

## THE FOREST CREEK FORUM

*A Newsletter  
for the Forest Creek  
Community*

The Forest Creek forum is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Forest Creek residents. Each newsletter will be filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information, and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports team, social group, etc., and would like to submit an article for the newsletter, you can do so online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com). Personal news (announcements, accolades/honors/celebrations, etc.) are also welcome as long as they are from area residents.

**GO GREEN!** Subscribe via [Peelinc.com](http://Peelinc.com) to have an email sent to you with a link to a PDF of the newsletter, or have an email sent to you instead of having a newsletter mailed to you!



## SUMMER FUN:

### The New Hill Country Science Mill in Johnson City

The Hill Country Science Mill opened in February to rave reviews! Only one hour from Austin, it's the perfect day trip for families looking to find indoor fun this summer. The museum's mission is to help kids discover the fun of science by exploring and interacting with the exhibits and games. The museum's founder, Bonnie Baskin, believes "kids learn to love science by doing it, not by reading about it."

She has spent the last two years readying a historic Johnson City gristmill and cotton gin, which operated in the 1880s, for its new purpose: a place where kids can have fun with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The 17,000-square-foot space features more than 25 interactive exhibits, hands-on maker stations and art installations, all designed to spark kids' interest in the STEM subjects.

The Mill's exhibits were sourced both locally and globally, and many were created specifically for the space. The installations blend art, kinetic technology, augmented reality, and computer gaming. All are available in both English and Spanish.

With a focus on older elementary, middle school and high school students (but with something for ALL ages to

enjoy) the Science Mill allows visitors to imagine themselves as a future scientist or engineer. Whether creating an "explosion" in the hydrogen ball launcher, experimenting with air pressure to move sailboats, or making a 3D topographic map in a sandbox, it's inevitable that visitors of all ages will have great fun while learning.

In addition to the many exhibits and hands-on activities, the Science Mill has a 3D movie theater, outdoor exhibits, a toddler play area and magnetic gear wall, a Biology Lab, a café, and much more!

Visit [sciencemill.org](http://sciencemill.org) for more information on hours, special events, birthday parties, field trips and summer camps.

Mention "PEEL" when you visit the museum for a kid's admission discount!

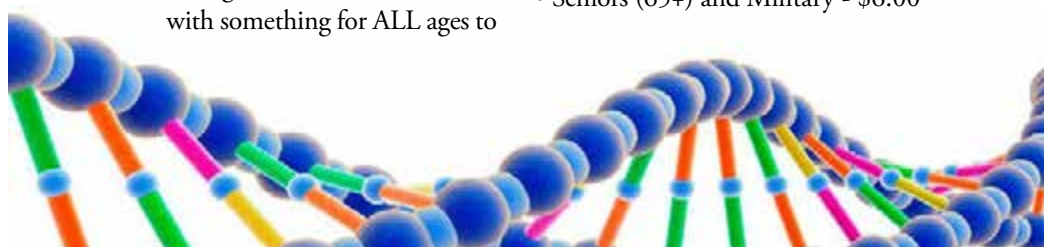
#### Hours

- Wed-Sat: 10am – 4pm
- Sun: Noon-4pm

#### General Admission

[Includes all exhibits and 3D movie]

- Under 2 years old – free
- Ages 2-18 (or with student ID) - \$6.50
- Adult - \$8.00
- Seniors (65+) and Military - \$6.00



# The Forum

## NEWSLETTER INFO

### NEWSLETTER

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### NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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## Nature Watch

### SERIOUS ABOUT SALAMANDERS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Humans often wonder why efforts are made to protect biodiversity and save endangered species. Biodiversity is defined as the variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem, and preserving it provides us with tremendous and vital benefits. Among others, these benefits include air purification, medicines for better health, fresh water, pollination of crops, carbon sequestration (or storage), and preserving the fertility of the soil.



**Blind Salamander**

forest soils, with their active microbial and animal populations, have a higher content of total nutrients and biomass, supplying the right nutrients to plants in the right proportions. Soils and wetlands also act as a filter for water, helping to reduce nitrogen loading, which is a significant form of pollution that occurs as a side effect of development in many parts of the world.

Roughly 50% of the medicines currently available are derived from natural products. Of these, at least 120 chemical compounds derived from 90 different plant species are critically important drugs in use around the world today. Many flowering plants rely on a great variety of animals to pollinate them, including one third of the world's food crops. In the U.S., it has been estimated that honeybees alone pollinate approximately \$10 billion worth of crops.

Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protected the Austin

Blind Salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*), and the Jollyville Plateau Salamander (*Eurycea tonkawae*) in addition to a total of 4,451 acres of critical habitat. These salamanders live nowhere else in the world, and saving them is also an important step for our region's long-term water quality and health. They cannot survive in waterways polluted with pesticides, industrial chemicals, and other toxins, so they are excellent indicators of the health of the environment.



**Jollyville Salamander**

The Austin Blind Salamander has external feathery gills, a pronounced extension of the snout, no external eyes, and weakly developed tail fins. It occurs in and around Barton Springs, which is fed by the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. The conditions that threaten this species include degradation of its aquatic habitat from pesticides and fertilizers, as well as low flow conditions in the aquifer and the springs. The Jollyville Plateau Salamander is physically similar to the Austin Blind Salamander, but has generally well-developed eyes, except for some cave-dwelling forms that exhibit eye reduction, head flattening, and loss of color. Typically, their habitat is spring-fed, and they occur in depths of less than one foot of cool, well-oxygenated water. While this salamander lives in the Jollyville Plateau and Brushy Creek areas, significant population declines have been observed, likely as a result of degrading water quality from rapid urban development.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental benefits of saving endangered species is an aesthetic one, as the loss of biodiversity impoverishes our world of natural beauty, both for ourselves and for future generations. It is yet another good reason for us to be serious about salamanders!



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# TENNIS



By USPTA/PTR Master Professional  
**Fernando Velasco**

## TIPS



**CAPTION 1**



**CAPTION 2**



**CAPTION 3**

## “TENNIS FOR CHILDREN 9-10 YEARS OLD AND UNDER – GREEN BALL”

This series of Tennis Tips are focused on how to involve children of all ages learning to play tennis and offering tips to the parents on how to assist at home. In the last issue I offered advice for children 9-10 years old and under playing with the softer orange ball and on a 60' foot court. This issue, will focus on children 9 and 10 years old and under playing with the green soft ball and on a 78' foot regular size court.

**Caption 1: Tennis Racket and balls:** The children should be using rackets ranging in length from 25" to 27" long along with the green ball. These longer, lighter rackets and bouncier balls will make it easier for the child to control the swing and the point of contact with the ball. The appropriate racket to use will depend on the height of the child. Balls will bounce from 47" to 53", which is within the comfort zone for most children of that age.

**Caption 2: Tennis Court:** For those players ready to cover the regular size court, they will now be playing on a 78" x 36' tennis court. Lines are now painted regular white making it much easier to see the ball landing, especially while the opponents are serving. Players need to be physically ready to cover the entire court.

**Caption 3: Make Tennis Your Kid's New Pick-Up Game:** Just like any other sport or skill, repetition is the key to learning. Once basic skills are learned the child will:

- Receive Mind and Body Workout

- Develop Confidence and Character
- Encourage Self-Control and Discipline
- Improve Fitness and Focus
- Offer Both Individual and Team Play
- Encourage Cross-Training and Low Rate of Injury
- Teach Problem Solving and Sportsmanship

Children at this age are already playing points and are given tips on how to hit groundstrokes, volleys and serves with control. The USTA provides tournaments and leagues for children 10 and under using the green ball on the 78' courts. Matches are normally 4 game sets and they are encouraged to play round robins and/or consolation rounds.

Tips to parents:

- Take your child to a tennis court and encourage them to drop the ball and hit it on their own.
- Afterwards, feed the green balls from your own service line to them standing on the opposite service line. Feed the ball softly and with control. Make them move very slowly and with body control.
- Have them stand on their base line and feed balls next to them. Later move to the service line and once successful, move to the opposite side of the net.

*Look in the next Newsletter for: "Tips for children 11 years old and older – Yellow Ball". For more information about our programs and club information, you can visit us at [www.greyyrocktennis.com](http://www.greyyrocktennis.com) or call us at 512-301-8685.*

# EVERY SECOND COUNTS



## BE PREPARED!

### GET CPR AND FIRST AID TRAINING

By:  HOPEcpr

**Who:** Adults & Children 12 or older

**When:** June 27th from 9:30am - 12:00pm

**Where:** Aloha Event Center  
Hawaiian Falls Waterpark  
18500 N SH 130, Pflugerville, TX 78660

**How:** Sign up at [www.hope4minds.org](http://www.hope4minds.org)  
(limited space)

**Cost:** Suggested donation of \$5 per person

**Certification:** \$20 for CPR (starts at 9:30am)  
\$10 for First Aid (arrive at 10:30am)  
\$25 for CPR and First Aid  
Certification is through the American  
Safety Health Institute (paid day of)

**Each year 1 in 500  
school-age children  
receive a brain injury  
serious enough to be  
hospitalized.**

**Every day, about  
10 people die from an  
accidental drowning.**

**PRESENTED BY:**



For more information, contact [ronda@hope4minds.org](mailto:ronda@hope4minds.org)

HOPE4MINDS is a public charity organized to foster hope and enrich the lives of children with an acquired brain injury through support and education.



## CONSUMER ALERT

Avoid the storm chaser roofing scam. Don't let hail damage hurt your wallet and property value. Red flags homeowners should watch out for when selecting a contractor to fix storm damage

- The disappearing deductible
- Mysterious door to door salesman
- Fluctuating bid
- High pressure tactics

First steps after the storm

- Call your insurance agent
- Ask agent about process
- Wait to get estimates until after your adjuster has examined your roof

### Selecting contractors

- Stay calm
- Be proactive selecting a company
- Avoid door to door solicitors
- Do your research check with BBB , Angie's List or similar
- Don't sign any document until you're sure you've selected the contractor you want
- Find a local reputable company
- Make sure it is in writing
- Verify bonding and insurance
- Check the companies referrals from neighbors and others you trust
- Avoid quick fixes and low prices
- Avoid contractors willing to "Save your deductible" which is unlawful
- Written manufacture warranties

Protect your home and investment. Hire a local, well rated contractor

## TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

## FOUR-LINED PLANT BUGS



Four-lined plant bugs are brightly colored. Nymphs (immatures) are red while older nymphs start to have wing pads with yellow and black stripes. Adults have fully developed wings that are yellow and black striped. Adults look similar to, and may be mistaken for, striped cucumber beetles.

These insects have piercing-sucking mouthparts which they use to suck out plant juices. The plant bugs suck out chlorophyll and leave a "window" between the upper and lower epidermis of the leaf. Damage appears as white, dark or translucent spots of foliage and is sometimes mistaken for fungal damage. Feeding may also cause curling and browning. Fortunately, damage is mostly cosmetic, but if you are trying to eat the foliage of the damaged plant it may become a problem.

The insects feed on a wide variety of hosts, including fruits and vegetables, annuals and perennials and woody plants. When disturbed, the insects are fairly good at hiding. They either crawl to the underside of the leaves or drop to the ground to hide among foliage.

If you feel the need to manage these insects, try insecticidal soap. If that doesn't work, you can try azadirachtin (neem- concentrate, not oil; it's getting too hot to use oil formulations) or pyrethrins. If that doesn't work then try a residual contact product.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com).

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**13 Texas children have already lost their lives to drowning in 2015**

## DROWNING IS PREVENTABLE