

# THE BULLETIN

## Belterra Community News

May 2011 Volume 5, Issue 5

News for the Residents of Belterra



### WHAT CAUSES AUTISM?

By Connie Ripley

*Autism is diagnosed in one out of 110 children (1 in 70 boys). In 1975, autism effected 1 in 5,000. It is the fastest growing serious developmental disorder in the U.S., but is it a disorder or a disease?*

The reasons for this huge increase, especially the 57% increase between 2002 and 2005, are being explored by parents, physicians and scientists. The means of diagnosing being essentially the same, what in our current world is causing the escalation of autism at alarming rates?

*No totally supported cure exists. Early detection and intervention are the best treatments.*

Many concerned parents are blaming childhood immunizations—due in part to a well-publicized study by Dr. Andrew Wakefield (founder the Austin-based Thoughtful House) linking the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism. Medical organizations and drug companies have spent millions combating what they call his “fraudulent research findings”, yet Wakefield still holds his findings as factual. Who do you believe? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is finally citing studies showing that early exposure to mercury-based thimerosal is associated with motor and phonic tics in boys. Others are claiming the measles vaccine is a live virus that may continue to live in some children.

The age of parents, either mother or father, has been shown to possibly have an impact on the diagnosis. According to the federal government’s leading autism body, the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC), “Recent studies suggest...that parental age...may confer environmental risk.” The Dr. Oz television show had a large portion of one show on the causes. This was a well-accepted cause, but why?

In-Vitro fertilization appears to also be in question. A recognized physician and autism specialist states that 29% of her autism patients were conceived in-vitro. (It is important to note that this is only one physician’s findings and is not a published study.) Could this also be linked to age of parents? The federal government is also studying Toxins as a possible cause. The unusually high incidence of autism in children around Texas power plants is cited in some studies.

Mitochondrial DNA damage is finally getting a lot of attention

from both physicians and the federal government.

Current scientific findings support the concept of a medical disease causing a dysregulated immune system to constrict the blood flow in some children’s brains, primarily the temporal lobes affecting motor skills, social integration and speech. Some physicians claim that when “the villain” that causes the damage can be identified and removed from the child, autism symptoms diminish. Is this a vitamin deficiency, a virus, a fungus, sensitivities to toxins or certain food allergies?

The CDC now wants to do a 5 year study on the potential risk for post vaccine “neurological deterioration” and a study of mitochondrial dysfunction. This comes after the IACC announced a shift in research priorities toward environmental triggers, which could include toxins, biological agents and “adverse events following immunization.” Does a genetic predisposition to the disorder exist in some children? While each gene appears to affect only a small percentage of cases, groups of genes appear to account for a greater percentage of autism risk. When children are exposed to certain toxins, viruses, fungi or conditions, autism could be the result, but not in all siblings and not in all twins.

Why are four times as many boys as girls affected with autism?

Something causes this early disruption in the development of the brain of one in 110 children (Some even say the number is more like one in 91. The U.S. military is stating 1 in 80 in ads on TV!), but what?

Autism Speaks is North America’s largest autism science and advocacy organization. Autism Speaks is funded primarily by local walks. The Greater Austin Walk Now for Autism Speaks committees and teams are being formed for the 2011 Walk at Dell Diamond on September 24. Your help is needed! Please contact Walk Manager Traci Whitney at [traci.whitney@autismspeaks.org](mailto:traci.whitney@autismspeaks.org) or go to [www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/austin](http://www.walknowforautismspeaks.org/austin)

*Every 15 minutes a parent is told his/her child has autism!*

# THE BULLETIN

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Ambulance / Fire ..... 911

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Dripping Springs Elementary ..... 512-858-3700  
Walnut Springs Elementary ..... 512-858-3800  
Rooster Springs Elementary ..... 512-465-6200  
Dripping Springs Middle School ..... 512-858-3400  
Dripping Springs High School ..... 512-858-3100

### UTILITIES

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Trash – Texas Disposal ..... 512-246-0498  
Gas – Texas Community Propane ..... 512-272-5503  
Electricity – Pedernales Electric ..... 512-858-5611

### OTHER

Oak Hill Post Office ..... 512-892-2794  
Animal Control ..... 512-393-7896

### NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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## NATUREWATCH - AVIAN ACROBATS

by Jim and Lynne Weber



Small to medium-sized songbirds with long, pointed wings, forked or squared tails, and inconspicuous legs and feet, swallows are characterized by their adaptation to aerial feeding. Unlike other groups of birds, swallows have a streamlined body shape that has evolved to efficiently hunt insects on the wing, allowing for great maneuverability, endurance, and frequent periods of gliding. When not performing their avian acrobatics, swallows are often seen perching in long rows on branches and wires.

Spending most of their waking hours hunting for flying insects, swallows have short bills, strong jaws, and a wide gape. They feed at speeds up to 25 miles per hour and are selective about their prey, tending to choose the larger insects rather than scooping up every insect around them. Swallows also use aerial flights to attract a mate, and are monogamous breeders. While they can be territorial, most form at least loosely aggregated colonies with both the male and female jointly constructing their nests, made primarily with mud and sometimes added bits of dried vegetation.

Swallows migrate to Central and South America for the winter and three species of swallows return to the Austin area in late March and April, with breeding occurring soon after. The most common is the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), with a dark slate blue back, reddish brown throat, cinnamon or buffy chest, and deeply forked tail. They prefer to nest in suburban areas, often building their mud structures under the eaves of porches and overhangs. Males have 18% longer tails than females, and females generally choose a mate by the length of its tail. Barn swallows begin hawking for insects an hour or so before dawn, accompanied by their liquid, energetic chattering.

Found mostly flying around overpasses and bridges where they prefer to build large mud nest colonies, Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) have a squarish tail, buffy rump, dark chestnut throat, and a pale forehead. Normal flights follow a rollercoaster path, with rapid ascents on quick wingbeats, followed by downward glides. Courtship flights in the spring are followed by copulation on the ground.

Cave Swallows (*Petrochelidon fulva*) look quite similar to Cliff Swallows, and are distinguished by their buffy throat and cinnamon forehead. Locally common and increasing their range to the north and east, Cave Swallows historically occurred only in dimly lit interiors of caves or sinkholes, but over the past few decades have begun utilizing man-made structures such as low bridges and culverts. When returning to the location of their mud nests, they fold their wings and plunge in at a high speed, then circle around inside the cave/structure to lose momentum before landing.

Adept aerialists, swallows do many things on the wing, including drinking and bathing. The next time you witness their swooping flight and distinctive chattering, take a moment to appreciate these avian acrobats!

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



*Cliff Swallow*



*Barn Swallow*



*Cave Swallow*

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## National Public Gardens Day

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, May 6

Special wildflower and ecology tours

## Gardens on Tour

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 7

A special self-guided tour to secret garden treasures featuring unique ways to design with native plants. Five gardens plus the Wildflower Center for \$25 or pay \$6 for individual gardens.

Origami artist Joan Son in the store noon to 4 p.m.

Sponsored by South Texas Money Management.

## MAY EVENTS at the Wildflower Center

### Texas Highways Photo Exhibit

Monday, May 2, through Sunday, May 8

Honoring National Wildflower Week

### Nature Nights—Butterflies

6 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 20

\$1 admission

### Silk Paintings

Opens Saturday, May 28

Uniquely layered silk with colorful additions by Catherine Flowers in the McDermott Learning Center.

### Memorial Day

Monday, May 30

The Wildflower Center is open.

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## SUDOKU

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	5		6					
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	2							1
		4				6	3	

View answers online

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

## Recipe of the Month

### CHOCOLATE CRINKLES

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 squares unsweetened chocolate (melted)
- 4 eggs 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups plus 2 level Tbsp. flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt

Mix oil, chocolate, & sugar. Blend in one egg at a time until well mixed. Add vanilla. Stir flour, baking powder, and salt into oil mixture. Chill several hours. Drop teaspoon of dough rolled into small balls into powdered sugar. Place 2" apart on greased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes at 350 °. Do not overbake!



## Bikram Yoga

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## OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EXERCISE

### *Enjoyment, Time, & Know How*

*By Sarah S. Jordan, MS*

We live in a busy world where creating and sticking with a regular exercise routine can be challenging. Many obstacles can stand in the way of our routine, including the enjoyment factor, time, and exercise know-how. But with a little creativity, planning, and dedication, the rewards can be oh so sweet! (Not to mention life changing.)

#### **1st Barrier - I don't enjoy exercise.**

For some people, exercise is simply not enjoyable. Think about what you did as a child as "play." Most likely, you enjoyed doing it. See if you can weave that into your workouts to make them more fun. Or make it social by exercising with a workout buddy or in a group setting.

Whenever I have people tell me that they just don't find exercise enjoyable, I work hard to find a mode of exercise that they do enjoy in order to get them started. Once they are moving more, eating smarter, and feel their hard work and activity paying off, it is much easier to find other modes of exercise to challenge them and help them see results. And I love watching exercise become fun for them and the thing that they look forward to in their day!

#### **2nd Barrier - I just can't find the time.**

If there is one thing that I have learned about my workouts since becoming a mother, it is that they will not happen if I wait for the time to open up in my day. I have to create, devote, and stick to the time I make for them. Here are some tips for making more time for exercise:

- ANY exercise is better than none. Even if you just have 15 minutes, take it. Your body and mind will be glad you did, and 15 minutes a day can add up to great things over time!
- Put exercise on your calendar and treat it like you would a mandatory meeting.
- Find a reliable workout partner. This not only makes workouts more fun, but it holds you accountable to show up.
- Invest in a personal trainer. They can create an individualized workout plan that fits your lifestyle and goals, and equip you with an incredible amount of education on healthy living.
- Make use of the early hours. Getting workouts in before the busy

*(Continued on Page 7)*



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## Overcoming Barriers - (Continued from Page 6)

day kicks off ensures that they happen, and the entire day will be so much better because of it!

- Make it a family tradition. What a cool thing to expose our kids to - families moving together!
- Find what works for YOU. For some people, joining a gym is the most convenient option. If that is not realistic for you, find other activities, classes, and opportunities in your area.
- Don't give up. If you are not reaching your goals, determine what is not working and create a roadmap to resolve it. Remember that fitness is a lifestyle and it goes through ups and downs, but always benefits us if we persevere.

The other important thing is to make the time we do have count in the biggest ways possible. If we have just thirty minutes three days a week to exercise, it is essential that we step up the intensity of those workouts to get the most we can for our time. If duration is short, we need to increase intensity. Add intervals and hills to your routine, or find a fitness class or DVD that offers a combination of cardio and strength training.

### 3rd Barrier - I don't know how to exercise.

In today's world, exercise videos and how-to's are literally at our fingertips online. We also have options for FitTV, DVDs, and opportunities at gyms, studios, and parks around town. Finding

what works for your schedule and lifestyle is essential, so test a few things out before you commit.

Here are some options for gaining exercise know-how:

- Talk to your doctor to get recommendations and approval when starting an exercise program.
- Use credible online resources. One that I use often is the "ACE Get Fit™" section at [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org).
- Put it in the hands of a professional and take out the guesswork by hiring an experienced personal trainer, or get involved in some group fitness classes.
- If you have a friend that is very fit and knows a lot about exercise, ask him/her if you can join them for their next exercise session.

*We all know that it is not easy to make time to exercise. But we have the power to make choices that can shape our future based on how much we move now. Sometimes all it takes is one step in the right direction.*



What's on your to-do list this month?



Change Your World - sundays @ 10 am

THE RADIANT CHURCH | WATCH LIVE services Sunday mornings  
or view any time at [www.ghbc.org](http://www.ghbc.org)

#### Sunday Morning Schedule

10:00 - Worship  
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## COLIN'S HOPE

*Increasing water safety awareness and standards*

*Drowning is a leading cause of  
unintentional injury-related death  
for children ages 1-14.*

***May is National Water Safety Month.***

*NO ONE is "drownproof",  
but drowning is PREVENTABLE.*



**Join us in getting ready for a safe summer in the water!**

**Colin's Hope Night at Eastside Movies in the Park**  
**Tuesday, May 3rd, Doors open at 6PM, Movie at sundown**

Join us at The Expedition School Lagoon (On Lady Bird Lake in East Austin next to Fiesta Gardens) for a screening of Whale Rider. Bring your family and friends to enjoy the movie under the stars.

**Colin's Hope Day at Schlitterbahn-New Braunfels**  
**Saturday, May 21st**

Join us for a day to promote Water Safety and Drowning Prevention at Schlitterbahn-New Braunfels! Special tickets are available from Colin's Hope. Email [alissa.magrum@colinshope.org](mailto:alissa.magrum@colinshope.org) for more information.

**For more information, visit our website at [www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org)**

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& HAVE THE  
BEST SUMMER EVER!**