

LONG CANYON

Gazette

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE LONG CANYON

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COLIN'S HOPE

by Dorian de Wind

When I was six or seven years old, I witnessed the ocean drowning of a dear aunt. Although too young for the full scope of the tragedy to sink in, the thoughts and the images of that event have remained with me for almost 70 years.

No wonder that, when our young grandson started splashing in our swimming pool a dozen or so years ago, the thought of such an unfathomable occurrence never left our mind. We took every precaution possible, as I am sure the vast majority of parents, grandparents, relatives, caretakers and friends of so many young children do when they let their young ones swim in pools, lakes, rivers, water parks and more.

But the unimaginable does occur -- more often than we think.

Now that another swimming season approaches it may be the time to give "the unimaginable" some thought because if statistics tell the truth, drowning is all too imaginable.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publishes the following grim statistic: From 1999 through 2010, a total of 46,419 deaths from unintentional drowning (including boating) occurred in the United States, an average of 3,868 deaths per year. That is an average of more than 10 drowning deaths each and every day of the year.

But what is even more disturbing, unintentional drowning has become the leading cause of death from unintentional injury among children aged 1-4 years. It replaces deaths resulting from motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death from unintentional injury for boys aged 1-4 years. These child-drowning deaths occurred most often in a bathtub for children under one year of age and, in a swimming pool, for children aged 1-4 years. The latter location -- swimming pools -- accounts for more than 50% of all unintentional drowning deaths in that age group, according to the CDC.

At this point, the reader may ask, why the focus on younger children and swimming pools? While, of course, every drowning is

an immeasurable tragedy, the loss of a toddler under such horrific circumstances in one's neighborhood pool, is bound to leave an indelible impression. That is what happened on a beautiful June day almost seven years ago at a nearby swimming pool. To be precise, on June 13, 2008, Colin Holst, a proud and happy four-and-a-half-year-old little boy went to "the big" pool -- a swimming pool close to Circle C Ranch -- just one day after graduating from swimming lessons and receiving his medal. Little Colin, age 4, enjoying a family weekend by the water. Colin was having a ball playing in the fountains and sprinklers with his friends, all moving around the pool together in a clump, playing and splashing and ducking in and out of the water.

Suddenly, in an instant, Colin wasn't with them. Time stood still as all eyes swept the pool looking for him, and then, only moments later, Colin was pulled from the shallow water unconscious and not breathing. Efforts to revive him at the pool were unsuccessful. Colin, the baby boy born "with a mop of dark hair that looked just like his mother," died at the hospital the next day, having never opened his eyes again after his swim.

Out of this unimaginable tragedy, sprang a glimmer of hope -- even of good. Grief-stricken by their loss and shocked to learn the cruel toll drowning takes on children

of Colin's age, Colin's family founded an organization dedicated to preventing such tragedies from befalling other families: Colin's Hope. Simply, "Colin's Hope envisions a world where children do not drown. Colin's Hope raises water safety awareness to prevent children from drowning."

As our weather warms up, as families once again head for our pools, lakes and beaches, please take time to familiarize yourself with water safety rules -- they might make the difference between a happy summer and the unimaginable. An excellent place to do such is ColinsHope.org. At Colin's Hope, learn about this



(Continued on Page 3)

NEWSLETTER INFO

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Colins Hope (Continued from Cover)

wonderful organization's many water safety awareness programs, events, campaigns and resources. They all have one vision in mind: "A world where children do not drown. While at Colin's Hope, take a look at their on-line Water Safety Resources Hub," take the "Water Safety Quiz" and please consider volunteering for one of their many activities and programs and making a contribution so that the "glimmer of hope" may become a bright light -- a reality, as much as possible -- for our children and grandchildren.

Acknowledgement: Some of the information and wording in this article comes -- with permission -- from "Colin's Story," at Colin's Hope. Colin's photo and lead image, courtesy Colin's Hope.

Colin's Hope has a mission to raise water safety awareness to prevent children from drowning. They envision a world where children do not drown. To learn more, please visit:

WWW.COLINSHOPE.ORG

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Thanks to Four Points Community for Raising \$140,000 for Education

2016 Gala Set for February 27

Despite the cold, rainy weather, the Four Points community rallied to support the Hill Country Education Foundation's 5th Annual Giddy Up Gala on Saturday, February 28, at The Westin Austin at The Domain. HCEF is pleased to announce that record-breaking attendance and record-breaking funds totaled \$140,000. More than 475 guests made a difference for our students, schools and teachers at HCEF's primary fundraiser, bidding for Silent Auction, Big Board and Live Auction items, raising their paddles for Vandegrift High School's Fund-A-Need and buying more raffle and Heads or Tails tickets more than ever before. Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 27, 2016 for the 6th Annual Gala.

As a result of this success, HCEF will increase support of our schools through Impact Grants, scholarships, professional development, robotics grants, Naviance/ReadiStep and much more. This year's Fund-A-Need titled "Expand the Reach of Excellence at VHS" raised another record-breaker, bringing in \$23,200 to launch a new SAT curriculum for all VHS juniors, the highly successful PSAT Boot Camp, UIL academic competitions and teacher professional development.

Special thank you to the very hard working, dependable and dedicated volunteer chairs who elevated the quality and expanded the fundraising potential!

Myra Roberts – Event Chair

Julie Geller, Julie Petrucelli & Cherisse Smyser – Silent Auction Chairs

Stephanie Johnson – Live Auction Chair

Chris Lee – Reservation Management & Check In/Out Chair

Susan Arant – Decorations Chair

Catherine Parrington – Entertainment Chair

Michelle Beck – HCEF Board Liaison

There were many more hands that brought their talents from pre-Gala preparation and procurement to set-up and event night help. Very special thanks to these generous parents and students who were an integral component to the fundraiser's success!

Candy Adams, Gene Arant, Cindy Bezella, Doris Bui, Debbie Donohue, Misti Dwyer, Kai Lamb, Laura Lee, Barb Lucido, Laura Ludvigson, Shawna Meyer, Martha Moring, Elaine Morrow, Kyra Patel, Shelle Pitman, Pam Province, Jim Roberts, Jeff Sabuda, Kimberly Sarantakes, Becky Shidlosky, Tonya & Adam Stahl, Mandy Teodecki, VHS Students, Keri Wootton & Laurie Wright.

Alexandra Gandara



Austin resident Alexandra Gandara, and a former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader, has been appointed director of the National League of Junior Cotillions chapters for Travis County, the program's national office announced. Gandara is a graduate of Texas State University and McNeil High School.

The Junior Cotillion program, which features etiquette, social dance, and life skills training for middle school students, holds classes starting in the fall and concludes with a black and white ball. "I believe the program has the ability to guide students into becoming well-mannered, savvy young adults who will positively impact their communities for years to come" she said.

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., the National League of Junior Cotillions was established in 1979 and has more than 350 chapters nationwide.

Registration is now open for the 2015-2016 cotillion season. Please visit www.nljc.com or call 512-785-7068 to register.



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Fight Back Against Property Taxes in 2015

By John Paul Krueger, Senior Property Tax Consultant, Five Stone Tax Advisers

It's no secret that people are moving to Central Texas every single day. Austin is known nationwide as one of the most desirable places to live, and we're all paying for it. Skyrocketing property taxes are arguably one of the largest expenses that moved to town with this influx of new Travis and Williamson County residents.

The name of the game is supply and demand. This is great news if you are looking to sell your home in the near future. However, if you are in the vast majority of people that would like to continue to be able to afford to live here, rising property values pose a very real financial threat.

Property owners in Travis County will soon receive a letter in the mail titled "Notice of Appraised Value". State law requires that the Travis Central Appraisal District provide you with this letter communicating what the district felt your property's market value was as of January 1, 2015. You are likely about to experience some sticker shock based on the "hot" nature of our real estate market.

Whether your property's value has jumped 1% or 50%, every landowner should strongly consider the option of appealing their valuation. Why?

- The Travis Central Appraisal District's mass appraisal techniques are anything but perfect. They do not incorporate important information specific to your property.

- Texas allows landowners the ability to lower their taxes if they are being taxed unfairly compared to other properties in the area.

- Last year, market values in Travis County jumped an average of 12.6%, per the appraisal district. Our real estate market has not slowed since that time. We will likely see significant increases again this year.

In short, there are many potential ways to argue for lower property taxes in 2015.

If you are not the type of person that has real estate expertise or enjoys rigorous negotiation, it is in your best interest to enlist a property tax representation firm to handle every aspect of lowering the property tax on your Central Texas property. This can save you significant money with as little as five minutes of your time, and the good news is most property tax consultants operate on a contingency fee structure—no savings, no fees.



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General Dentist**

FAGD (Fellow Academy of General Dentistry)

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Featured Smile Makeover of the Month

by Dr. Lance Loveless



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After

**Actual patient of Dr. Loveless*

Being a General Dentist, I have many tools in my "tool box". Having training and experience in multiple areas of dentistry gives me the unique ability to combine different aspects of Dentistry to accomplish my patients' smile makeovers. Some of the more common "tools" we use include: Invisalign, whitening, laser gum lift, implants, crowns, bridges, and veneers. Some of our more challenging makeovers have included all of the above; most can be done in office so that we can limit the need to go all over town seeing multiple doctors. For example, this patient had a tooth size discrepancy, narrow upper arch, yellow misshapen teeth and an uneven gumline. He didn't know exactly what he wanted, just the fact that he wanted a better looking smile. I had to evaluate everything and come up with a plan to address all his issues. His plan included Invisalign, whitening, laser gum lift and all porcelain restorations. Without the ability to combine all those "tools" and techniques, we would not have been able to achieve the fantastic results that we did!

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HOPE4MINDS

Expands its Mission to Support More Texas Children With Severe Brain Injuries

Less than four years after it was founded, a Southwest Austin nonprofit organization has decided that it's got more than enough hope to go around.



That's the thinking behind a new mission and a name change for the Southwest Austin nonprofit organization known as HOPE4JD, which was founded in 2011 to support families whose children suffered brain injuries due to nonfatal drownings. As of April, the organization

will be known as Hope4Minds whose mission is to foster hope and enrich the lives of children with an acquired brain injury by providing support and education.

With a new name and more families to serve, Hope4Minds also will expand its community outreach services to include parent support groups and concussion baseline screenings, in addition to the services it already offers such as CPR/First Aid training and family care packages.

"Our board of directors and supporters see the opportunity to do more and help more Texas families," says Ronda Johnson, executive director, Hope4Minds. "Our community rose to the challenge over the last few years, helping us make a difference in the lives of families in Austin, San Antonio and Dallas. Our work has showed us the needs of more children who are living with an acquired brain injury and whose families need our support."

According to the Texas Brain Injury Alliance, fewer than 1 in 20 children with acquired brain injury will get the rehabilitation they need for recovery. Injury may occur during events such as non-fatal drownings, choking, car accidents, sports and recreational activities, falls, lightning strikes and even abuse.

Since 2012, the organization has provided more than \$211,248 in services to families, 841 hours of recovery therapy services, nearly 100 family care packages to Texas hospitals and rehab centers, and free CPR training for 216 adults.

May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Submitted by Tom Henry, Community Relations, Longhorn Village

Strokes can happen to anyone at any time, including newborn babies, children, teens and adults. It is important to understand not only how to identify a stroke, but also to know that up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable.

What is a stroke? A stroke is a "brain attack." It happens when blood flowing to an area of the brain is cut off. When brain cells are deprived of oxygen, they begin to die. When cells in the brain die, the abilities controlled by the affected area can be damaged or lost completely. The affect of a stroke depends on where in the brain it occurs, and how much it is damaged. Damage can range from minor problems such as temporary loss of strength in an arm or leg, to major permanent damage that may include paralysis on one side of the body or the ability to speak. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Strokes are the 5th leading cause of death, and is one of the leading causes of adult disability in the United States.

Act FAST! Each year, nearly 800,000 people in the United States experience a stroke. According to The National Stroke Association, quick detection and treatment will more likely lead to a better recovery. FAST is a commonly used acronym to remember the warning signs of stroke. Things to check in a suspected stroke victim:

F – FACE: If you ask the person to smile, does the face droop on one side?

A – ARMS: Ask the person to raise both arms; does one of the arms drift downward?

S – SPEECH: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech strange or slurred?

T – TIME: If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately. If possible, note the time of the first symptom. This information is important and can affect treatment decisions.

Additional symptoms can include:

- Sudden confusion or trouble understanding
- Sudden troubled vision in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with unknown cause

Preventing a Stroke – What You Can Do: You can help prevent stroke happening to you or others by knowing and reducing controllable risk factors through lifestyle changes and if needed, medication. Learn to recognize the symptoms and signs of a stroke by memorizing FAST. Respond quickly to the first sight of a stroke and you can help save lives.

Stroke Recovery: Many stroke survivors can continue to improve over a long period of time. Recovery involves making changes in social, emotional, and physical aspects of your life. Rehabilitation is about returning to your normal life and living as independently as possible. You must take an active approach to ensure that your quality of life improves, and goes on. With good rehabilitation and care, there is life after a stroke.

For additional resources and information please visit:

The National Stroke Association Website <http://www.stroke.org/>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Stroke <http://www.cdc.gov/stroke/index.htm>

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