

LONG CANYON *Gazette*

AUGUST 2015

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE LONG CANYON

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 8

THE LONG CANYON GAZETTE

*A Newsletter
for the residents of
Long Canyon*

The Long Canyon Gazette is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Long Canyon residents. Each newsletter is 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. Personal news (announcements, accolades/honors/celebrations, etc.) are also welcome as long as they are from area residents.

GO GREEN! Subscribe via 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!

End-of-Summer Book Challenge



Book Swap
Free Neighborhood Library @
Cups & Cones



*Sponsored by the Hill Country Education
Foundation and Cups & Cones*

Drawing for Barnes & Noble Gift Cards

Hill Country Education Foundation (HCEF) and Cups & Cones are sponsoring an End-of-Summer Book Challenge for area students. Students who read six (6) books and turn in a completed reading log by Saturday, August 15, can receive a snow cone. They can also enter their name in a drawing to win one (1) of (6) Barnes & Noble \$25 gift cards.

To participate, bring a gently used book to the Four Points Book Swap at Cups & Cones and exchange the book for another one to read in the growing Book Swap Library. Be sure to pick up a reading log at the same time! Return the completed form no later than Saturday, August 15. The drawing will take place on Monday, August 17, just in time for some last minute reading before school starts on August 24!

Cups & Cones and HCEF launched the Four Points Book Swap during the summer of 2014. Since then, this little library has filled three bookcases and the donations just keep coming in! The range of books includes preschool board books, picture books, chapter books and adult fiction and non-fiction.

"We are excited how the Book Swap has grown over the past year," said Michelle Beck, HCEF's executive director. "As we continue to focus on library options in our community, the Book Swap gives us a nice alternative. We are grateful to Cups & Cones for teaming up with us."

NEWSLETTER INFO

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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Advertising..... advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

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Please support the businesses that advertise in the Long Canyon Gazette. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all Long Canyon residents to receive the monthly newsletter at no charge. No homeowners association funds are used to produce or mail the newsletters. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact our sales office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@PEELinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Personal classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Long Canyon residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail longcanyon@peelinc.com

Business classifieds (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$50, limit 40 words, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales Office @ 512-263-9181 or advertising@PEELinc.com.

NOW HIRING

Advertising Sales Representative

Description: The position includes marketing our community newsletters to local and area businesses. It is a flexible position that allows you to work from home and set your own hours.

Roles: Stimulate new advertising accounts in our community newsletters. Maintain current accounts assigned to you by Sales Manager. Service your accounts by assisting them from ad design to final proof approval.

Skills: Excellent communication through email and phone, with high level presentation and relationship-building skills. Strong prospecting and business development skills are a must. Previous sales experience preferred but not required.

Benefits: Commission Based
Apply by sending resume to jobs@peelinc.com


PEEL, INC.

PET PLACE

DIY TREATS FOR OUR FELINE FRIENDS

TUNA CATNIP KITTY TREATS

(Makes about 2 dozen)

1 (5 oz.) can tuna, no salt added packed in water, drained
1 cup oat flour* 1 large egg
1 heaping Tablespoon dried catnip 1 Tbsp olive oil

- Place a rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
- In the bowl of a food processor fitted with a blade attachment, combine all ingredients. Blend until mixture is smooth. It will be thick, but pliable and not terribly sticky.
- Roll dough into half teaspoon balls and place on prepared cookie sheet. Use a skewer to press an X-shape into each cookie ball.
- Bake cookies 10 to 12 minutes, until they are dried on top and slightly browned. Allow to cool completely.
- Place treats in an airtight container and store in refrigerator for up to seven days.

*Note: It's easy to make your own oat flour. Simply grind old-fashioned oats in a spice grinder (or a super clean coffee grinder) until it is transformed into a light powder.

CHEWY CAT TREATS

(Makes about 50 small treats)

1 (4 oz.) jar of chicken and brown rice baby food (or something meaty, can use wet cat food)
1 large egg 2 teaspoons olive oil
2 Tablespoon water ¼ cup parsley, coarsely chopped
1 cup brown rice flour ½ cup cooked white (or brown) rice

1. Prepare same as #1 above (Tuna Catnip Kitty Treats).
 2. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg, baby food (or wet cat food), parsley, olive oil and water. Add brown rice flour and cooked rice. Stir to incorporate. Mixture will be thick but spreadable.
- Spread mixture onto prepared baking sheet, creating a rectangle that is about 1/3 inch thick. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes.
 - Remove from the oven. Let rest until cool enough to handle, then slice the soft dough into bite-size pieces. Return pieces to the oven to bake for 8 more mins.
 - Remove from the oven. Allow to cool completely. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.



LOOP 360

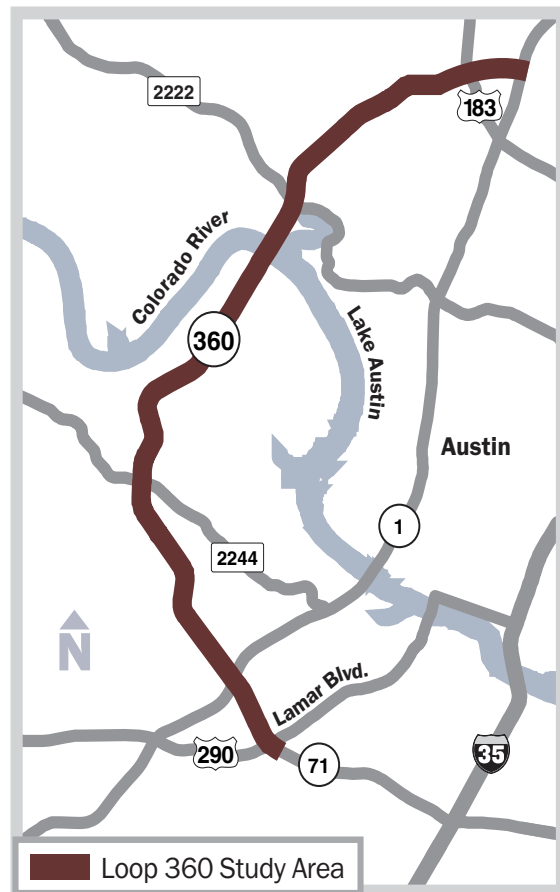
IMPROVEMENT STUDY

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) recently launched a new study to identify short- and long-term transportation improvements along Loop 360 from US 290/SH 71 to North MoPac.

TxDOT wants to know your thoughts, concerns, and ideas for the future of Loop 360.

Visit www.Loop360Study.com to:

- Take a survey on problems, potential solutions, and considerations for future planning on Loop 360.
- Submit a comment.
- Request a meeting with the Loop 360 study team.
- Sign up for the mailing list.



by Jim and Lynne Weber

Relatively common throughout Texas, the Tarantula (*Aphonopelma* sp.) is Texas' heaviest and largest spider. Typically, the head and legs are dark brown, and the abdomen is brownish-black. Coloration varies between individuals as well as between the 14 different species found in Texas. Identification of individual species is difficult, however, and is often performed only on mature males under a microscope.

Tarantulas are typically found in grasslands and semi-open areas, and use burrows, natural cavities under stones or fallen logs, spaces under loose tree bark, and even old rodent holes as shelters. They are also capable of digging their own burrows, and often line them with webbing, placing a few strands across the front to help detect passing prey. Laying several hundred eggs in a hammock-like web constructed inside the burrow, females will guard them until they hatch. Females have lived in captivity for over 25 years, while males rarely live over two or three months after reaching maturity.

Like many animals, tarantulas molt their exoskeletons several times as they grow. The skin on the hard upper shell and abdomen splits, and the tarantula begins the process of squeezing through the opening. Most of the time, tarantulas molt while positioned on their backs, twitching, stretching, and kicking until the entire exoskeleton has been cast off. After they have wriggled free of their old skin, this discarded exoskeleton is a perfect replica of the spider, minus its head and fangs.

Other insects such as crickets, beetles, grasshoppers, cicadas, and caterpillars form the basic diet of the tarantula. They inject their prey with a poison when they bite, which liquefies the prey's insides, making it easier to ingest. While they can climb, they are usually restricted to the ground, where the majority of their prey is found. The hairiness and large size of tarantulas often evokes concern, but the bites of Texas species are not serious to humans. Tarantulas maneuver quickly to face whatever disturbs them, often raising up on their hind legs and stretching out their front legs in a threatening posture. They have also been observed rapidly brushing the top of their abdomen with their hind legs to dislodge hairs that can be used to irritate the attacker's eyes or skin.

For a few weeks late in the summer or early fall, one of the most spectacular spider events occurs in Texas. Not well understood,

this phenomenon is often called a migration, but it may be related more to mating rather than seasonally motivated movement. Males actively wander to seek out females, and can travel 50 miles in search of a mate. Populations seem to follow a boom and bust cycle, depending on weather patterns and the availability of food, but a good year can be a sight to behold if summer rains have been plentiful. While the males are out searching, females wait in their burrows for

a suitor to appear. Larger and more robust, the female does not always accept any male that comes along, and will kill and eat males that are deemed unsuitable.

As formidable as they may seem, tarantulas are not without their own enemies. In fact, in late spring and early summer they are routinely hunted by female Tarantula Hawks as food for their larvae. Belonging to a group of spider wasps in the genera *Pepis* and *Hemipepsis*, tarantula hawks are large, 2-inch long wasps with iridescent blue-black bodies and bright, rust-colored wings. This vivid color combination is a form of

aposematism or warning coloration, a type of advertising signal to both predator and prey that these species are potentially harmful. These wasps have the ability to deliver a powerful sting, and their long legs have hooked claws for grappling their victims.

Flying low over the ground, the female tarantula hawk will find a tarantula and sting it, which paralyzes the spider but does not kill it. She then drags the inert tarantula into her burrow or transports it to a specially prepared nest, where she lays a single egg on the spider's abdomen, then seals the opening to the burrow as she leaves. When the wasp larva hatches, it creates a small hole and enters the spider's abdomen, where it feeds voraciously, avoiding vital organs to keep the spider alive as long as possible. After several weeks the spider dies, the larva pupates, and then it emerges from the spider's abdomen to continue its lifecycle.

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. Check out our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com if you enjoy reading these articles!



Tarantula



Tarantula Hawk



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TAWNY CRAZY ANTS

The Tawny crazy ant, formerly known as the Raspberry crazy ant, was originally found in Harris County in 2002. It is currently confirmed in 27 Texas counties.

Tawny crazy ants have a cyclical population level throughout the year with populations peaking in late summer, decreasing in the fall and then beginning to build again in the spring. Tawny crazy ants are capable of biting, but do NOT sting like fire ants. They are mostly nuisance pests, but can reach extraordinary population levels (in the millions) and can become a problem when getting into electrical equipment. Tawny crazy ants do not have nests or mounds like fire ants; they tend to nest under things- rocks, landscape timbers, flowerpots, etc.

For more information on this particular ant species go to <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/raspberry.html>

Treatment Options

Removing harborage areas- fallen limbs, rocks, leaf litter, etc. These ants will nest under pretty much anything on the ground, so you may want to remove anything that is not necessary.

Alter moisture conditions (crazy ants prefer moist, humid conditions)- reduce watering, repair any leaks, improve drainage

Eliminate honeydew producers from area. Crazy ants tend honeydew producers such as aphids, whiteflies, hoppers, mealybugs and scale insects.

Use pesticide sprays to treat infested areas- under rocks, along landscape edging, etc. Pesticide sprays can also be used to create a barrier around the outside of the home. Piles of dead ants may build up in treated areas, so they must be removed to keep the barrier maintained.

Hire a pest management professional (PMP). PMPs have access to pesticides that are unavailable to homeowners and they also have experience dealing with pest problems regularly.

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

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