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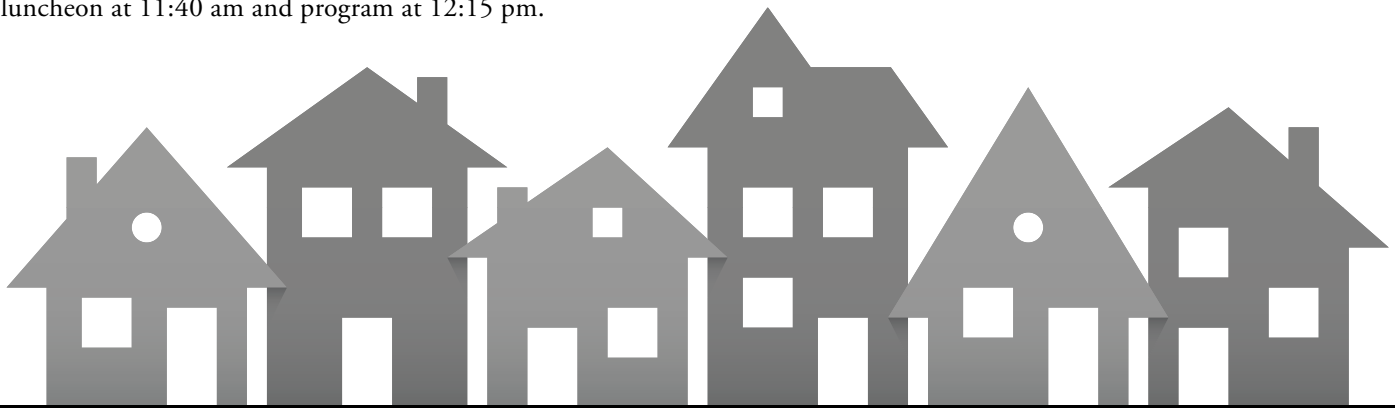
An organization of Women welcoming
Women for Fun and Friendship

Join us for Our 2016-2017 Season

Whether you are a newcomer or have lived here for years WE WELCOME YOU! We are of all ages!! Ideal for empty nesters or women who have left the work place and are looking to get back to a social life. We enjoy monthly luncheons with a speaker or program of interest.

We will be returning to our regular meeting venue at Fern Bluff Community Center, 7320 Wyoming Springs Drive, and Round Rock. Doors open at 10:30 am, meeting at 11:10 am, luncheon at 11:40 am and program at 12:15 pm.

We have many groups: Card and game groups, gardening, Wine Tasting, Foodies, Antiquing, Hiking, Movie, Photo, Potluck, Safari, Walking and Caring Hands. There is something for everyone. Many activities take place during the day and some activities include couples. Please visit our website at www.rrnewneighbors.org for more information and to see our newsletter. Or call Jan Percy, 512-810-3214, Membership Chair for information.



NEWSLETTER INFO

NEWSLETTER

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Neighborhood Compassion Watch!

COMPASSION IS ACTION.

Let's each of us make it our mission to bring positive change and solutions to our own lives, our communities, and our world. Let's sustain our hope for a better world through personal action.

Try this in December. Start a compassion jar or box in your home. Challenge yourself and your family members to seek out and discover compassion in your home, neighborhood, school, and workplace (acts of kindness, service, respect, love, acceptance, generosity, hope, peace, gratitude, forgiveness, and caretaking of the Earth). Pay close attention and discover these acts in yourself and others. Recognize these acts by dropping a note or a marble or pebble into the jar or box. See how full it gets. Find a time to share with each other what you discover.

Share your stories here and we'll publish them www.peelinc.com/residentsArticleSubmit.php. Also, share via social media with the hashtag #compassionup.

Instead of Toys This Holiday Season, Some Kids Just Want Their Basic Needs Met

by Dr. Beverly Hamilton

One in four children in the Austin area live in poverty. The tiniest members of our community don't care yet about toys but they might know what it's like to not have enough diapers. Diapers are not covered under assistance programs and cost \$800-\$1,000 per year. This price tag means some families have to decide between paying their rent or paying for diapers. A national study showed that 1 in 12 mothers reported leaving their baby in a soiled diaper longer than necessary due to limited resources.

The founder of Austin Diaper Bank, Beverly Hamilton, started the diaper bank out of her spare bedroom after learning this sad fact. Now the organization has grown exponentially and occupies a modest warehouse on Burnet Road in north Austin. Austin Diaper Bank helps make sure that Central Texas families have the diapers they need to keep babies healthy. By working with a network of over 40 partner agencies, the diaper bank serves thousands of people from Georgetown to San Marcos.

The diaper bank is a grassroots community effort, largely donation driven and volunteer run. To directly help babies in Central Texas this holiday season, you can host a diaper drive, donate much needed funds, provide diapers (larger sizes are especially in demand) or volunteer. Individuals and groups can spend time in the warehouse sorting, counting and bundling diapers for distribution to the community. The littlest Central Texans thank you.

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Hitting the slopes this ski season?

KEEP IN MIND THESE TIPS TO PREVENTING INJURIES ON THE SLOPES.

*Written by Kelly Cunningham, MD
Orthopedic Specialist and Founder, Austin OrthoBiologics
Sports Medicine Clinic*

As a former US Olympic Men's Ski Team physician and orthopedist, every year during the winter months I treat many ski & snowboard injuries in Austin recreational athletes of all ages and abilities.

For 15 years, as a traveling doctor for the team, I accompanied the athletes throughout the US, Canada and Europe on the World Cup tour and was responsible for the triage, stabilization, and treatment of injuries in these world-class skiers.

One of the most frequent questions I get this time of year from my patients who ski is

"HOW CAN I AVOID HURTING MYSELF ON THE SKI SLOPES?"

So what do I tell recreational skiers about staying healthy on the hill?

First and foremost, adjust to the altitude in your first few days. While there are medications that will improve your blood oxygen, they require a prescription and can have side effects. Perhaps the easiest to take along are low-dose aspirin or ginko biloba, as both are safe (unless allergic) and easy to take. Low-level exercise and lots of water (especially during the first night) are also key, as is abstinence from alcohol during the first 24 hours at altitude. Early trip moderation equals a better mountain experience!

Modern skis, boots, and bindings are universally safe now, unlike in decades past. Multi-release bindings help you come out of your skis safely in a fall and with less stress on your knees, the most commonly injured joint in a skier. Make sure they are set correctly.

Speaking of knees, in most solid, intermediate skiers, unlike beginners (learning to stop) and racers (ACL injury from shear forces), serious knee injuries are actually quite rare.

The best way to protect yourself from ski injury is:

- Get in good "ski-shape"
6 weeks of strength and some aerobic training will suffice
- Ski within your limits
- Stay relaxed, focused & well hydrated
- Watch out for that last, fatigued run of the afternoon
- If you fall, fall forward and throw your hands in front of you.

It's proven that less knee and shoulder injuries occur in the forward lean of a fall.

- And always, always, wear a helmet!

Before you ski, take time to take stock of your physical condition, especially your knee, shoulder and hip joints. Pre-trip aches and pains will not make for an enjoyable ski trip!

Austin resident Kelly Cunningham, MD is board certified by the American College of Orthopedic Surgeons, and an active member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America and the International Cartilage Repair Society.

Want to host a foreign exchange student?

contact Sandra at:
sdawe@ayusa.org



Forest Creek Animal Hospital

*Clifford H. Peck, D.V.M.
Amber Breclaw, D.V.M.
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While most people are familiar with the tropical, non-native species of Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera* sp.) often sold as houseplants, not all are aware that we have a native Christmas Cactus (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*) here in Texas. Our Christmas Cactus, also called Tasajillo, Pencil Cactus, Christmas Cholla, and Desert Christmas Cactus, is a true cactus much more adapted to our types of soils and climate. Common in the central and western parts of Texas, this plant's species name, *leptocaulis*, means 'slender-stemmed', and it is a very good descriptor of its form.

Upright, shrub-like, with many branches made up of slender, cylindrical jointed segments, this 2 to 5 foot tall plant is most often found growing in sandy or bottomland soils, having a trunk or main stem up to 4 inches in diameter with thicket-forming stems that exhibit various shades of green and feature a solid, woody internal core. While occasionally spineless, it typically has very slender, 1 to 2 inch grayish-white spines grouped with much tinier spines, along each stem. Botanists now think that two forms grow in Texas, a 'long-spine' form and a 'short-spine' form. Its leaves are very small, often not even noticed before they fall early in the growing season. Small, pale, yellow-green flowers appear at irregular intervals in April/May and July/August, opening in late afternoon or evening. But the true color display occurs in December, when its fruits turn conspicuously bright red and seemingly cover the plant like it has been festooned for the holiday season.

Christmas Cactus can grow from seed, but it is much more likely to spread by cloning. The jointed stems can easily detach without harming the rest of the plant, and they are dotted with areoles, a structural feature of cacti that contain buds. All a stem needs to do is come in contact with the right soil, and it can take root and grow a whole new plant.

While the Christmas Cactus can be a nuisance if it develops in the wrong areas, it can also provide desirable value to wildlife and to humans. Growing best under the protection of other vegetation, it offers dense cover for a variety of nesting birds and provides a good food source for white-tailed deer, bobwhite, wild turkey, most bird species, and many small mammals. From a human perspective, Christmas Cactus has a good ornamental value in a mostly xeric landscape, as it stands out in the bleak winter landscape, adorned with red fruit when most other vegetation is bare.

Several sources describe the fruits of the Christmas Cactus as edible, even intoxicating. But they are so small, and the spines so troublesome, that the plant usually yields only a sporadic nibble to the curious human. Nevertheless, native tribes made it part of their traditional diet, noting that the fruits, also called tunas, are vaguely sweet with a taste similar to the fruit of a prickly pear cactus.

Take the time to get to know our native Christmas Cactus and consider adding it to your wildscape. You will easily learn to fall in love with its prickly nature, especially at Christmas time!

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, check out our book, *Nature Watch Austin* (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.



Tasajillo bloom



Tasajillo fruit

Plan While You Can: Don't Drink and Drive

TxDOT

This Holiday Season, TxDOT is focusing on the issue of impaired driving by encouraging people to save a life by making a plan to get home safely before the holiday festivities begin. The "Plan While You Can" impaired driving campaign encourages drivers to line up a sober ride before enjoying festivities where drinking may occur. The campaign will run through January 1, 2016 and coincides with an enforcement period in which DWI patrols will be at increased capacity and out in full force looking for drunk drivers on Texas roadways.

Too often a designated driver is chosen during the evening and is often considered the "least drunk" person in the group. The designated driver should be a sober driver. Unfortunately, in many of our Texas towns and cities, mass transit and/or taxi availability is limited – another important reason this campaign message is about planning ahead and reminding our fellow Texans to "Plan While You Can."

TEXAS STATISTICS

During the 2014-2015 Christmas Holiday Season (Dec. 1, 2014 to Jan. 1, 2015), there were 2,411 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas, resulting in 190 serious injuries and 110 fatalities. During the 2013/2014 holiday season (Dec. 1, 2013 to Jan. 1, 2014) there were

2,408 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas, resulting in 233 serious injuries and 102 fatalities. Comparing the 2013/2014 holiday season with the 2014/2015 holiday season there was a 0.1 percent increase in alcohol-related crashes and a 7.8 percent increase in alcohol-related traffic fatalities in Texas.

During the 2014-2015 New Year's holiday (Dec. 31, 2014 to Jan. 3, 2015), there were 409 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas resulting in 34 serious injuries and 16 fatalities. During the 2013/2014 New Year's holiday reporting period (Dec. 31, 2013 to Jan. 3, 2014), there were 337 alcohol-related traffic crashes in Texas, resulting in 37 serious injuries and 15 fatalities. Comparing the 2013/2014 New Year's holiday reporting period with the 2014/2015 New Year's holiday reporting period, there was a 21 percent increase in alcohol-related traffic crashes and a 7 percent increase in alcohol-related traffic fatalities in Texas.

Texans can help make the holidays merry and bright all season long by remembering to make a plan to get home safely before the festivities begin. Remember, it's the most wonderful time of the year, but one poor decision to drink and drive could bring a devastating end to holiday celebrations.

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POINSETTIA FACTS

Poinsettias are a popular holiday plant which many pet owners and parents avoid due to their believed potential to cause death if ingested. According to Pet MD, this is actually an unlikely occurrence. Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) plants contain a milky white sap containing chemicals called diterpenoid euphorbol esters and saponin-like detergents. When ingested, symptoms of vomiting, drooling, or diarrhea may be seen, but it would take large amounts of the plant to be ingested to cause poisoning, and most animals and children will likely not eat such amounts of the plant because of the irritating taste and feel from the sap. If the milky sap is exposed to skin, skin irritation may develop. Eye exposure may result in mild conjunctivitis or pink eye. Signs are self-limiting and generally don't require medical treatment unless severe, according to an online Pet Poison Helpline site.

REACHING YOUR NEIGHBORS *and many others...*

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- Bella Vista
- Belterra
- Canyon Creek
- Cat Mountain Villas
- Circle C Ranch
- Courtyard
- Forest Creek
- Highland Park West Balcones
- Jester Estates
- Ladera
- Lakeway
- Legend Oaks II
- Long Canyon
- Meridian
- Northwest Austin Civic Association
- Paloma Lake
- Parkside at Mayfield Ranch
- Plum Creek
- River Place
- Rocky Creek
- Sendera
- Steiner Ranch
- Sweetwater
- Tarrytown
- Teravista
- Twin Creeks
- Villages of Westen Oaks
- West Lake Hills

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Tips For A Healthy Holiday

Center's For Disease Control and Prevention

The holidays are a good time to reflect on the gift of health. Following are some tips from the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to keep in mind for a healthy and safe holiday season.

WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water, and rub them together for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

STAY WARM

Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers.

MANAGE STRESS

The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep.

TRAVEL SAFELY

Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for his/her height, weight, and age.

BE SMOKE-FREE

Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or talk to your health care provider for help.

GET CHECK-UPS AND VACCINATIONS.

Exams and screenings can help find potential problems early, when the chances for treatment and cure are often better. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for needed exams and screenings. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history, and family health history.

WATCH THE KIDS

Children are at high risk for injuries. Keep a watchful eye on your kids when they're eating and playing. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins and hard candy), and other objects out of kids' reach. Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking. Make sure toys are used properly. Develop rules about acceptable and safe behaviors, including using electronic media.

PREVENT INJURIES

Injuries can happen anywhere, and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of climbing on furniture when hanging decorations. Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or skateboarding to help prevent head injuries. Keep vaccinations up to date.



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