



HIGHLAND PARK WEST BALCONES  
AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

# THE HPWBANA NEWS

Volume 10, Number 10

October 2014

[www.hpwbana.org](http://www.hpwbana.org)

## GET TO KNOW THE NEW HIGHLAND PARK PRINCIPAL,

# KATIE PEÑA

*By Laura Jones*

Highland Park welcomed a new principal this school year, Katie Peña. Though born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Peña got herself to Texas as fast as she could! She grew up in the Dallas area and earned her undergraduate degree from UT and a graduate degree from Concordia University.

"Education is my passion," she says. "My third grade teacher, Mrs. Howard, changed my attitude about school and showed me how to have fun while learning. I have been an enthusiastic professional educator with ten years of successful experience in Austin ISD. I spent the first eight years at Zilker as a fourth and fifth grade teacher, and the last three at Doss as the Assistant Principal. As an administrator, I actively create a school culture focused on excellence, collaboration, and personalization. Meaningful relationships between students, staff, and the community is the key to educational success.

Sports, family, and friends keep me busy while I am away from



*New Highland Park Elementary  
Principal Katie Peña.*

school. My husband, Marc, and I enjoy cheering on the Longhorns at football and baseball games. I also enjoy great food, running, reading, and our Boston Terrier, Baylee.

Highland Park already feels like home and I am thankful to be a part of this amazing community."

### Questions for Principal Peña

**Q: What is your educational philosophy, in general and for Highland Park Elementary specifically?**

A: As principal of Highland Park, I will develop strong and meaningful relationships with my staff, students, and community to create a shared campus culture that is motivated to strive for greatness every day and focused on excellence, collaboration, and personalization. We are successful

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## HPWBANA ANNUAL MEETING

**Monday, October 20, 2014  
6:30 p.m. • La Mancha**

- Appetizer Buffett and Beverages provided
- Join us for a brief review of 2014, and give the board members your ideas and input for the coming year.
- Election of 2015 HPWBANA Board Members

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Austin Citywide Information Center . 974-2000 or 311  
Emergency Police ..... 911  
Non-emergency Police (coyote sighting, etc.) ..... 311  
Social Services (during work hours) ..... 211  
Wildlife Rescue 24 Hour Hot Line ..... 210-698-1709  
APD REP. - Officer Darrell Grayson ..... 512-974-5242

## '14 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chereen Fisher.....

Pieter Sysbesma.....

Jason Lindenschmidt.....

The HPWBANA Board meets on the third Monday of each month except December. Please go to [HPWBANA.org](http://HPWBANA.org) for our current meeting location or contact [president@HPWBANA.org](mailto:president@HPWBANA.org).

HWPBANA is bordered on the north by 2222, on the south by 35th St., on the west by Mt. Bonnell Rd., and on the east by MoPac and by Bull Creek Rd. between Hancock Dr. and 45th St. Mail your membership dues to HPWBANA, P.O. Box 26101, Austin, Texas 78755

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*Katie Peña (Continued on Page 2)*

when all our students, staff, and community are achieving at the highest level.

I have an uncompromising view that all students can learn, given a positive and motivating learning atmosphere that is centered on building relationships with students and enhancing student confidence. An educator's mission is to connect to and know his or her students so that school is meaningful and enjoyable. A school and students are unstoppable once they have the will and motivation to learn.

### **Q: What are you most excited about at HP?**

A: I am excited about so many wonderful things at HP! I am excited about ...

- Collaborating with our dedicated, passionate, and professional faculty.
- Building meaningful relationships with ALL our students, staff, and families.
- Positively impacting an already amazing community.
- Creating a shared campus culture focused on excellence, collaboration, and personalization.
- Continuing to cultivate an arts-rich campus with the integration of drama-based instructional practices and arts residencies.
- Observing the very best teachers who put students first every day.
- Being an active participant in all our big HP events and performances.
- Having fun while doing all of it!

### **Q: What do you consider your biggest challenge at HP?**

A: Our biggest challenge at HP is to continue our historical success in all academic and social areas. We must maintain our academic achievement distinctions in reading/ELA and science, and now add this distinction in math. We are also focused on closing our achievement gaps between our student groups and increasing our student progress from year to year. We will continue to have success by developing the whole child by utilizing our social emotional learning curriculum and integrating drama-based instructional strategies into our core content.

### **Q: How can the HPWBANA community support HP? Are there volunteer programs or ways to donate various resources to the school?**

I am so thankful for our supportive Highland Park community. In collaboration with our PTA, we have various volunteer opportunities. Most volunteer opportunities are communicated in our Scottie Informer weekly email blast and on [hppta.org](http://hppta.org). I encourage all community members to sign up to receive the Scottie Informer on the [hppta.org](http://hppta.org) website (you do not have to join the PTA to receive the newsletter). Our amazing HPPTA has over 60 committees that require volunteers and resources to be successful. Businesses can also support HP by becoming a Partner in Education. Contact our PIE committee chairs, Elise and Elizabeth at [pie@hppta.org](mailto:pie@hppta.org) for more information.

# October 2014

THE SMITH TEAM

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## FALL FOOD DRIVE

Once again, The Smith Team partnered with Keller Williams in city-wide food drive for the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas.

Here's how it works:

- Grocery bags delivered to your house the week of October 13th
- Fill the bag with tuna fish, peanut butter, baby food, soups, dry milk, cereal, fruit and vegetable juices
- Saturday, October 18 place your grocery bag curbside
- Saturday, October 18, 9:00-12:00, The Smith Team picks up donations



Thank you in advance for helping keep the shelves full at the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas!

FOLLOW MY BI-WEEKLY VIDEO BLOG AT [SMARTSERVICESOLD.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://SMARTSERVICESOLD.BLOGSPOT.COM)



## OCTOBER FESTIVITIES

October is the perfect month to get out and enjoy some of Austin's many festivals. Here are just a few:

**Austin City Limits** | 10/3-10/5 & 10/10-10/12

**Austin Celtic Festival** | 10/18-10/19

**Austin Film Festival** | 10/23-10/30

**Texas Book Festival** | 10/25-10/26

**Formula 1 U.S. Grand Prix** | 10/31-11/02



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# *Keeping the Neighborhood Attractive* FRONT YARD PARKING

By Pieter Sybesma

Keeping the neighborhood attractive. That is a primary goal of the Highland Park West Balcones Area Neighborhood Association. One eyesore that the neighborhood has been fortunate to avoid is the parking of vehicles on lawns in front of houses and in side yards.

However, earlier in August a red pickup was spotted parked on the front lawn of a house that also appears to be a stealth dorm on West Highland Terrace (stealth dorm is a term used to describe a single-family home rented to six or more unrelated people, usually students). A call to APD revealed the fact that the HPWBANA has not taken advantage of a City Ordinance which prohibits the parking of vehicles in front yards or lawns and side yards. With the pressure of redevelopment and increased density, we are seeing more neighbors concerned about the emergence of stealth dorms and the increased traffic and pressure on parking.

In order to keep our neighborhood from declining in attractiveness and value, the HPWBANA Board will consider at its November meeting whether or not the Association should join with surrounding neighborhood associations to prohibit the parking of vehicles in front and side yards. Section 12-5-29 of the Austin City Code, FRONT OR SIDE YARD PARKING, provides that "This section applies to residential property within the areas depicted on the restricted parking area map." Further, "A person



*Detail of the Restricted Parking Area Map.*

may not park a motor vehicle in the front yard or side yard of a residential property, except in a driveway or a paved parking space depicted on an approved site plan." (emphasis added) This ordinance does not prohibit parking on a public street.

As part of the Neighborhood Planning process, the parking of vehicles in the front and side yards can be prohibited in all or part of the planning area. If a neighborhood is not located within in an adopted planning area and not in the neighborhood planning process (the case for HPWBANA), a neighborhood association registered with the City of Austin may submit an application to prohibit parking in the front and side yard for their entire neighborhood in February of a given year.

As a matter of information, the neighborhood associations abutting HPWBANA opted in to the Ordinance a few years ago. Parking of vehicles in front yards and side yards is prohibited in the areas of the Northwest Austin Civic Association, Cat Mountain HOA, Courtyard HOA, Allandale NA, Rosedale NA, West Austin Neighborhood Group, Old Enfield HOA, and West University NPA. A map of the Neighborhood Associations how have opted in is available for viewing at [ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/fyp\\_map.pdf](ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/fyp_map.pdf).

## Annual Highland Park HOOT Halloween Carnival Coming Soon

Mark your calendars for the annual Highland Park Elementary HOOT Carnival on Friday, October 24, from 5:00 – 8:30pm. Friends and neighbors are welcome to this family fun event! Each class at the school runs a booth, including such fun as a dunking booth, huge slide, laser tag, bounce house, and this year, a fun tea cup ride that inspired our theme: Scotties in Wonderland, based on Alice in Wonderland.



Wristbands include all rides and are \$50. Individual tickets are also available. Tickets are good for the booths as well as delicious food from local vendors Craig's Pizza, La Mancha, Cedar Door and many others. Wristbands and tickets can be purchased in advance from the Highland Park PTA ([www.hppta.org](http://www.hppta.org)) or from ticket sellers at the event.

The HOOT is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the PTA. The PTA pays for many additional programs that support the school such as technology, health and wellness initiatives, reading and math specialists, professional development and additional supplies for our teachers.

Please come out and support the school while having a great time as well! Sponsorship opportunities are still available. For more information, please contact Jon Plum at [jplum@rocketmail.com](mailto:jplum@rocketmail.com).



# District 10 City Council Candidates Forum Highlights

*By Carolyn Robinson*

HPWBANA, Brykerwoods Neighborhood Association and West Austin Neighborhood Group joined forces and organized the District 10 Candidates Forum. All eight candidates for city council were present. The most frequently heard comment after the forum was that we are a lucky group of citizens because the candidates are all very qualified and we will be well represented by any one of the eight.

The candidates were asked a series of questions related to issues that are important to our neighborhoods. Topics included zoning matters, historical designations, communications to citizens within District 10, future plans for the Breckenridge tract of land and Municipal Golf Course, the cost of APD and AFD services as a percentage of the COA budget, and traffic/transportation.

Not one of the candidates voiced support for the rail bond that will be on the ballot in November. Most candidates thought that the money proposed for the rail should be spent instead on improving bus routes and improving or expanding existing infrastructure (both roads and existing rail line). Other improvement ideas included promoting the idea of staggered hours for city staff, designating employment centers outside of the downtown area. Some candidates pointed out that although it stands to benefit from the proposed rail line, UT has not provided any financial support to the city for its construction.

You've probably seen their names, but check out their individual websites, if possible. The candidates are:

Margie Burciaga	Matt Lamon
Tina Cannon	Jason Meeker
Mandy Dealey	Robert Thomas
Sheri Gallo	Bill Worsham

A special thank you to HPWBANA board member Dawn Lewis for coordinating this effort. Thanks to all neighbors who attended.

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# Nature Notes: **The Mississippi Kite**

*By Peter English*

I have been watching birds for pretty much my entire life. Early in my career as 3rd grader, I was walking down the Crestway hill to Highland Park Elementary when something above caught my eye. About 20 feet up was a gigantic gray bird with pointed wings and a big red eye - it was hovering motionless in the air and looking right at me. I ran to school and went straight to the library, where there happened to be a librarian who was also in the Audubon Society. She gave me a copy of *The Birds of Texas* by Roger Tory Peterson and I was able to figure out that the crazy and kind of scary thing I had just seen was a Mississippi Kite – a type of a hawk that has beautifully buoyant flight, relatively weak feet, and as a result eats mostly insects it catches in the air. And it really does have red eyes. It turns out that “gigantic” is a wingspan of a little over 3 feet.

Since then birds have been my thing – I spent my youth walking around Brightleaf Preserve back when we knew it as the Lucas Tract. I have traveled to most countries south of Texas leading birdwatching tours, and I eventually earned a Ph.D. studying

complex bird flocks in Ecuador. And for 7 years I taught the ornithology course at UT-Austin.

I have been seeing Mississippi Kites regularly the past few weeks as I write this article, because the Fall hawk migration is happening now just as it was 40 years ago. Starting in late August and ending in late October hawks move through the Austin area in huge numbers – up to 100,000 in a single day when the weather creates the perfect



*Mississippi Kite.  
Photo by Greg Lasley/VIREO.*

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## Highland Park West Balcones Area

conditions. The path usually takes them over the Ridge Oak hill, then over Mt. Bonnell and on to points southward.

The Mississippi Kites are expanding their range, but are still mostly concentrated in the central and southeastern parts of the US. They gather into flocks of between 20 and 200 as they head towards Austin then these groups pass over us and continue their journey all the way to the forests of southern Brazil, Paraguay, and northern Argentina. Unlike songbirds, hawks do not fly over large expanses of water – if they did we wouldn't see them in Austin. The kites fly a zigzag path through Central America, stay east of the Andes in South America, and cover roughly 5500 miles in a few weeks.

The direction of the wind makes a big difference to a hawk trying to fly 5500 miles! The Fall migration is different from the Spring migration in that they are not racing to get to their breeding sites at just the right time to balance weather and food availability and presence of mates. In the Fall all they are trying to do is get someplace with nicer weather and food for the winter. So the hawks take a leisurely approach to getting south, and if they can wait for a nice north wind to carry them they will. As a result, the best days to see large numbers of hawks in Austin are when a front brings a north wind. If it is Fall and there is a north wind, look up! There is probably a hawk above you.



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# SCHOOL START NEWS

By Pieter Sybesma

It has been over a month since school started on August 25. The school pedestrian crosswalks for Highland Park Elementary have been repainted, School Zone and No Parking Signs checked, the APD radar trailer is being set up at various locations surrounding the school this fall, and “Drive Like Your Kids Live Here” yard signs have been put out in the neighborhood.

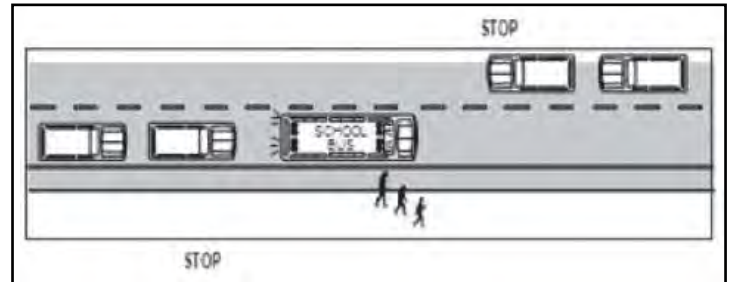
Highland Park parents bringing their children to and from school continue to be diligent in being aware of the hazards around the busy school, with a few exceptions. The lack of sidewalks continues to be more evident this year with many parents and children having to walk in the streets to get to school.

Since we do not have enough sidewalks in the neighborhood, it seems most children are brought to school by their parents with resulting very heavy traffic on Fairview Drive and the intersecting streets. School Crossing Guards are at the busy crossings for the safety of pedestrians. Some of the street area on the north and west side of Highland Park Elementary is signed as No Parking, Tow Away Zones to allow adequate street area for the large buses and cars to safely get by. However, there are often times when parents either do not see or ignore these No Parking Areas and needlessly place pedestrians and traffic at risk within the much reduced street travel area. These traffic control signs and No Parking signs have been installed for student safety. And for the start of this school year there will be further congestion because of three homes under construction near the school: 3201 Sunny Lane (at Valley View), 3208 Sunny Lane, and 3301 Big Bend (at Fairview Drive).

Kealing Middle School students are picked up by bus at Highland Park Elementary at 6:23 a.m. and returned at 3:20 p.m. Lamar Middle School students are picked up by bus at Highland Park Elementary at 7:28 a.m. and returned at 3:43 p.m. Highland Park Elementary class time begins at 7:45 a.m. with the school day being over at 2:45 p.m. And McCallum High School students are picked up by bus at the corner of Sunny Lane and Valley View at 8:31 a.m. and returned at 4:26 p.m. Students are everywhere around Highland Park Elementary.

AISSD's Department of Transportation encourages drivers to reduce their speed when driving near schools and follow posted signs that require drivers to slow down to 20 miles or less when lights are flashing. Police officers will be enforcing reduced speed limits from approximately 45 minutes before school opens, during lunch periods, and for 30 minutes at the end of the school day.

Failure to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks or stop when school bus lights are flashing for students boarding or exiting the bus, and speeding through school zones when lights are flashing could result in a fine of up to \$400 dollars.



AISSD's transportation team offers tips for driving in school zones:

- Follow all posted speed signs
- Be aware of surroundings at all times and eliminate distractions
- Find alternate routes if possible
- Stop at all crosswalks marked and unmarked, as pedestrians have the right of way

- Stop for all buses with red flashing lights

And also remember, cell phone use is prohibited in School Zones.

Excerpts from the *Texas Driver's Handbook (Revised July, 2012)*:

### Yield Right-of-Way to School Buses

You must yield the right-of-way to school buses. Always drive with care when you are near a school bus. If you approach a school bus from either direction and the bus is displaying alternately flashing red lights, you must stop. Do not pass the school bus until:

1. The school bus has resumed motion;
2. You are signaled by the driver to proceed; or
3. The red lights are no longer flashing.

It isn't necessary to stop when passing a school bus on a different road or when on a controlled-access highway where



(Continued on Page 11)



# Austin-wide House Sales Seasonality Compared with HPWBAN Seasonality

By Rebecca Wolfe Spratlin

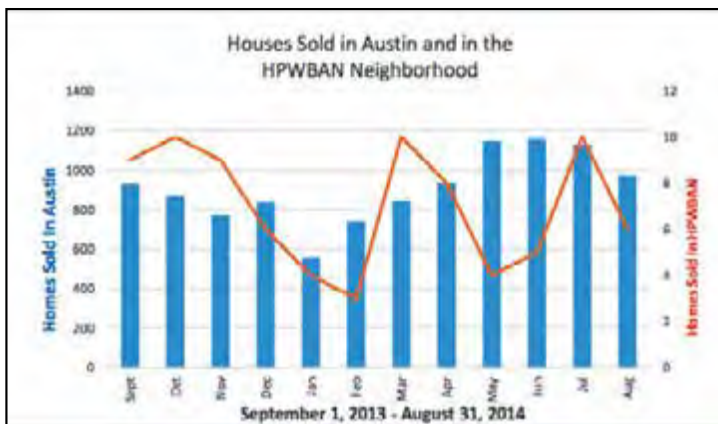
What's the best time to sell my home? This is one of the most frequently asked questions heard by Realtors from individuals who are considering selling their homes. There is no clear answer because seasonality varies in different areas of the city.

To find the answer to this question for Highland Park West and Balcones Area Neighborhoods, I performed an analysis showing the sales during the past 12 months, beginning on September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2014. Per the results, as shown on the chart below, our neighborhood sales seasonality differs from the Austin-wide seasonality with periods of significant variances. Our neighborhood house sales peaked during September – November 2013, March 2014 and again in July 2014, while the rest of Austin peaked in May and June 2014. Both Austin and our neighborhood were in sync with each other during April 2014 and very close in July 2014.

When evaluating this data, it is important to keep in mind that these sale dates reflect the closing dates, NOT the dates the houses went under contract. In most cases, homes close 30-45 days after they go under contract and, in HPWBAN, they went under contract after an average of 63 days on the market. This is important because, calculating backwards, these homes actually went on the market approximately 93-108 days prior to the closing date. In addition to the actual time on the market, most sellers need from 2 – 4 weeks to get their homes ready to sell. During this time, they are de-cluttering, cleaning, making repairs, having windows cleaned and getting their yards neatly groomed. Bottom line is that there is a long lead time to get to the actual closing date.

The most important thing to remember, however, is that regardless of the seasonality, there are always buyers needing to move due to marriages, births, divorces, job losses, new jobs, corporate relocations, promotions, need to downsize or upsize and deaths of family members...none of which follow any seasonality.

While the data does reveal seasonality, the reality is that homes sell well in our neighborhood regardless of when they go on the market.



## Rebecca's Listings



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## Highland Park West Balcones Area

# JULY AND AUGUST WINNERS OF THE PERRY ART PARK CONTEST ANNOUNCED

*By Nadene Morning, Friends of Perry Park*

**Congratulations go out to our July and August winners of the Perry Art Park contest!**

### JULY



Peyton Casey  
Age 10



Amelia  
Ratcliff Gardy  
Age 4



Nia Wayman  
Age 9

### AUGUST



Amelia  
Ratcliff Gardy  
Age 4



Grant  
Ratcliff Gardy  
Age 4



Greta Wayman  
Age 7

This art contest was run over the summer months to keep up the awareness of the upcoming Perry Art Park project. Winners were awarded ice cream certificates from Amy's Ice Creams. Now that fall is here and people are back in town we will start work to make this project happen. That means organizing and fundraising!

Many thanks go out to Emily Clayton who performed the judging for our contest! Emily is the Associate Educator for Teachers and Docents for The Contemporary Austin. All the entries were just wonderful and they can be viewed at the Friends of Perry Park website: <http://friendsofperrypark.org/perry-art-park-contest-winners>.

For updates on the upcoming Perry Art Park project and to see how you can help please visit our website: <http://friendsofperrypark.org>.

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# Join the HPWBANA Yahoo Group

Readers of the HPWBANA News can be kept more up to date on neighborhood issues by joining the HPWBANA Yahoo Group. It is easy to do and all recipients of the News are encouraged to join. Just go [HPWBANA.org](http://HPWBANA.org) and click on the "Join the Yahoo Group" tab, then in the lower left of the page Click Here to join the HPWBANA Yahoo Group.

## REMINDER

Perry Park is an On Leash Park where a dog should be on a leash or lead and under control/under restraint at all times. Violations should be reported to 311.



### School News (Continued from Page 8)

the bus is stopped in a loading zone and pedestrians aren't permitted to cross. A person who fails to obey the law regarding yielding the right-of-way to school buses displaying alternating, flashing lights is subject to the penalties listed in the Penalties for Failure to Yield Right-of-Way to School Bus.

### Do Not Park or Stand a Vehicle

Whether occupied or not, do not park or allow a vehicle to stand idling:

1. In front of a public or private driveway
2. Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant
3. Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection
4. Within 30 feet upon the approach to any flashing signal, stop sign, yield sign, or other traffic control signal located at the side of a road
5. Within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station and on the side of a street opposite the entrance to any fire station within 75 feet of entrance
6. At any place where an official sign prohibits parking or standing.

*Let's have a Safe School Year.*

## DROWNING IS FAST & SILENT KEEP KIDS IN ARM'S REACH



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**60 Texas children have lost their lives to a fatal drowning this year.\***

**Take our Water Safety Quiz.** [www.colinshope.org/quiz/](http://www.colinshope.org/quiz/)

**Year round:** Athlete and Community Ambassadors needed. Email us: [info@colinshope.org](mailto:info@colinshope.org)

**November:** Underwater Holiday Photos! Back by popular demand, and coming soon.

Colin's Hope will again offer awesome and unique underwater holiday photos to capture your BEST Holiday picture Ever! Proceeds from photos will help us prevent drowning. Locations and dates will be posted at [www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org) and our Facebook page soon.

**Thank you to our sponsors, donors, and volunteers for their year round support!**

*A special thank you to Peel, Inc. From donated ads to pledges raised in our golf tournament, their support helps us to raise water safety awareness to prevent children from drowning.*

\*Source: Texas DFPS, Watch Kids Around Water



## LAYERS OF PROTECTION CAN PREVENT DROWNING



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SUPERVISION



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TO  
SWIM



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LIFE  
JACKETS



MULTIPLE  
BARRIERS  
TO WATER



KEEP BACKYARDS  
& BATHROOMS  
SAFER



CHECK POOL  
& HOT TUB  
FIRST



STAY AWAY  
FROM  
DRAINS



BE SAFER  
AT THE  
BEACH



LEARN CPR  
& REFRESH  
SKILLS YEARLY





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