

THE BULLETIN

Belterra Community News

November 2012 Volume 6, Issue 11

News for the Residents of Belterra



Austin Newcomers Club

Austin Newcomers is dedicated to introducing new residents to Austin while extending a hand to make new acquaintances and join fun Interest Groups.

Our speaker this month is Master Gardener Velia Sanchez-Ruiz, a native Texan who specializes in daylilies, a perennial plant of the genus *Hemerocallis*, also known as “the perfect perennial.” She also does Ikebana –the intricate Japanese art of flower arranging, and creative design. Velia is a retired public school health and physical education teacher, achieving her Master Gardener status in 2003. Her talk is sure to inspire Austin gardeners.

The monthly luncheon will be held on Wednesday, November 14 at Green Pastures Restaurant, 811 Live Oak St, Austin TX 78704. The luncheon is \$20 per person; reservations are required, and payment must be received by Thursday, November 8.

The club website is www.AustinNewcomers.com and the telephone number is (512) 314-5100.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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EMERGENCY 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

Water – WCID # 1 & 2 512-246-0498
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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

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NEW AND IMPROVED IRRIGATION REBATE MAKES DEBUT

*by Jacob Johnson, LI 17528
Austin Water Conservation Program Specialist*

Austin Water recently revised the irrigation upgrade rebate program to make participation easier than ever. Residential Austin Water and eligible wholesale customers no longer need an irrigation evaluation by Austin Water prior to beginning any rebated work. So instead of just fixing your irrigation system, upgrade it!

The rebate program is for existing irrigation systems only; rebates will not be given for new systems and/or expansions. A licensed irrigator or the homeowner must complete the work that will be rebated. Once the work is complete, submit the completed application and itemized receipt within 30 days. Staff may perform a post-project inspection to verify the completed work. The application can be found online and will always contain up-to-date information about the program: www.austintexas.gov/department/water-conservation-residents

Items eligible for rebate:

1. Rain sensor or soil moisture sensor (up to \$50): rain sensors and soil moisture sensors detect moisture and will shut off the irrigation system until the sensor dries out.

2. Pressure Regulating Valve—“ PRV” (up to \$100): Misting or fogging in an irrigation system is often a sign of excessive operating pressure. A pressure regulator on the irrigation mainline helps decrease misting, makes spray patterns easier to control and extends the life of your irrigation components.

3. Pressure Regulating Components other than a PRV (up to \$100): A pressure regulating valve on the irrigation mainline is a way to control system-wide high pressure. However, not all stations are created equal. If only some stations are operating at excessive pressure, you may choose to install pressure regulation components at the individual station valve or even change out those heads to pressure compensating heads. If using pressure compensating heads, the entire station must be converted.

4. Conversion from spray to multi-stream multi trajectory nozzles (\$4 per nozzle, up to \$100; entire station must be converted): Multi-stream, multi- trajectory nozzles have a spray pattern that looks like rotating spider legs. This spray pattern results in higher distribution uniformity and is less susceptible to wind drift. This rebate is perfect for mid to large turf stations.

5. Conversion of station to drip (up to \$50; must include filtration and pressure regulation): Well designed and installed drip systems are extremely efficient. Drip applies water directly to the soil at a very low rate. However, to operate correctly, drip stations need filtration to prevent clogs and a form of pressure

regulation to bring operating pressure into range for the drip emitters. The current code exempts drip from watering restrictions which will allow drip users to create their own schedule.

6. Capping a station (\$50; station valve must be removed): You may have an area of your yard that you don't need to water or where you may be making some big landscape changes. If you decide you don't need a certain station anymore, remove the station valve and you'll be eligible for a \$50 rebate. Keep the cap visible and hang on to the valve for the possible post-work inspection. But remember, even high quality irrigation systems can use a lot of water so pay careful attention to scheduling. Austin Water and eligible wholesale customers who use more than 15,000 gallons per month may benefit from a free irrigation evaluation performed by a licensed irrigator. Call 974-2199 or email watercon@ austintexas.gov for more information or to schedule an evaluation.

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A PLETHORA OF PARAKEETS

Nature Watch by Jim and Lynne Weber

Established in Austin in the early 1970s from escaped caged birds, Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) also known as the Quaker Parrot, are native to the temperate and subtropical regions of Argentina and surrounding countries in South America. Monks are often heard before they are seen, as their call is a loud and throaty chap(-yee) or quak quaki quak-wi quarr, and their sometimes startling screeches sound like skveet! They have grown in numbers by being able to survive our mild winters, and as such have now been included on the official list of accepted Texas species.

A colorful bird with bright green upperparts, pale grey forehead and breast with darker scalloped edges, and very light green to yellow underparts, Monks also have an orange bill, stiff dark blue flight feathers, and a long tapered tail. Technically a parrot, it is this tail that makes them a parakeet, which is a term for small to medium sized species of parrots that generally have long tail feathers.

Monks are the only parrot that builds a stick nest, either in a tall tree or man-made structure, rather than using a hole in a tree. They often breed in colonies, building a single large nest that has separate entrance holes for each pair. In the wild these colonies can become quite large, with communal nests reaching the size of a small automobile! Also unusual for a parrot, these birds occasionally have 'helper individuals', typically grown offspring, which assist in feeding the young. Highly intelligent and social birds, Monks can live anywhere from 15 to 30 years, and like other species of parrots kept as pets routinely develop quite a large vocabulary.

Monk Parakeets readily adapt to urban neighborhoods, as they are an open woodland species. A recent informal survey found over 65 nests in Austin, mostly in cell phone towers, tall telephone poles, and sports facility light poles. Even if the nests are cleared out, many colonies return to the same place to rebuild their nest. While mainly constructed out of willow branches, these nests may include man-made items such as rope, carpet, newspaper, and scraps of cloth. The Monks' diet consists of berries, tree buds, and seeds, which can be plentiful in both the native and non-native tree species common in the Austin area.

The exact number of wild Monks in our area is unknown, and evidence of harm by feral colonies of Monks is disputed. While they can be agricultural pests by eating fruits, grains, and other crops, they can also benefit local economies through birdwatching-based ecotourism. It is also important to remember that tens of millions of parrots have been removed from the wild worldwide, and have been traded in greater numbers and for far longer than any other group of wild animals. Many parrot species are still threatened by this trade, as well as by habitat loss, predation by introduced species, and hunting for food or feathers. As such, let's respect their existence enjoy our plethora of parakeets!

*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, *Nature Watch Austin*, published by Texas A&M University Press.*

PET CORNER

CAN I GIVE MY DOG THANKSGIVING SCRAPS?

Submitted by Kristen West

We know it's tempting, but most Thanksgiving scraps are not safest treat for your pets. Cooked turkey bones are a big no-no as they can splinter and result in a trip to pet ER. Additionally, overindulging your pet in other fatty foods can lead to stomach upset, diarrhea or even life-threatening pancreatitis. Other items to avoid are onion, sage, garlic ... and please, don't ever give your pet alcohol.

If you can't turn away from those puppy-dog eyes, a bite or two of pet-safe veggies like plain broccoli, sweet potato or carrots, or a small taste of plain turkey is usually OK. Put the treats in a Kong or other puzzle toy while you sit down to eat with your family so that your furry begger is happily preoccupied!



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Would you like to help us make the holidays brighter for hundreds of Central Texas foster children! Secret Santa is a special holiday gift program of the Adoption Coalition of Texas (ACT) helping Child Protective Services and foster families provide gifts and spread holiday cheer to Central Texas foster children through the generosity of community donors.

If you would like to be a Secret Santa this year and purchase holiday gifts for a Central Texas foster child, please email your name, email address and contact phone number to ACTSecretSanta@gmail.com. The gift drop-off days will be at several Austin-area locations on Wednesday through Saturday, December 5 – 8, and caseworkers will be picking up the gifts the following week. Once you sign up to be a donor, we'll send you all the details. Last year, thanks to the kindness of people like you, we brought smiles to the faces of more than 350 foster children!

The Adoption Coalition is a partnership of nonprofit adoption agencies and Child Protective Services working together to find forever families for abused and neglected children waiting for adoption. These are usually older children, sibling groups and children with special needs. For information about ACT and adoption, visit www.adoptioncoalitiontx.org.

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STAY SUN SMART

Skin Cancer Screenings, Prevention Tips

By Adam J. Mamelak MD, FRCPC, FAAD

Skin cancer is on the rise, affecting more Americans over the past three decades than all other cancers combined, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. The good news is that you can do much to prevent it. "The danger in skin cancer is gravest when it goes undetected," says Dr. Adam Mamelak of Sanova Dermatology in Austin. "It is extremely treatable, and in a large sense preventable when caught early."

To help reduce your risk, follow these sun-smart practices.

7 WAYS TO REDUCE SKIN CANCER RISK:

1. See your physician every year for a professional skin exam. Regular total-body checkups are the best way to make sure your skin is healthy and stays that way. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends annual skin exams. You can receive a FREE skin cancer screening through 2012 at Sanova Dermatology, 12319 N. Mopac in Austin. To schedule your free screening, call (512) 837-3376; no purchase or insurance coverage is necessary.

2. Avoid tanning and UV tanning booths. Even occasional sunbed use almost triples your chances of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Young people – including teenagers – are especially sensitive to the ultraviolet radiation from tanning booths.

3. Seek the shade and do not burn. Stay in the shade especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are often strongest. Avoid getting burned; even a single sunburn increases your risk of developing melanoma.

4. Cover up with clothing and UV-blocking sunglasses. Protect your skin with densely woven and bright- or dark- colored fabrics, which offer the best defense. Wear a hat with a brim of 3" or greater to protect the face. Use wraparound sunglasses that block 99-100% of the sun's UV rays, which helps prevent cataracts and melanomas of the eye.

5. Use a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen. Every day, year-round, use broad spectrum sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 15 or higher. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more. Apply 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 40-80 minutes or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.

6. Help protect children from sun damage. Keep newborns out of the sun, since their skin possesses little melanin, the pigment that provides some sun protection. Sunscreen should be used on babies over the age of six months. Make sure your children are well-protected with clothing, hats, sunscreen and sunglasses. Ask the pediatrician to examine your child's skin thoroughly as part of a yearly check-up – especially important for those with fair skin, light eyes and hair, and those with a family history of skin cancer.

7. Examine your skin head-to-toe each month. Look for skin changes and let your doctor know about any sore that does not heal or spot that changes in size, texture or color.

Adapted from the Skin Cancer Foundation

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S CORIOLANUS - OPENS NOVEMBER 3RD

at Downtown Black Box Theatre!

War is hell, but politics may be worse. And when one becomes the other, no one walks away unscathed.

In this season of political warfare and warring politics, experience Trinity Street Players' production of William Shakespeare's Coriolanus starting November 3rd at Blackbox Theatre at Ninth and Trinity in downtown Austin.

Believed to be written by Shakespeare between 1605 and 1610, the play's themes of class privileges and general unhappiness with government remains relevant today in our own sound-bite society as they were in the riotous streets of the Roman Republic.

The play begins with Coriolanus, a respected and feared general who is at odds with his City and his people. Pushed by his highly determined and calculating mother to seek the prestigious position of Consul, Coriolanus gives into his mother's wishes but ultimately finds himself banished and raging with vengeance.

Coriolanus is directed by Bridget Farias, an award-winning actress and director, who is currently the full-time Artistic Director at the EmilyAnn Theatre in Wimberley, Texas. Farias holds Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in both Acting and Directing and has recently played Catherine in Proof with Trinity Street Players and Lady Macbeth in Macbeth at the EmilyAnn Theatre.

The brilliant cast features Kevin Gates as "Coriolanus." Gates is a Master of Fine Arts theatre student at Texas State University. He recently played Giovanni in Tis Pity She's a Whore and is directing Dr. Faustus for Last Act Theatre. Sam Mercer will play "Aufidius." Mercer was recently nominated for two B. Iden Payne Awards, having played in Austin Shakespeare and Two Towers. Austin favorite Charles Stites will play "Menenius." Stites is a past B. Iden Payne Award Nominee and a well-known and respected local actor and director.

A show with important societal themes, Coriolanus will leave you asking, "Who is worthy to lead? What role do we all have in the success or failure of our government? What is the price of power? And how far, really, are we willing to go to get what we want?"

Opening night is Saturday, November 3rd at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are free to the public, but reservations may be made at <http://trinitystreetplayers.com/reservations> or by calling 512-402-3086. Donations are appreciated.

November 3 – 18

Friday and Saturday, 7:30 pm

Sunday, 2:30 pm

About us: Trinity Street Players is an all-volunteer, nonprofit community theater committed to providing high quality, thought-provoking, and entertaining stage productions in the heart of downtown Austin.

"Trinity Street Players is the most accomplished community ensemble in the greater Austin area." -- Michael Meigs, Austin Live Theatre

Tennis Tips

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco

HOW TO HIT A ONE-HANDED BACKHAND

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to hit a Forehand and a Two-Handed Backhand. In this issue, I will give you instructions on how to execute a one-handed backhand for a right hander. This stroke is still used by many league and tournament players since it gives players a wider range of reach and flexibility to hit slices and drop shots.

Step 1: Ready position: The body is facing the net. The right hand is holding the end of the racket in a forehand grip position and the left hand is on the throat of the racket. The left hand is holding the racket slightly tighter than the right hand. Feet are shoulder width apart and the body in is good balance.

Step 2: Back swing: When the opponent's ball is headed to the backhand side, the left hand takes the racket back and the right hand changes the grip with one quarter turn placing the index knuckle at the upper ridge of the handle. The body should start taking the racket back before the ball bounces. Notice the turn of the upper body and the right foot leading the left foot. Eyes are still focused on the incoming ball.

Step 3: Point of Contact: The eyes now shift toward the point of contact which should be about 12-18 inches in front of the right foot.



The right hand is holding the racket tight. The racket has made contact with the ball and weight of the player has shifted toward the point of contact. It is important to keep the right shoulder closed and not open the left hip too early. Flexing the right knee will allow more flexibility and power on the ball.

Step 4: Follow Through: Once the racket has made contact with the ball, both of the arms need to be extended for better balance. The right arm should be straight and the follow through upwards above the head.

Look for next Issue: The Forehand Volley



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