

LONG CANYON Gazette

OCTOBER 2014

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE LONG CANYON

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 10



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HCEF Celebrates 5th Anniversary with Fall Fundraising Campaign

The Hill Country Education Foundation (HCEF) celebrates its 5th anniversary this year. What started as an idea among a few parents has grown into an established partner with Four Points-area schools, donating more than \$300,000 dollars to date and more than \$120,000 just last year. Our mission is to support programs that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) curriculum, as well as to promote leadership, entrepreneurship and college readiness.

Why an Education Foundation?

We are blessed to live in a vibrant, active, and affluent community, where parents are engaged with their children's

education. I witnessed this at the Viper's season-opening football game. Amidst all of the pageantry and excitement – from the camouflage-themed uniforms, to the gleaming 18-wheeler carrying band instruments – it's clear that football isn't just a game but an experience. Whether your child is on the team or involved in any other groups, you know that these enhancements are only made possible through booster club funding.

HCEF - Your Four Points Academic Booster Club

HCEF is committed to bringing the same kind of excitement and inspiring, experiential learning to core curricular activities.

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NEWSLETTER INFO

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

HACKBERRY PSYLLIDS

Late summer into fall, people may notice tiny insects that are mottled grayish-brown collecting near windows, especially if hackberry trees are nearby. Hackberry psyllids (pronounced sill-ids) look like tiny cicadas and are actually closely related to them. Adults are about 1/8 an inch long.

Another name for hackberry psyllids is hackberry nipple gall maker. Adults lay their eggs on hackberry leaves in the spring. When eggs hatch, the psyllid feeds on the leaf and the leaf responds by developing a small pocket around the insect. The pocket is called a gall. Hackberry trees do not show long term damage from the galls or feeding of the psyllids, but the galls can make the tree unsightly.



These insects are not harmful to humans or companion animals. In the fall, the insects are searching for overwintering sites. They normally overwinter under the bark of trees, but sometimes they will utilize whatever crack or crevice they can find. This, along with the psyllids being attract to lights at night, can lead them near doors and windows and sometimes they end up inside the home.

To manage fall invasion of hackberry psyllids:

- Use fine mesh (18) screening
- Reduce outdoor lighting or use bulbs that are less attractive to insects
- Use sealant to seal cracks and crevices
- Insects that find their way indoors can be vacuumed up

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

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HCEF (Continued from Cover)

It's easy to assume that such a financially strong region has everything needed to provide a great education. However, because our public schools rely primarily on state funding, the reality is that financial resources are tight and not able to keep pace with growing demands. Advanced technology and tools for hands-on use in the classroom, outside speakers who inspire our kids about potential careers, and supplemental programs for preparing for college are all examples that can transform the learning process into a memorable, stimulating experience.

Not only do these programs heighten learning, they allow administrators to recruit and retain the best teachers. It's similar to college football – many schools can boast great coaches and shiny new facilities, but a strong and supportive fan base can be the tipping point to push the program over the top; just visit Aggieland in College Station for a good example.

Prepare, Inspire, and Engage Our Students

On October 1, we kick off our 2nd Annual Fall Fundraising campaign: "Prepare, Inspire, Engage!" Our goal is to raise \$20,000 that will finance programs, equipment, and activities that will take learning to the next level. Many may connect HCEF through robotics. Our strong backing of robotics teams and competitions, from elementary through high school is well known. However, HCEF promotes much more than robotics.

Prepare! – HCEF assists in funding the Naviance college readiness platform for the entire school district. With Naviance, students explore careers and majors that match their interests, discover college programs, and understand what it takes to gain acceptance.

Be Part of the PIE Challenge and Help Raise \$20k for Four Points- Area Students!
2nd Annual Fall Fundraising Campaign
"Prepare, Inspire, Engage!"
Starts October 1
 Go to www.HillCountryEdFoundation

Funding for VHS' PSAT boot camp is bringing concrete results with a prestigious TEA rating and a whopping 32% increase in AP scholars this year. We also fund ReadStep, which allows 8th graders to take practice PSAT tests so they understand whether they are on track for college success and, hopefully, minimize any game-day jitters.

Inspire! – HCEF funded the FCCLA leadership event at Vandegrift, as well as leadership programs for middle school band and high school athletics. We've helped the Entrepreneurs Club at Vandegrift, and we're exploring ways to provide internships or "career days" with local employers to give students an inside look at potential career paths for their future.

Engage! – HCEF has provided digital microscopes, iPads, laboratory sensors, measurement equipment, and interactive tools – all for students to gain hands-on experiences with real-world tools that literally "flip the classroom" into a more engaging and active environment. Each year passionate teachers ask for more tools like these. To date, we've funded \$120,000 in Impact Grants.

The next time you are writing that booster club check or driving junior to his weekly private lesson, take a moment to stop and remind yourself about why your children attend school. Your support can help make the rest of their week just as exciting as the Friday night game experience.



John Pasquarette is vice president of e-Business at National Instruments. He received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Texas A&M. He and his wife Kathleen have two children. Ellie is a sophomore at VHS and Will is an 8th grader at CRMS. They have lived in the Four Points community since 2009.

TRAVIS COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



CRIME PREVENTION TIPS

- LOCK YOUR CARS!!!!
- Get to know your neighbors! Report suspicious activity immediately!
- Secure your vehicles, homes, garage doors at all times. (If you have an alarm, use it!) Remove garage door openers from your vehicle at night and when you are out of town.
- Utilize timers for lights, radios, and televisions to give the appearance that someone is home when you are out of town.
- Secure patio doors with a rod.
- Keep the perimeter of your home well lit.
- Take pictures of valuables and keep them stored in a secure location.
- Keep an inventory of all serial numbers for valuable items that can be given to Law Enforcement to track your items if stolen.
- Never leave a vacation message on your answering machine.
- Have a friend or family member pick up newspaper and mail, or stop delivery until you return.
- Keep shrubbery trimmed, to prevent hiding places.
- Park in well-lit areas at night.
- Do not leave valuables in plain sight. Lock them in the trunk or take them inside.
- Organize a community watch program in your neighborhood.
- Secure all windows and doors at all times.

DON'T BE A VICTIM

CitizenObserver is being used by the Travis County Sheriff's Office to communicate information to citizens ranging from crime alerts and offender notifications. Be in touch with what's happening! Visit www.citizenobserver.com today and Be Informed!

Nature Watch

by Jim and
Lynne Weber

FIELDS OF GOLD

Cooler temperatures and shorter days mark the onset of autumn, and the golden colors of the season begin to surround us. Among the amber and scarlet hues making an appearance in the landscape, one cannot help but notice two of our most common fall-blooming native plants: Goldeneye (*Viguiera dentata*) and Prairie Goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*).

A member of the sunflower family, Goldeneye is a bushy, drought-tolerant, multi-branched plant that tends to grow in colonies, providing rich swaths of golden color along our roadsides and in open areas. It has narrow leaves and numerous 1.5 inch daisy-like flowers at the tips of long, slender stalks. Growing to 3 feet tall in full sun or up to 6 feet tall in partial shade, this plant is native not only to Texas but to Arizona and New Mexico as well. It prefers relatively dry, partially shaded areas such as woodland edges and open prairies, and in Mexico is also known by the common name Chimalacate.

The mid to late fall blooms of Goldeneye not only provide seasonal color, but provide for native wildlife as well. Goldeneye is the larval food plant for both the Bordered Patch and Cassius Blue butterflies, and if spent flower stalks are left to stand through most of the winter, they will provide good seed forage for Lesser Goldfinches and other birds. Infusions of this plant are still used today as an antibacterial treatment for baby rash.

Prairie Goldenrod, also called Gray Goldenrod, is a slender-stemmed plant 1.5 to 2 feet tall, that blooms from June through October. A member of the aster family, it has thin, coarsely-toothed leaves and yellow flowers that are borne on the upper side of hairy stalks, arching out and downward to create a vase-shaped flower cluster. Individual plants bloom at various times, extending the flowering



Goldeneye
(Photo by Joseph A. Marcus)



Prairie Goldenrod
(Photo by R. W. Smith)

season, but they are most noticeable in fall, especially when paired with purple Gayfeather and red Autumn Sage. An excellent addition to a wildflower meadow or a sunny garden,

Prairie Goldenrod is naturally found in dry, open woods and upland prairies, and does well in full sun to part shade. A carefree plant, it can become invasive if left alone, but is also easily controlled.

Of special value to bees and butterflies for its pollen and nectar, and to several species of finches for its seeds, Prairie Goldenrod was also used by Native Americans to treat jaundice and kidney disorders, and as a wash for burns and skin ulcers. The Navajo burned the leaves as incense, and used the seeds for food.

As you wander along roadways and pathways this fall, admire these fields of gold that delight not only our senses, but provide a bountiful harvest for our wild neighbors as well!

*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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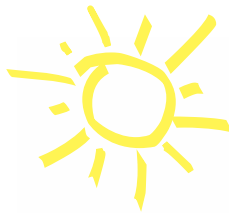
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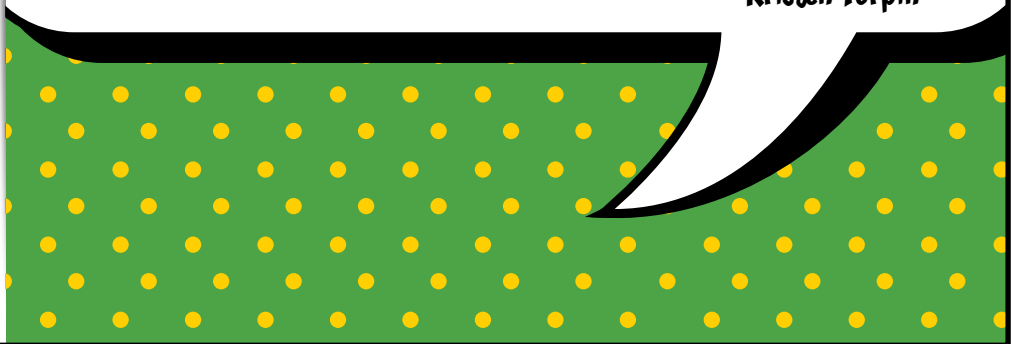
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Who knew the title "Weather Meterologist" would make my dreams come true? As a contestant on the "Wheel of Fortune," I solved this puzzle and several others which earned me over \$21,000 in cash and prizes. The day of the show, I just wanted to have fun but I did let myself think "What if I did win money? What do I want to do with it?" Fortunately, I was able to live that dream and the answer was easy, I wanted our family to move to Austin's Mueller neighborhood. Within a few weeks, we were referred to Brandy Finessey. Within minutes of meeting with Brandy, my husband and I knew the search for our realtor was over; she was the right fit. Friendly, organized, highly knowledgable and "on it", she was it! As quickly as we were able to make the decision to partner with Brandy, because it truly was a partnership, our house was listed on the market and sold. We were able to build our dream house in Mueller and haven't looked back since. If Brandy wants to find us now, she knows to look at Cafe Mueller where we may be having dinner, the Thinkery where our kids explore, or find us walking along the lake with our golden retriever, never without big smiles on our faces that only accomplishing our dream could bring. We couldn't have done it without Brandy; we certainly wouldn't have had as much fun doing it and the stresses, fears and unknowns when buying and selling were eased by her knowledge and ability to connect; making a monumental decision easier. It is rare to find someone who cares just as much about your dreams as you do. Brandy did and I can safely say, continues to for all her clients.

-- Kristen Turpin





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