

LONG CANYON Gazette

November 2012

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A Newsletter for the Residents of the Long Canyon

Exciting Developments Happen at Hill Country Education Foundation

The Hill Country Education Foundation, your Academic Booster Club, is pleased to announce several exciting developments during the past month.

MR. GENE ARANT JOINS HCEF BOARD

We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Gene Arant to the HCEF's Board of Directors. Mr. Arant is a fixture in the Four Points community not only for his 18-year-old real estate business but also for his philanthropy. He and his wife Susan are avid supporters of education and consistently give back to the community in which they live. Mr. Arant and his team have ranked in Austin's top four real estate companies during the past five years, earning first in sales since 2010. He has many accreditations and awards to his name.

HCEF FUNDS LISD READISTEP PROGRAM

HCEF is proud to provide funding to Leander ISD to pay for ReadStep for the 2012-2013 academic school year. ReadStep is an assessment test that all 8th grade students take in the Fall. The test measures the skills that students need to be on track for college success.

NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DONATES \$5K TO HCEF

Thanks to the generous support of National Instruments, HCEF received a grant of \$6k to help fund robotics programs including teams participating in the FIRST® LEGO® League. From elementary through high school, our students are embracing science and technology and learning valuable employment and life skills through robotics.

LARGEST JR. FLL GROUP IN COUNTRY AT LWBE

In the inaugural Jr. FLL Robotics Club at Laura Bush Elementary, 78 students in the first through third grades enrolled in the program, making 13 teams participating in this year's Jr. FLL Senior Solutions Challenge. The FLL organization reports that LWBE is the largest group to have enrolled in the entire country! We wish our future leaders, engineers, scientists and technologists much success along

with teams from Grandview Hills, River Place and River Ridge Elementary Schools.

LARGEST ROBOTICS CLUB FORMED IN VHS HISTORY

After the phenomenal success of the young Vandegrift High School robotics team, the ViperBots, last season, the school made history this year with more than 70 students enrolling. Rad Allen, Galen Goodreau, and Martin Weidenmeir, computer science teachers and FIRST® FTC Robotics Team sponsors, organized the students into five teams. With the financial support of the Club's Friends of the Foundation, the Hill Country Education Foundation, and other grants, teams will have the equipment to compete. Each team has a designated Project Manager, Web Developer, and Mobile Application Developer along with separate teams focusing on marketing, public relations, hardware, and software. We wish the ViperBots continued success!

4TH ANNUAL ROBOTICS SCRIMMAGE NOVEMBER 10

HCEF will host the 4th Annual FIRST® LEGO® League scrimmage on November 10 at Vandegrift High School's cafeteria. Sponsored by HCEF and hosted by the Vandegrift ViperBots, the scrimmage will emulate the Central Texas Qualifier set for December. Registration is limited to the first 34 teams. Jr. FLL teams are invited to showcase their research. All students and families are welcome to attend and see future leaders at work. Direct questions to RoboticSociety@HillCountryEdFoundation.org.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UNDERWAY

Please consider a family membership of \$100 for your Academic Booster Club. As your child makes his or her way through elementary, middle and high school, your contributions will make impact all along the way. Coordinate with your employer for matching funds. Current Matching Programs: Applied Materials, Charles Schwab Foundation, Dell, IBM, National Instruments, and Silicon Laboratories.

NEWSLETTER INFO

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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



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www.childrenscenterofaustin.com

Tennis Tips

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional **Fernando Velasco**
Owner, Manager and Director of Tennis
 Grey Rock Tennis Club, Austin, TX

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 is in 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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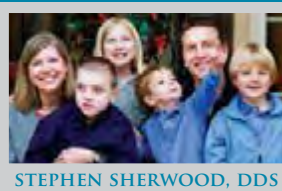
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Date	Sport	Opponent	Time
11/15	WBB	Whittier!	6 p.m.
11/17	WBB	LeTourneau!	1 p.m.
11/29	WBB	LeTourneau*	5:30 p.m.
	MBB	LeTourneau*	7:30 p.m.
12/1	WBB	Ozarks*	1 p.m.
	MBB	Ozarks*	3 p.m.
12/17	MBB	Northwood	3 p.m.
12/20	WBB	Texas-Dallas*	1 p.m.
	MBB	Texas-Dallas*	3 p.m.
12/29	WBB	Wisconsin-Stout^	4 p.m.
12/30	WBB	Rust^	4 p.m.
12/31	MBB	Wisconsin-Stevens Point	11 a.m.

MBB (M. Basketball)

WBB (W. Basketball)

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athletics.concordia.edu

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.*

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