

The Ranch Review

www.riataranch.net

August 2011

Volume 6, Issue 8

Official Publication of Riata Ranch Homeowners Association

ANNOUNCING A NEW PROGRAM

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

Place: Kids R Kids (Barker Cypress)

Date: 3rd Tuesday of Every Month

(starting August 16, 2011)

Time: 7:15pm - 8:30pm

To encourage increased involvement with our residents, the HOA board is starting a new (and hopefully innovative) program! An additional meeting time will be scheduled at a more convenient location and time, making this opportunity more accessible to the members of our community. This trial program is made possible by the generous offer of a place to meet, by Darold and Wendy Frederick, owners of Kids R Kids on Barker Cypress.

Whether you drop by for a second or stay for a while, please join us for refreshments and a casual meet and greet. We will discuss what is going on in the neighborhood, and would love for you to share your ideas on how to make our community better!

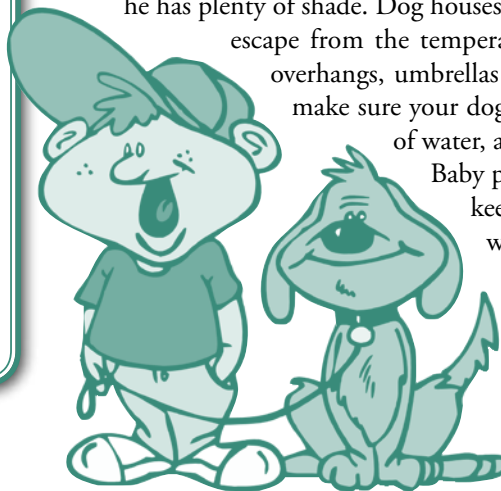
SUMMER PET SAFETY

You are leaving the store after picking up some groceries, and you see a man smashing the front window of a car. Just as you are grabbing your phone to call the police, you witness the man opening the back door of the car and gently picking up a dog and running it into the store. It's summer in Houston. It's hot. We deal with it every year. Many people do not realize that it is NOT a safe time to travel with your dog in the car. Unless your dog can come with you into the store, or someone can sit in the car with the a/c running while you go in, its better to leave your dog at home. The assumption that parking in the shade, cracking the windows or only being gone for a minute, lead to countless dog deaths each year across the country.

HERE ARE 5 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR DOG SAFE THIS SUMMER

- Dogs do not sweat like humans do. They have very few sweat glands in the pads of their feet and ears, and these are not sufficient in helping to regulate temperature. Dogs rely on their tongues to keep their internal systems cool. Panting allows a dog to reduce his internal temperature by cooling the blood in the tongue, which is then distributed throughout the body. Dogs who are brachycephalic (short nosed), find it even more challenging to cool their bodies down, because of the reduced surface area of their tongues. Even dogs considered to be 'outdoor' types, can still quickly succumb to heat stroke.
- Do not leave your dog in a parked car. EVER. When the temperature outside is 85 degrees, a car with the windows cracked, can reach 102 degrees in 10 minutes (www.mydogiscool.com). Considering the fact that 85 degrees for Houston would be fall, it's safe to assume that it is never safe to leave your pet in a parked car in the heat.
- Water and shade are essential. Although we recommend all dogs stay indoors during these hot summer months, it's imperative that if a dog does have to stay outside, he has plenty of shade. Dog houses tend to hold heat, and are not a sufficient escape from the temperatures. Dogs can find shade under trees, overhangs, umbrellas and tarps. It is also equally important to make sure your dog has water. Some dogs will tip over bowls of water, and then have no access the rest of the day. Baby pools (the plastic kind) are a perfect way to keep your dog cool. They are inexpensive, and will provide water for drinking and for lying in! Special attachments to garden hose connections can also provide a constant source of water as well and can be found at most pet stores.

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Cy-Fair College.....	281-290-3200

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HOA, SCS Mgt.....	281-463-1777
United States Post Office.....	800-275-8777

LIBRARY

Cy-Fair College Library.....	281-290-3210
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NEWSLETTER

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Advertising.....	advertising@Peelinc.com

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Do you have an idea or suggestion for the newsletter? Want to submit a photo, article, or both? It's easy!! Email drrandyjose@hotmail.com Articles for the newsletter are finalized on the 10th of the preceding month So if you get your ideas in before the deadline, you should see them in the very next month's newsletter.

We are glad to hear all of the positive feedback and we intend to continue to improving the look and feel of the newsletter according to what you tell us. So get as involved as you like! We look forward to hearing from you.



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Summer Pet Safety - (Continued from cover)

- Keep your dog well groomed. A dog with a clean coat which is free of loose hair will have an easier time cooling themselves. It is also a common myth that shaving a dogs coat will keep him cooler.
- This can actually make it harder for some breeds of dog to regulate their temperature. Consult your veterinarian before deciding to shave your dog this summer. Many times, they can thin out their coat, which may be a better option! If you do have a dog who is shaved, keep in mind that dogs can get sunburned too! Make sure that you use a dog approved (not baby!) sunscreen on the top of their nose, and any parts of the skin that are exposed, before heading out to the park or beach!
- Taking your dog on summer vacation is wonderful. Most dogs will enjoy being able to see the sights and smells of a new place. Make sure you remember heat safety when traveling as well. Again, DO NOT leave your dog in a parked car. Our family has spent many lunches on the road, where we rotate whose turn it is to sit with the dog in the car (with A/C on)! We also opt to eat at rest stops, and places with outdoor patios that allow dogs. Doggie feet can burn on hot pavement, blacktop and sand. Protect your dogs feet by walking them in the grass, or providing them with boots (we like Muttluks!). It is also important to make sure your dog has identification on at all times (a collar tag AND a microchip), and you brush up on their obedience before hitting the road!

These tips should ensure you have a happy and safe summer with your pet. As for the poor little pup pulled from the car? The owner said she ran in the store for 10 minutes to grab some groceries. The dog was taken immediately to the vet, and was diagnosed with heat stroke. He made a full recovery several days later. If it wasn't for the man who took action to rescue the pup, he would not have been so lucky. For more information on heat stroke and dogs, please visit www.avma.org. Have a safe summer!

*Katie Hiett, Pet Dog Trainer and Educator
Annabelles Academy | 281-380-2601
www.AnnabellesAcademy.com*

Meet Your New Board Members

Randy Jose was elected for the three year term of office at the annual meeting and subsequently elected as Vice-President for 2010-11. Randy graduated from the University of California – Berkeley earning his professional doctorate in Optometry in 1969. Since that time he has been involved in teaching at the UC Berkeley College of Optometry; the University of Alabama/Birmingham College of Optometry, the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and since 1980 at the University of Houston, College of Optometry. He retired in 2008 as an Emeritus Professor at the University of Houston.

Dr. Jose has served on many national professional boards as well as local programs serving the visually impaired. He has experience with HOA issues thanks to having over ten years of service with being a board member of the Piper's Meadow subdivision in Webster, Tx and Concord Bridge subdivision here in the Northwest section of Houston. He has served in just about every officer position and committee chair responsibilities during this time. He stated at the annual meeting that the biggest challenge in working on boards is to maintain communication with the residents and this will be his emphasis during his tenure on your board of directors.

Linda Beverlin was appointed to fill the remaining years for Derek Abbott who resigned of June 08, 2011. Thank you for your untiring service for our community. Linda will bring a continued energy to the board or the remainder of the vacated term. Unfortunately her complete bio did not make the publishing deadline so we will feature her at our next issue. Linda is also involved in teaching at Lone Star College and will bring that expertise and experience to the board and community.



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OAK TREES


The live oak is a majestic-looking tree with beautiful spreading branches that have over the years provided many of our streets with a gorgeous canopy. That was the dream of our developer, Mr Bob Allen some 12 years ago. While these trees have provided much shade and comfort and beauty to our neighborhood, they also have some areas of concern. They grow quickly (as much as one inch of increased diameter of trunk a year and three feet of new growth). Interestingly, they can stick around for over 100 years if properly cared for. So, if you listen carefully, they probably have some good stories about your neighbors, past and present. They are fairly resistant to drought as proven this last four or five months.

The problem arises with their shallow roots and thick canopy. The root system will allow them to suck up to 50 gallons of water. It is in direct competition with your grass for this precious moisture. Often you will find your lawn deteriorating more as the tree get larger. This is due to the lack of sunlight getting through the canopy and the roots being more aggressive in obtaining of all moisture in the ground. The search for water will lead the roots to, under or through neighboring structures like sidewalks, drives and even your house. This can cause a lot of damage and repair expenses for the homeowner if allowed to go unchecked.

It is important for every homeowner to know about your responsibility for maintaining these trees as part of our deed restriction program you signed when buying your house. If the tree damages the sidewalk or driveway you will need to be responsible for those repairs. Some residents have been under the impression the county or HOA will fix any damage due to the oak's root system, especially if the damage is from the trees between the sidewalk and road. The roots will seek moisture and thus water meter boxes are often a target for their growth pattern. If they get under the house, they can remove all the moisture from that area under the house leading to cracks in the foundation and/or interior of the house.

We can help Mother Nature keep her charges in check and enjoy their beauty while minimizing destruction to our property with some simple maintenance activities. Deep watering helps the grass get its fair share of the available water. I like putting a bucket of water over four or five areas where 18 inch holes have been dug at the water line of the tree. Put holes in the bottom of the bucket and water will slowly run into the deep water areas and not lose most of the water to runoff. (Chronicle). Professional thinning of the canopy will allow more light in and help grass develop.


(Continued on Page 5)



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Oak Trees

(Continued from Page 4)

This can also be accomplished by cutting off some of the lower branches to let light sneak under the canopy at certain times of the day. Setting up root barriers (available at most hardware or home package stores) are much needed to prevent damage to nearby structures. It is possible to cut many surface roots that are heading towards the house or sidewalk as a preventative measure. Best left to a professional tree service.

More professional information and advice can be found on the web pages of Texas Parks and Wildlife, Randy Lemon at KUHf, Texas A&M Agri Life Extension service, google Oak Tree or pay a visit to Master Gardeners program at Bear Creek Park off Patterson Rd. Hope this helps

Going 100% Organic Not Feasible?

By Melanie Dragger, M.Comm.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit organization specializing in research and advocacy related to public health and the environment, has released its 2011 updated “Dirty Dozen” list of the 12 fruits and vegetables containing the most pesticides. Topping this year’s list? Apples. This begs the question, “Can eating an apple a day really keep the doctor away?”

The answer may lie in where you get your apples. Although the EWG’s ranking was cited as an overestimate of the risk by the Alliance for Food & Farming, a non-profit organization with the stated mission of providing a voice for farmers to communicate their commitment to food safety, consuming organically grown products can reduce the amount of pesticides that enter your body. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), long-term exposure to pesticides can lead to death or serious illness, including

developmental and reproductive disorders, impaired nervous system function, and certain cancers. Further, the WHO has found children to be at higher risk from exposure than adults.

However, organically grown products are typically more expensive than conventionally grown products, and some organic products may be difficult to find in some areas. If growing your own fruits and vegetables is not an option, and purchasing 100 percent of your produce in organic form is monetarily unfeasible, the EWG’s list offers a good starting point for consumers.

According to the EWG’s 2011 report, which is based on its analysis of tests conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the following 12 fruits and vegetables (the “Dirty

(Continued on Page 6)

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Going 100% Organic Not Feasible? - (Continued from Page 5)
Dozen”) consistently contained the highest amount of pesticides when conventionally grown, and should be consumed in organic form when possible:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Apples | 7. Grapes (imported) |
| 2. Celery | 8. Sweet bell peppers |
| 3. Strawberries | 9. Potatoes |
| 4. Peaches | 10. Blueberries (domestic) |
| 5. Spinach | 11. Lettuce |
| 6. Nectarines (imported) | 12. Kale/collard greens |

Alternatively, according to the EWG, the following 15 fruits and vegetables (the “Clean 15”) consistently contained the least amount of pesticides, and by adhering to this list, individuals can get their recommended daily allowance of fruits and vegetables without incurring the expense of buying organic products in order to limit their exposure to pesticides:

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Onions | 6. Sweet peas | 11. Cabbage |
| 2. Sweet Corn | 7. Mangoes | 12. Watermelon |
| 3. Pineapples | 8. Eggplant | 13. Sweet potatoes |
| 4. Avocado | 9. Cantaloupe (domestic) | 14. Grapefruit |
| 5. Asparagus | 10. Kiwi | 15. Mushrooms |

Underscoring the importance of the consumption of fruits and vegetables was the release of MyPlate, also in June, replacing the classic food pyramid. The USDA’s new food icon is a simple, visual cue that advises individuals to “make half your plate fruits and vegetables,” graphically shrinking the role of meats and dairy products in the national diet. More information on the EWG, as well as the full list of fruits and vegetables ranked, can be found at <http://www.ewg.org>. More information on the Alliance for Food and Farming can be found at <http://www.foodandfarming.info>.

To learn more about the USDA’s MyPlate, visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>, and to discover more about the WHO, visit <http://www.who.int/en>.



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