

# THE RIVER REVIEW

November 2014 Volume 8, Issue 11



NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF RIVER PLACE



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## ARTICLE INFO

The River Review is mailed monthly to all River Place residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the River Review please email it to [riverreview@peelinc.com](mailto:riverreview@peelinc.com). The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.



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## River Place Garden Club Tours Member's Garden

The October meeting of the River Place Garden Club was held at the home of Claudia and Wick Tobias at 4016 Lovebird Lane. Claudia is a member of the garden club and invited club members to tour their patio and backyard gardens, which offered a profusion of color and texture.

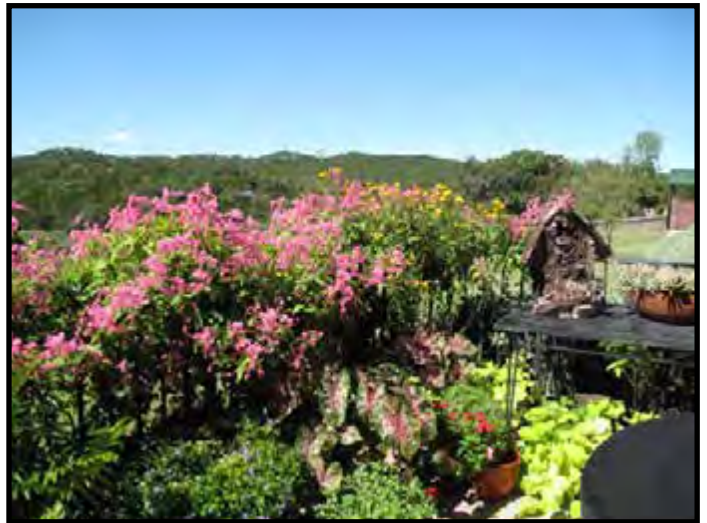
As members of the garden club entered the Tobias' back patio, they were greeted by a wrap around explosion of color from coral vines that grew along the horizontal edge of the railing, making a border of striking, lacy, hot pink flowers. This plant is a vigorous vine, with heart-shaped leaves and needs the support of a trellis or fence. Claudia explained that this drought tolerant plant is easily grown, and it regrows every year. Hers was in full sun, but the plant can be grown in at least a partially sunny exposure.

The patio was also filled with many pots containing a variety of plants. Included were pots of lime green potato vine, which is easy to propagate from cuttings that can be placed right in the ground or around other plants in pots, she indicated. Also growing in pots were asparagus fern, caladium, an hibiscus tree, lime trees, and annuals such as begonias and gerbera daisies. The heart shaped caladium leaves in rose, chartreuse and green made a striking appearance throughout the patio as well as at her entry, and Claudia has used ones that can take direct sun and ones that grow in shade. As garden club members went down the steps to the backyard, they also noticed pots of succulents on each step. Claudia said she covers these during winter freezes, and many return in the spring.

The beauty of the Tobias' yard is also found throughout the property. From the street, one is greeted with clusters of crepe myrtle trees in front of a hedge of primrose jasmine. At the end of the driveway, Claudia has placed a shade garden beneath a group of oak trees. Seven pots of hanging ferns sway from the branches of the trees and help create a lush, inviting setting for two lawn chairs.

When the Tobias family moved into this house in 1996, Claudia began creating her gardens, which also surround the house and border the green belt west of their yard. She does all the planting and maintaining of her beds, and she said one of her favorite sources for plants is the sale section at Loew's. She began gardening as a young child, with both her mother and grandmother teaching her. "When you grow up seeing your parents garden, that has an influence," she said. The Tobias' yard is a reflection of Claudia's love of plants and gardening.

The River Place Garden Club invites members of the neighborhood to join us at our meetings on the second Thursday of the month. To get information, please email our president, Patricia Thomas, at [RiverPlaceGarden@gmail.com](mailto:RiverPlaceGarden@gmail.com).





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## Travis County Sets Up Reverse 911 For Cell Phones

Travis County Emergency Services is making reverse 911 services available to residents' cell phones. The county already offers this service to residents' landlines. Reverse 911 is used in emergencies where there is a threat to public safety. The message gives warnings and instructions.

People can register their cell phones for up to five geographical locations and if there is an emergency in one of those areas, they will get a call. To find out more info about the program, you can go to <http://www.capcog.org/divisions/homeland-security/ens/>

To register, people are asked to go to the Capital Area Council of Governments' website at <http://wireless.capcog.org>.

## HOMEWORK HELP

Could your child benefit from one-on-one homework assistance? Four Points Homework Help is a volunteer-based organization that offers free tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-7 pm at Cups & Cones in Steiner Ranch. Sign up for tutoring times, find more information, or get in touch with us at:

[www.fourpointshomeworkhelp.org](http://www.fourpointshomeworkhelp.org) | [4ptshmwkhelp@gmail.com](mailto:4ptshmwkhelp@gmail.com)

Tutoring begins on Tuesday, October 7 – sign up now for a 30 or 60 minute session!

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## NATUREWATCH

by Jim and Lynne Weber

## WHAT GALL!

In nature, galls refer not to brazen behavior but to abnormal outgrowths on the surface of certain life forms. Plant galls, or cecidia, can be caused by various parasites from fungi to bacteria as well as by insects and mites. In the United States there are over 2000 species of gall-inducing insects, and the majority are reported to form galls on oak trees.

The formation of a gall begins with the hatching of the eggs of certain wasp species laid on the plant. It progresses when the larvae (or the adult female) injects chemicals into the plant, and the tissue swells in reaction, forming a spherical microhabitat around the larvae. The gall's purpose is twofold, providing the larvae with nutrients and protecting them from predators. Once fully grown, the all-female, adult insects bore an exit hole out to the surface of the gall and disperse.

While usually forming in the spring when the most rapid plant cell division occurs, galls initially appear light green in color but become even more noticeable in the fall when oak trees drop their leaves. Dull, dry, and brown, the spent galls are often scavenged by mammals searching for leftover food as winter approaches.

Gall-inducing insects are usually species-specific and sometimes even tissue-specific (branches, leaves, buds, roots) in the plants they select. In central Texas, most of the gall-inducing insects are gall wasps, and while they are closely associated with several species of our native oaks, they can also be identified by the types of galls they produce.

In general, you may find leaf galls with orangish 'hair' formed by the Hedgehog gall wasp, and sticky, spongy galls on twigs with seed-like structures inside formed by the Wool sower gall wasp. On live oaks, you can find woody twig and stem galls formed by the Mealy oak gall wasp, and leaf galls formed by the Woolly leaf gall wasp. The oak apple wasp, however, prefers our red oaks and forms spherical, spongy-filled galls.

Gall-making insects are generally not considered pests, and some galls are even considered attractive and are used in flower arrangements and other crafts. While certain species may cause some aesthetic damage to a plant such as leaf discoloration or early defoliation, most of these insects do not permanently damage the host plant, but just use them to further their own purpose. What gall!

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our blog at:

**[naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com)**



*Hedgehog gall on white oak (photo by J. Hahn)*



*Hedgehog gall on white oak (photo by J. Hahn)*



*Hedgehog gall on white oak (photo by J. Hahn)*



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN

Paul is a sweet, loving boy—and he almost always has a smile on face! While he is extremely active and loves to play sports and be outside, Paul does well academically and is a polite young man.

Paul is 7 years old and is confident in his abilities to entertain others with his dance moves, creativity, and jokes. An abundance of support and patience will help Paul achieve success in his promising young life.

To find out more about Paul, please contact Grace Lindgren, LMSW, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at (512) 810-0813 or [glindgren@helpinghandhome.org](mailto:glindgren@helpinghandhome.org).

Adopting a child from the foster care system requires little or no cost to the adoptive family and funding may be available to help the adoptive family support the child or sibling group.

The Heart Gallery of Central Texas is a program of Partnerships for Children. To learn more about the adoption or fostering process, please call the Heart Gallery of Central Texas at (512) 834-3102, email [heartgallery@partnershipsforchildren.org](mailto:heartgallery@partnershipsforchildren.org) or visit our website at [www.partnershipsforchildren.org](http://www.partnershipsforchildren.org).



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### GOAL:

Raise \$20,000 from the community between October 1 and November 15

### SUPPORTING:

Vandegrift High School, Canyon Ridge and Four Points Middle Schools, Grandview Hills, Laura Welch Bush, River Place, River Ridge and Steiner Ranch Elementary Schools.

For details visit  
[www.HillCountryEdFoundation.org](http://www.HillCountryEdFoundation.org)





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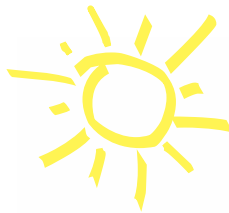
## Four Points Community Fine Art Show and Sale at the Oasis Restaurant

The 3rd Austin Four Points Community Fine Art Show takes place on Saturday, November 29th, from noon - 5p.m. at the Oasis Restaurant in NW Austin. The show and sale include original paintings, drawings and sculpture and hand made, exquisite fine jewelry. Local Austin artists will be present to discuss their experience and skills, answer questions and explain their process and inspiration. The show is juried to showcase and share the artistic talents of our most skilled and creative local artists.

Please join us at the Oasis Restaurant on November 29th, from noon-5p.m. The Oasis is located at 6550 Comanche Trail in NW Austin.

For more information, please contact Suzette at [liveanotherlifeart@yahoo.com](mailto:liveanotherlifeart@yahoo.com).

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## VHS Show, “Joy of Life,” Dedicated to Cale and Peggy Howard

*VHS band is Grand Champion of Vista Ridge Marching Festival, competes at Bands of America Nov. 1*

*Submitted by Rich Keith*



Our state-champion marching band's show, “Joy of Life” is dedicated to the memory of high school student Cale Howard and his mother Peggy Howard of Steiner Ranch, who were tragically killed by a drunk driver over Christmas break in December 2013.

The band directors for the Vandegrift High School marching band and Vision Dance Company began designing this year's show last fall. Originally the show was to be a dramatic, almost dark and edgy production with music and costuming to match.

But after the terrible accident which took the life of one of the band's most loved members, the directors began to wonder how the show could be modified. Ultimately they scrapped the entire score and visuals completely and went in a direction of light and color, featuring sunrises, sunsets and even butterflies.

“The four parts of our show represent Beauty, Excitement, Love and Peace,” said Mike Howard, director of bands.

The band's program, “Joy of Life,” features the music of Aaron Copeland including “Promise of Living,” Symphony No. 3, “Dance Panels,” “Down a Country Road” and “Happy Ending” from the Red Pony.

Based upon competition results, the judges agree with the change. In October Vandegrift finished in first place at the Vista Ridge Marching Festival. VHS has won the contest every year since it was launched in 2010.

Vandegrift was named Best in Class in 6A, and “we were named Grand Champion of the entire contest for the fourth straight year,” said Howard. In fact they swept the field by taking all category awards for best music, visual performance, general effect and percussion. The Vision Dance Co. was named best auxiliary.

The grand champion trophy represents the best marching band regardless of class of school. Vandegrift is rated a class 5A school but

competed up in class 6A this year, which included impressive bands from the larger 6A schools.

Larger marching bands often attract the judges' attention; but just as in 2013, the Vipers outworked everyone else to get their show perfect. In second and third place were Cedar Park High School and Georgetown High School respectively.

On Sat. Nov. 1 the band will compete in the prestigious Bands of America Super-Regionals marching contest in the Alamodome in San Antonio. There they will go up against 57 bands from all over Texas and nearby states. They recently took 5th place in the Regionals during October.

“This will be a tough competition against several Grand National Finalists and Super Regional Finalists from past years,” Howard said. He noted the band has made it to finals performance each of the last 2 years.

As a consideration to out-of-area schools, Central Texas schools perform on Friday. For Bands of America the Vandegrift students will get out of school on Halloween day and ride buses to the Alamodome and march in the preliminary contest. They then come back to Austin, unload, and play during the home football game against Marble Falls. The band will then get some needed sleep.

Then late Saturday afternoon they will know if they made it to finals. If so, the band loads up the equipment and the buses will roll to the Alamodome for the evening finals performance.

The Viper band and Vision Dance Company is currently ranked Texas state champion out of 250 UIL Class 4A band programs following the last competition held in 2013. There are 247 students in the program, making it by far the largest program on campus.

The community can enjoy Vandegrift's marching videos at <http://vhsband.com/audio-images/> Enter the password: “vipers” to see images and videos.

# RIVER REVIEW

## CARPENTER ANTS



Carpenter ants nest outdoors in dead wood (tree stumps or dead limbs, fences, firewood, etc.). They may also be found in wood siding, beams, joists, fascia boards or trim on structures. Damage is usually limited since carpenter ants tunnel and nest within wood; they do not eat wood. However, wood can become weakened by carpenter ant excavation.

Carpenter ants are large ants that can vary in color from all black to reddish to yellowish or a combination of colors. These ants have one node, no stinger and a circle of hairs at the tip of their abdomen.

Galleries in the nest are excavated following the grain of the wood and have clean, smooth walls. Nest locations may be discovered by searching for piles of sawdust-looking material under exit holes. Sawdust is coarse and may also contain soil or sand, uneaten insects as well as dead ants from the colony.

Carpenter ants are able to enter homes from tree branches or utility lines touching the home, through cracks and crevices around

windows and doors, cracks in foundation walls, ventilation openings or heating and air conditioning ducts.

Here are some tips for a carpenter ant infestation:

- Remove dead trees and/ or limbs and remove tree stumps from the landscape. Many times you can remove the (possible) nesting sites and get rid of the ants without using pesticides.
- Prune trees and shrubs that touch the home. Carpenter ants will often use these areas as a bridge to enter the home.
- Replace wood that is water damaged. Carpenter ants are drawn to moisture damaged wood, so make sure to repair any water leaks and replace damaged wood.
- Remove wood debris and firewood that is near the home. Carpenter ants may nest in firewood and when it is stacked right next to the home, it allows the ants to enter more easily.

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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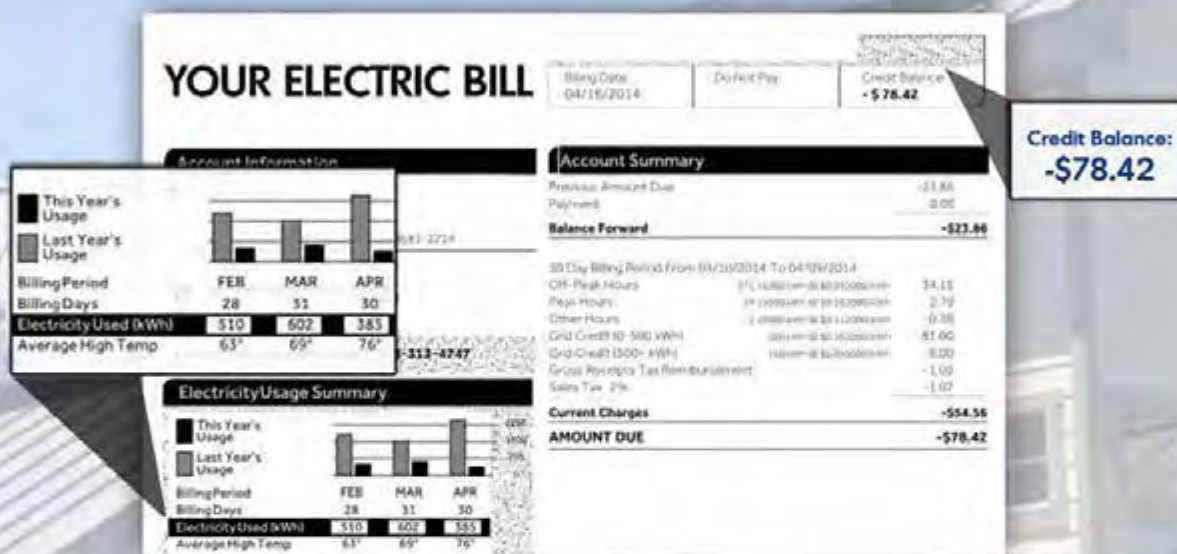
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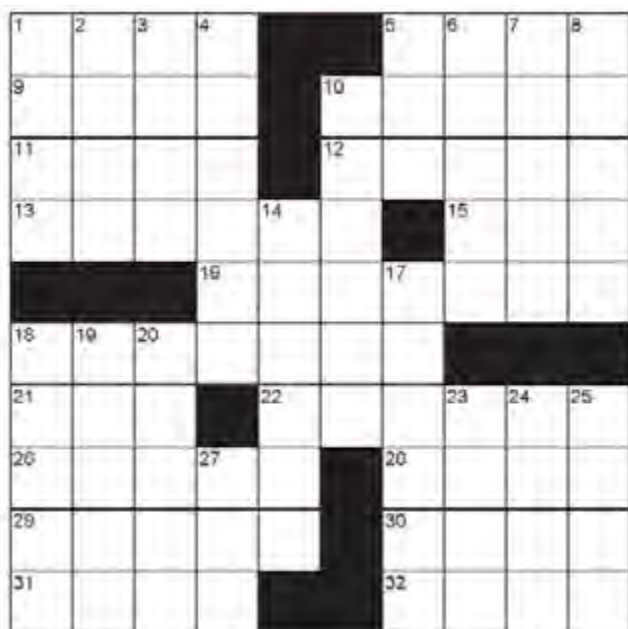
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11. Iraq's neighbor
12. More able
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15. Conger
16. Avows
18. Angora (2 wds.)
21. Finale
22. Grows
26. Do penitence
28. Has 4 identical siblings
29. Automaton
30. Ancient Indian
31. Espy
32. Tier

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1. Skinny
2. Flexible metal thread
3. Lick
4. Sunbonnet
5. Catch
6. Cargo ship
7. BB Player Abdul Jabar
8. Throws violently
10. Played (2 wds.)
14. Counterbalance
17. Iranian's neighbors
18. What you shift
19. Upon (2 wds.)
20. Philippine dish with marinated chicken or pork
23. Peewee
24. Aphids
25. Fasten
27. Negative

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We love dogs—we really do. That's why the association is committed to enforcing the county leash law on association property. According to the U.S. Humane Society, an unleashed dog has an average life span of less than four years? Allowing your dog to run free threatens your dog's health and welfare and the happiness it brings to you.

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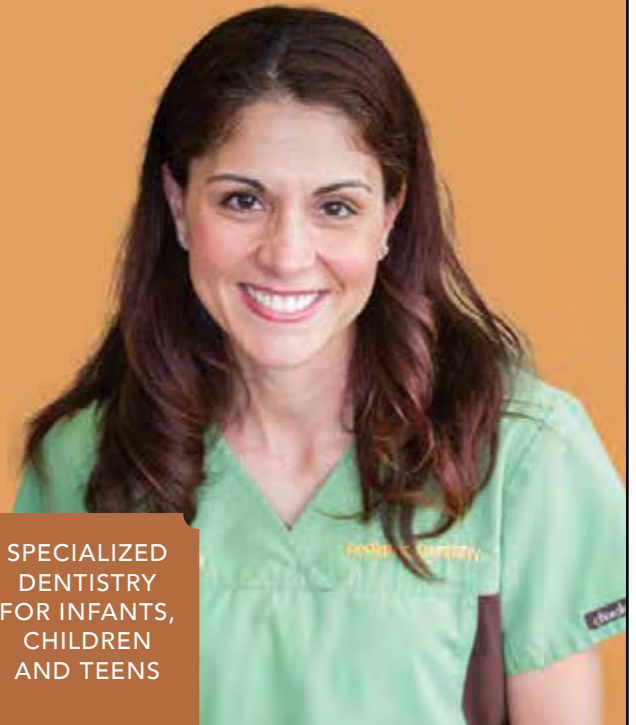
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