budget. He has been responsible for migrating to a new laboratory and bringing ASCLD Laboratory Accreditation to that laboratory. Hope to see you all at this most interesting version of "CSI Austin".

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Recipe of the Month Chicken Cordon-Bleu

½ C margarine

1/4 C white wine

parsely, minced

1/4 - 1/2 C sour cream

Ingredients

8 small boneless, skinless chicken breasts

8 thin slices ham

8 slices Swiss cheese

1 egg salt & pepper

2 C bread crumbs, with Parmesean cheese

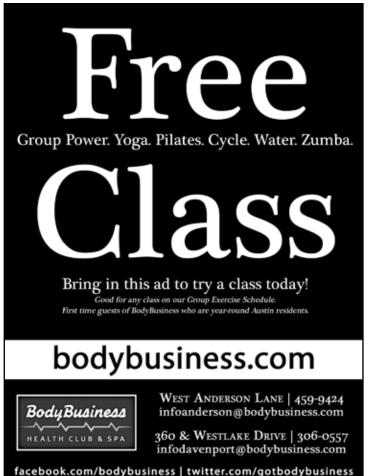
Directions

Flatten chicken breasts with meat clever or mallet. Place slice of ham and cheese on each chicken breast. Roll up and secure with string. Dip chicken in egg and roll in seasoned bread crumbs. Heat butter in skillet. Brown breasts. Reduce heat and cook until done, about 30 minutes. Remove breasts. Add wine and sour cream to drippings. Mix. Add parsely. Put chicken back in wine sauce. Heat and serve.

TREE CLEARANCES

Now that we don't have to worry about oak wilt until after Christmas, it's a good time to give your trees their summer "manicure." You don't have to be a NBA basketball player to know that tree branches have gotten too low along the sidewalks and streets in several locations in the neighborhood. Pursuant to the Courtyard's deed restrictions, owners are responsible for keeping plant materials (shrubs and trees) on their property that extend over public sidewalks and streets trimmed to a height of not less than seven feet 7 (14' per City Code). Please make the effort to take a good look at your trees and see if there are some branches over sidewalks or streets that could use a trim. Thank you for being a good neighbor.







NATURE WATCH

Spiders on the Prowl!

An often seen spider in our suburban yards and gardens is the black and yellow garden spider (Argiope aurantia). True to its common name, this spider has distinctive black and yellow (and sometimes orange) markings on its abdomen and a mostly white area behind its head. With a fairly rotund body of 1 1/2 inches in length, the females of this species are twice as large as the males (common for most spiders), and can have colorful banding on the legs. These spiders are active during the summer months, and tend to be somewhat local, staying in one place throughout much of their lifetime. Like other members of the Argiope family, they are considered harmless to humans.

These garden spiders have three claws on each foot, unlike most spiders that have only two claws, and the extra claw helps them to spin complicated webs. Many times these webs are built in areas adjacent to open sunny areas, often two to eight feet off the ground. Most distinctively, the circular part of their webs are up to two feet in diameter, with a dense zigzag of silk, known as a stabilimentum, in the center. While the purpose of this structure is disputed, it helps this spider earn its other common name, the writing spider. It is most often thought that the stabilimentum might warn birds of the presence of the web, and only those spiders that are active during the day construct these types of patterns in their webs.

Black and yellow garden spiders breed once a year. The males roam in search of a female, building a small web near or actually in the female's web, then court the females by plucking strands on her web. When the male approaches the female, he often has a safety drop line ready, in case she attacks him. After mating, the male dies, and is sometimes then eaten by the female. The female will then lay her eggs, cover them with a sheet of silk, roll them into a sac, and hang them from the center of her web, where she spends most of her time. She guards the eggs against predation as long as she is able, but as the



weather cools, she becomes more frail, and dies around the time of the first hard frost. Come spring, the tiny young spiders exit the sac and disperse, often on a strand of silk carried by the wind.

Another common but startling-looking spider is the spiny-backed orbweaver, or spiny orb-weaver (Gasteracantha cancriformis). Its shell is shaped like a crab shell, wide, flat and variably red, white, orange, or yellow with dark oval spots, rimmed by six red or orange spines. The males lack these distinctive spines, having only four or five stubby dark projections, and are two-thirds smaller than the females. Their Latin name comes from 'cancer' meaning 'crab' and 'forma' meaning 'shape, form, or appearance.'

Also called a jewel or jewel box spider, this spider ranges across the southern half of the United States and is found year-round in woodland edges and shrubby areas of Texas. It usually adds decorations or little tufts of silk to its web, possibly to warn birds and other animals of the web's location. A short-lived spider, its lifespan lasts until reproduction in the spring following their birth. In fact, the males die only six days after mating with a female.

Often found feeding on flowers, the Green Lynx Spider (Peucetia viridans) is a bright green spider and the largest lynx spider in North America. The species name is derived from the Latin viridis, meaning 'green', and (Continued on Page 8)

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Nature Watch - (Continued from Page 7)

is its signature characteristic. Its abdomen has a series of cream-colored chevrons along its length, with white stripes accented by russet margins. Long, thin legs are pale green to yellow, and are covered with long black spines and spots. Gravid females are able to change color to fit their background, and depend on this ability in September and October, to help them defend their egg sac filled with bright orange eggs, from predation.

Active during late spring and summer in a wide variety of habitats, the Green Lynx spider does not spin a web, but hunts for moths and other small insects among low shrubs and plants. As such, this spider is of great interest for its use in agricultural pest management, but unfortunately also preys on beneficial insects such as honey bees. Very seldom does this spider bite humans, and its bite is harmless.

Relatively common throughout Texas, tarantulas are our heaviest and largest spiders. Typically, the head and legs are dark brown, and the abdomen is brownish-black. Coloration varies between individuals as well as between the 14 different species found in our state. Identification of species is difficult, however,

and is often performed only on mature males under a microscope.

Tarantulas are typically found in grasslands and semi-open areas, and use burrows, natural cavities under stones or fallen logs, spaces under loose tree bark, and even old rodent holes as shelters. They are also capable of digging their own burrows, and often line them with webbing, placing a few strands across the front to help detect passing prey. Laying several hundred eggs in a hammock-like web constructed inside the burrow, females will guard them until they hatch. Females have lived in captivity for over 25 years, while males rarely live over two or three months after reaching maturity.

Other insects such as crickets, beetles, grasshoppers, cicadas, and caterpillars form the basic diet of the tarantula. They inject their prey with a poison when they bite, which liquefies the prey's insides, making it easier to ingest. While they can climb, they are usually restricted to the ground, with the males actively wandering in large numbers in late summer, apparently seeking out females. The hairiness and (Continued on Page 9)









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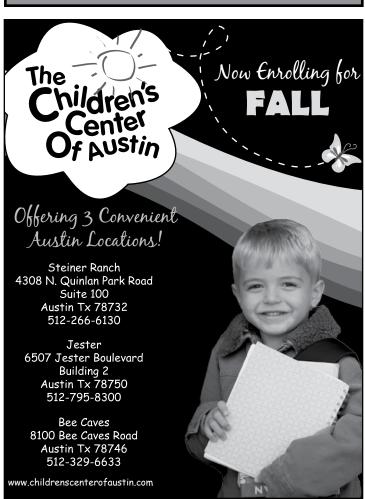
Nature Watch - (Continued from Page 8)

large size of tarantulas often evokes concern, but the bites of Texas species are not serious to humans. Tarantulas maneuver quickly to face whatever disturbs them, often raising up on their hind legs and stretching out their front legs in a threatening posture. They have also been observed rapidly brushing the top of their abdomen with their hind legs to dislodge hairs that can be used to irritate the attacker's eyes or skin.

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our book, NatureWatch Austin, to be published by Texas A&M University Press in 2011.

- by Jim & Lynne Weber

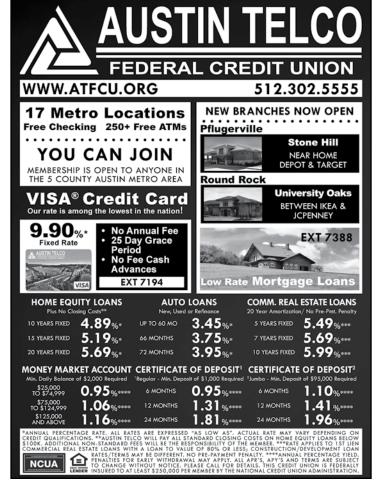




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