



December 2012

Volume 5, Issue 12

A Newsletter for the Residents of Legend Oaks

Mercer Street Festival

Submitted by DeNae Lee

Enjoy carolers, crafts, a broad selection of holiday gifts, live entertainment, children's activities, and a spectacular display of lighting as the 8th Annual Christmas on Mercer Street festival returns Saturday, December 1. A traditional holiday family experience that has grown every year, Christmas on Mercer Street offers something for all ages and all interests. Admission is free to the public.

For those who like to ring in the holiday season in a healthy way, YMCA will coordinate their Fit for Change 5K Run with the Christmas on Mercer Street celebration. The run begins at the Springs Family Branch YMCA at 8 am. Awards, prizes, and trophies will be presented at 10 am at the Christmas on Mercer Street festival.

Following the award presentation, downtown festivities will kick off with daylong activities including free music and live performances, arts and crafts booths, trackless train and pony rides for kids, photos with Santa, and tasty food and drinks. Mercer Street will be closed off to traffic and allow much room for you to stroll with your friends and loved ones. An authentic small town Christmas celebration, the entire area will sparkle with decorations and bustle with music, shopping, and holiday cheer.

Dripping Springs area merchants will once again welcome visitors with a Hill Country Holiday Gift Tour and Open House. For only \$25, you can purchase a festive holiday treasure box with a map to each participating store. At the end of the tour, your box will be filled to the brim with holiday gifts to keep or give away. With limited supplies available, please pre-register with the Dripping Springs Area Chamber of Commerce. Last year, the demand for participation was so high in the Gift Tour that all treasure boxes were completely sold out before the festival even began! Call 512-858-7000 for more information.

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 program this month is Malcolm Nelson directing the choir First Edition. Mr. Nelson is currently in his seventh year as choir director at McCallum Fine Arts Academy.

First Edition is the premier mixed choir at the McCallum Fine Arts Academy. Its members are auditioned each year and chosen because of their singing ability and commitment to excellence. The group performs all types of music but is best known for its seasonal offerings and pop Broadway style. Members of First Edition have performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City. Each year First Edition sings at numerous private parties, celebrations and luncheon meetings. This promises to be a lively and popular program.

The monthly luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 5 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 29.

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



NEWSLETTER INFO

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Personal classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Legend Oaks residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail legendoaks@peelinc.com.

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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

GET YOUR KIDS INTO THE GAME

The Southwest YMCA helps kids learn about developing healthy habits. The benefits are far greater than physical health. Whether it's gaining the confidence that comes from learning to swim or building the positive relationships that lead to good sportsmanship and teamwork, participating in programs at the Y is about **building the whole child from the inside out.**



SOUTHWEST FAMILY YMCA
6219 Oakclaire Dr. & Hwy 290
AustinYMCA.org • 891-YMCA

**YOUTH SPORTS
REGISTRATION
OPEN THRU DECEMBER**

Traveling with your pet over the holidays?

Here are some tips that will help make your drive smooth sailing.

Submitted by Kristen West

- Take your pet on short trips prior to the big day to let him get used to traveling by car.
- Keep your pet safe in a secured, well-ventilated crate or carrier. It should be large enough for your pet to stand, sit, lie down and turn around. Letting him have free range in the car not only puts him at risk, but it also poses a risk to your family if you were to stop suddenly.
- Never let your dog travel in the bed of a truck. Even if he is secured on a short line to prevent him falling or jumping out, your pet can experience discomfort from the weather and wind or sustain injury from debris.
- Feed your pet three or four hours prior to departure and avoid giving him any food or treats in the car.
- Never leave your pet in a parked vehicle, which can quickly become a furnace and cause heatstroke, even with open windows. In cold weather, the car holds the temperature like a refrigerator.
- Your pet's microchip should be up-to-date and he should be wearing a flat collar and ID at all times.
- Bring a bowl and extra water in case you get stuck in the inevitable holiday traffic jam!
- Take lots of breaks to let your pet stretch his legs and relieve himself. It's a great excuse to do some sight-seeing or pick up a fun treat for yourself!



SUDOKU

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Think Adoption

by Sarah Bremer

As I walked through the Dog Adoption Center at Austin Pets Alive for the first time a month ago, I admit that I was nervous about what I would find when I entered the external hallways housing the organizations adoptable dogs. Nervous because the last time I visited the animal center at Town Lake Austin was still a kill city and the experience left me worried and anxious about whether or not the animals I came into contact with would still be alive the next day. I took a deep breath and walked through the bright red door.

On the other side I found a large open courtyard with several fenced in play areas, each occupied with potential adopters getting to know one of the organization's adoptable dogs. Encouraging staff and volunteers hustled from one part of the courtyard to the next tending to the needs and nourishment of the 150 (give or take) dogs housed at APA's Town Lake Center. I took my time and walked through each part of the dog adoption area- observing the color coded signage (green for walkable and red for adoption counselor assistance) and short vignettes describing each dog. I paused at the pen holding "Barbie" and read her story carefully. She is a nine year old pit mix whose family of seven years had recently moved on without her; she had spent her first few nights in the shelter trembling. My heart broke. I put my hand to the chain linked gate fence, a small effort to ease her anxiousness. It was greeted by a cold nose that timidly sniffed at the flesh of my overturned palm. Gradually that shy initial contact gave way to tongue licks and tail wags. There are so many stories and so many animals looking for homes. I breathed a sigh of relief- Barbie would still be alive tomorrow. So much hope. But, hope that needs constant tending by the community- a hope sprung from donations, volunteers, foster families and, perhaps most importantly, adopters.

Adoptions are the bread and butter of animal rescue organizations like Austin Pets Alive. The best possible outcome is to see animals find good, loving forever homes so that more animals can be rescued- and in APA's case, particularly from shelters where adoptable pets are at risk of euthanasia. In putting together the photos for this essay, I was privileged to speak with several individuals and families considering adoption from Austin Pets Alive. I met one family who had recently lost their young boxer. They weren't sure they were ready for a new pet, but they were at least ready to start looking. I talked with one couple who were excitedly adopting an 8 week old puppy- a sibling for their 14 month old dog and their second adoption from Austin Pets Alive. I had the pleasure of photographing them as they met their puppy for the first time. I met a single mom looking for a dog that would be able to keep up with her nine year old son. I made the acquaintance of Max, Sasha and Katie who were excitedly waiting with APA foster parents, Monica Delgado and Chelsea Ruiz, for their mom to complete the adoption paperwork for Butterfly. The people I spoke with had any number of reasons for adopting a pet, but the two (perhaps the obvious two) that stood out were to save a life and to be a part of something larger than one person or one animal.

With cold weather moving in, the holidays fast approaching and recent funding and inspection issues for Austin Pets Alive (for more information, visit <http://www.austinpetsalive.org>) the organization hopes that you'll be interested in adoption as a way to grow your family. The adoption process is informative and thorough and any one of the organization's adoption counselors will enthusiastically and empathetically guide you through the process. For APA, one adoption is one more life that can be saved and one more step to maintaining Austin's No Kill Status. If you're looking for a new pet, consider stopping by APA's Town Lake Animal Center or any one of their off-site adoption locations. Counselors will work with you to find a pet that matches your needs and personality, advise you on everything from veterinary care to potty training, work with you to address any behavioral concerns that may be facing your potential companion and provide you with phone numbers to offer you assistance of all kinds.

If you're contemplating a new pet for your family, consider adoption and consider Austin Pets Alive. Save a life. Be a part of something BIG.



Russian Tea Cakes

By the Four Points Foodie

www.fourpointsfoodiecom

Whether you call them Mexican Wedding Cookies or Russian Tea Cakes, these treasures will melt in your mouth! Always on our Christmas Cookie making list, there are so many variations of the recipe. What I am sharing with you today is the best of my best - tweaked here and there - but with amazing results.

Ingredients:

- 1 C butter, softened
- 1/2 C powdered sugar
- 1 t vanilla
- 2 1/4 C all-purpose flour
- 3/4 C finely chopped pecans
- 1/4 t salt
- Powdered Sugar to roll in

Directions: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Cream butter with 1/2 C powdered sugar and vanilla in a large bowl. Stir in flour, nuts and salt until the dough holds together. With clean hands, roll dough into 1 inch balls and place about 1 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10 - 12 minutes or until set but not brown. Remove from cookie sheet, cool slightly, then roll the warm cookies in powdered sugar. This makes about 40 cookies.



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Poised or **POISONED?**

Teen Girls in Transition

*By Sugandha Jain, Master Registered Texas Trainer and Director of Accreditation
at a local preschool*



What are Alpha Girls?

The term comes from a 2006 book of the same name by Dr. Dan Kindlon, a child psychologist at Harvard University. Dr. Kindlon interviewed nearly 1,000 girls, in 6th through 12th grades, before writing the book. In it, he describes Alpha Girls on the cusp of incredible achievement.

Statistics released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), from studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, seem to bear this out in terms of academics. Girls consistently outperform boys in reading and writing; the 2004 NAEP reading scale results show that girls' outscore boys by five points at age nine, 10 points at age 13, and 13 points by age 17. Young women also head to college in larger numbers: they currently encompass 58% of students enrolled in two- and four-year colleges.

"Young women are achieving more than young men," says Dr. Linn Goldberg, a professor of medicine at Oregon Health and Science University. Dr. Goldberg has conducted extensive studies on drug and alcohol use among adolescents. He says girls simply aren't falling prey to the same pitfalls as boys. "They are less likely to be deviant and be engaged in many harmful behaviors, such as substance use and abuse," he says. "[Or] be involved in altercations, be arrested, among other maladaptive actions."

What's more, says Dr. Kindlon, is that girls aren't just succeeding, they're doing so in a psychologically healthy manner.

"Today, we have a generation of girls who have more psychological skills to play both the feminine roles and the roles that men played in the past," says Dr. Kindlon. "They are poised to do great things."

How Can Parents Respond?

Parents of Alpha Girls likely are proud when their daughters exhibit high achieving traits; some may think their girls aren't prone to any particular problems. Either way, it's important for parents to convey the message that girls don't have to be "perfect" to be successful and happy in life.

Teaching girls media literacy—how to evaluate the information they receive through television, magazines and other media—is one way to help them combat potentially harmful messages. Several organizations offer parents tools to do this, including the Center for Media Literacy (www.medialit.org) and Commercial Alert (www.commercialalert.com).

Parents also have to be vigilant about being models of appropriate body image. This means mothers, in particular, have to mean what they say when they talk with their daughters about their bodies. A mother shouldn't in one breath tell her daughter she is perfect and beautiful, then in the next make disparaging comments about her own body, says Ms. Martin.

Most important: parents should focus on their daughter's well being as well as her achievements—and consistently convey the message that there are myriad ways to be successful in life.

"Help your daughter develop her potential," says Dr. Diane Halpern, a psychology professor at Claremont McKenna College in California and the author of *Sex Differences in Cognitive Abilities*. "The only way parents can do that is to make sure that their daughters have a wide range of opportunities and know what their choices are."

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LEGEND OAKS

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TRAVIS COUNTY TAX BILLS FOR 2012 SHOULD BE IN YOUR HANDS!

If you own property in Travis County, chances are you already received a 2012 property tax bill. Over the past several weeks, 269,550 bills hit mailboxes. And if you are among the 122,569 homeowners who escrow through a mortgage company or lending institution, don't worry, the mortgage company probably requested the bill and will pay your property taxes. But you might want to check with them to be sure. Anyone who needs a tax bill can download a copy at www.traviscountytax.org or call (512) 854-9473 to request a mailed copy.

"All taxpayers or their mortgage companies should have received their bills," said Travis County Tax Collector Tina Morton. "Especially for owners of multiple properties, this is the time of year to make sure you have received the bills for all of your properties."

The deadline to pay 2012 property taxes is January 31, 2013. Morton said many taxpayers want the advantage of federal tax deductions that require taxes be paid by the end of the year. Any payment postmarked by December 31 will be recorded as a December payment regardless of when the payment arrives by mail. Payments can be made in person at any of the five tax office locations during normal business hours. Taxpayers can deposit checks or money orders in the tax office drop box after hours or pay online by credit card at

www.traviscountytax.org by midnight, December 31.

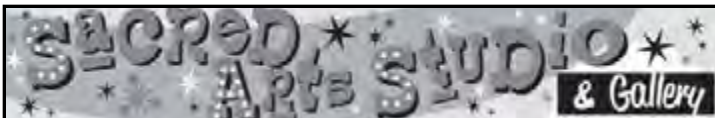
"Some taxpayers believe that if they do not receive a bill, they are not liable for tax payment," Morton said. "Taxpayers are responsible for requesting a tax bill if they do not receive one."

Seniors and disabled taxpayers may take advantage of a special provision in the law that allows for four installment payments with no penalty and interest provided payments are made before February 1, April 1, June 1 and August 1. Last year 3,943 eligible property owners participated in the program. Senior and disabled taxpayers interested in the installment payment plan should call (512) 854-9473 for details.

One of the most common questions this time of year concerns the ability to pay taxes. "If you can't pay any or all of your tax bill, please call or come in to our main office on Airport Boulevard and make payment arrangements," Morton recommended. "You don't need to wait until the deadline. We can assist taxpayers even before the bill becomes delinquent."

The Travis County Tax Office main location is 5501 Airport Boulevard, between Koenig Lane and 531st Street. The office opens

(Continued on Page 10)



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Tax Bills (Continued from Page 9)

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- East Austin – 4705 Heflin Lane at Springdale and MLK Blvd (drive-through service)
- Oak Hill Office – 8656 Highway 71W Building B, second floor
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HOLIDAY WISHES 2012

Each year, neglected and abused children in the Austin area must be removed from their homes by Child Protective Services caseworkers.

Separations occur all year, but it is especially difficult during the holidays. Partnerships for Children is making a difference in the lives of these children and we invite you to join us by participating in our Holiday Wishes program.

With your help, how many children can we impact this year?
Please contact us at:

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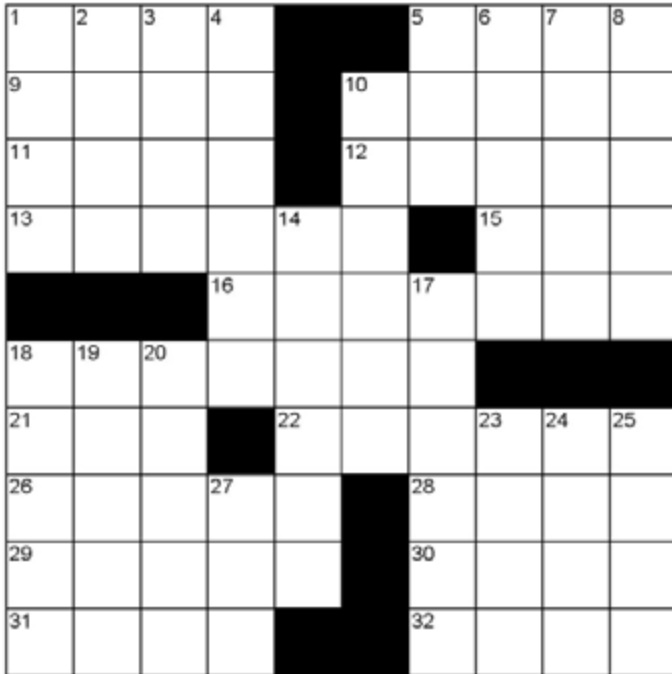
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9. Time periods
10. Satan
11. Tap in lightly
12. Adult insect
13. Prioress
15. Today
16. Chapel
18. 10,000 squared meters
21. Cutting tool
22. Scents
26. Small herring
28. Two
29. Fish tank dweller
30. Volcano
31. Otherwise
32. Hold

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1. Soft white cheese
2. Arabian
3. Mutton
4. Facet
5. Jewel
6. ___-garde
7. Severity
8. Wispy
10. Render harmless
14. Soft drink brand
17. Lacked
18. Hurry
19. Deport
20. Tic tac's competitor
23. Pear shaped instrument
24. Alley
25. Close the door hard
27. Be

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