

VOLUME 3

ISSUE 12

THE ROCKY CREEK *Connection*

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER



Rocky Creek presents

drees
CUSTOM HOMES™

CHRISTMAS **WITH** SANTA

Saturday, December 17
9 - 10:30 am
@ The Pool Area

Please Note... Santa has to fly away promptly at 10:30 to go and see other boys and girls!

• FEATURING •

- ☑ Christmas Music
- ☑ Christmas Sing-A-Long Songs
- ☑ Breakfast Treats w/ Santa
- ☑ Holiday Cheer

Plus Bring your own camera for FREE

Photos with Santa!



FirstService

HomeNabr

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance.....	911
Police Department	512-314-7590
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Travis County ESD No.6/Lake Travis Fire Rescue	
Administration Office.....	512-266-2533
Travis County Animal Control.....	512-972-6060

SCHOOLS

Lake Travis ISD.....	512-533-6000
Lake Travis High School.....	512-533-6100
Lake Travis Middle School.....	512-533-6200
Bee Cave Elementary.....	512-533-6250

UTILITIES

West Travis County PUA (Water).....	512-246-0498
Pedernales Electric.....	512-219-2602
Alliant Gas (Propane)	866-764-0283
AT&T	
New Service.....	1-800-464-7928
Repair.....	1-800-246-8464
Billing.....	1-800-858-7928
IESI (Garbage & Recycling).....	512-282-3508
Travis County Hazardous Waste.....	512-974-4343

OTHER NUMBERS

Bee Cave City Hall.....	512-767-6600
Bee Cave Library.....	512-767-6620
Municipal Court	512-767-6630
Lake Travis Postal Office.....	512-263-2458
City of Bee Cave	www.beecavetexas.com

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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ARTICLE INFO

The Rocky Creek Connection is mailed monthly to all Rocky Creek residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to submit 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.

If you have an article of interest to the community please submit to rockycreek@peelinc.com by the 15th of the month. The newsletter can also be viewed online at www.PEELinc.com.

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.

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Documentation or information from Drees Accounting Department may be required to receipt the gift, such as a w-9 or 1099 tax form.

Rocky Creek Connection

Linda Gail Lewis Performs Dec. 9 at Spicewood Vineyards



Linda Gail Lewis will bring her rollicking blend of country rock to the Spicewood Vineyards Dec. 9 when the Spicewood Arts Society presents its second concert of the season, beginning at 7 p.m.

Lewis' 50-plus years of musical experience began by singing in a little country church in Louisiana with her brother, Jerry Lee Lewis. As Jerry Lee shot to fame, he took Linda along on his tours, where she opened shows and sang backup vocals. The two recorded an album of duets, "Together" in 1969 that launched a top ten country single, "Don't Let Me Cross Over."

At age 40, Linda struck out on her own, teaching herself boogie piano in Jerry Lee's style, eventually collaborating with Irish singer/

songwriter Van Morrison and producing a duet album, "You Win Again."

She became an international success, keeping a home in Wales. Now an Austinite, she's been turning out music that celebrates her own unique talents, including a Christmas album with Jerry Deerwood, "Rockin' Christmas."

The Christmas album and her latest work will be sold at the concert. The Spicewood Vineyards Event Center is at 1419 Co. Rd. 409, Spicewood, TX. Tickets include light refreshments at intermission. Wine is available for purchase.

This concert is included in season tickets. Individual tickets are \$50 each. To purchase, go to www.spicewoodarts.org. For more information, call 512-264-2820 or visit the website.



Patrick Court
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Lake Travis High School Choir Invites You to Their Winter Holiday Concert

The award winning Lake Travis High School Choir would like to invite you and your family to their Winter Holiday Concert, Friday December 2nd. Come enjoy beautiful music that will put you in the holiday spirit, fun for the whole family! The concert begins at 7pm, admission is free, and takes place in the LTHS performing Arts Center.

Additionally, they would like to congratulate it's 2016-2017 All Region Choir Students. These students practiced for months prior to their audition and made the select riongal choir through blind audition.

Region (l to r...kind of by row):

Zoe Arora, Sarah Henry, Sophia Boyer, Zac Hrcir, Sarah Mann, Avery Goodwin, Tyller Garza, Emily Aaron, Kate Senter, Molly Snodgrass, Amanda Maldonado, Mason Tabb, Alaska Coombes, Jackie Lowy, Jade Milam, Abigail Storm, Hawkins Burns, Houston Burns, Wes King, Zachary Edwards, Dante Kokoszka

Not pictured: Kelly Hearn & Olivia Kingsfield

The 2016-2017 Choir Officers are Front Row: Sarah Mann, Tyller Garza, Alaska Coombes, Avery Goodwin, Kelly Hearn

Back Row: Reagan Westberry, Jackie Lowy, Julianne Lowy, Jade Milam, Mary Martindale, Alison Miller, Jessica Askey



**Please remember to pick
up after your pets and
“scoop the poop”**



“In this season of Thanksgiving and celebrating the gift of hope for the world at Christmas, Partners in Hope would like to thank everyone who has participated in and supported our efforts during 2016. Neighbors like you make all the difference! Thank you and may you recognize God’s blessings during this season.”



Visit us at www.partnersinhopelaketravis.org

Rocky Creek Connection

Deer & Trees & Such

Bambi is cute. His daddy and momma are majestic and elegant - and all of them are very very hungry! No doubt you have noticed that deer these days are becoming bolder and that deer-resistant plant lists are shrinking each year. Why? Populations in suburban-rural areas are increasing due to many factors all the while their native food sources are dwindling. Toxic and disagreeable landscape plants are becoming necessary for their forage as natural predators, hunting, and routes for migration become almost non-existent. Often corn is provided with good intentions, but it is well documented that it is of little nutritional value and can cause them to die as a result of acidosis. It has become a situation which is costly and undesirable for hill country communities and deer alike. One of the best sources of food for deer has always been the acorn. One of the less considered repercussions of the national tree epidemic we all call oak wilt, is the loss of this major deer diet staple in those more and more prevalent locals where this fungal pathogen has caused the death of oak trees. Property clearing has also affected them by the generic approach of remove everything but the Live Oaks and grass (deer don't have the capacity to digest mature grasses) from the lot and raising tree canopies above the height that deer can reach to browse. Also, not a minor issue of deer over-population is the genetic defects arising from in-breeding.

Though some may think it is "neat" to see deer so close to our back porches, it is incredibly unnatural. The lack of fear and decline of self-preservation instincts can take a serious toll on our bodily safety on the roads that the deer constantly jay-walk across, our insurance premiums, and obviously and arguably the worst consequence is the painful injury and likely drawn-out death the deer experience after vehicular impact. Also a result of this lack of fear (along with hormonal craziness), bucks are during the rut choosing our landscape trees as their punching bags if you will - both letting out there aggression and leaving their scent behind, both culminating in the likely event of your tree dying. Cages or plastic protectors are absolutely critical for any planted tree to survive these days.

Humane, well-thought-out plans of action are absolutely necessary to bring deer populations to levels (and maintain them at those levels) advised by wildlife experts, who have both the knowledge and are motivated by compassion to seek the good of both the community and the deer. Trapping, relocating, more park space, food plots of nutritional forbs, mast, and browse as well as regular education of the public of informed care practices for these amazing animals are just a few of the many things which can help enrich our lives and theirs.

Questions or comments this article has generated, may be directed to me at: kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com

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Beat the New Year and Join Before Christmas



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RETIRE BETTER CREATIVE INDEXING

WITH JOSH STIVERS

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Not only does that mean mistletoe and Silent Night, but also that it's time to make sure our portfolios are ready to ring in the New Year.

Much of the uncertainty that has plagued economic markets for the entire year is now dissipating. We know who the next president will be, we can expect interest rates to rise next year, and we know how our portfolios have performed.

Many people have benefitted from the 7 year old bull market. We have seen many people's investments achieve their highest values ever.

So what do you do now? How do you insure your profits for the future?

As you know, I am a big fan of utilizing index funds in our portfolio allocations. There are two primary reasons I feel this way. First, index funds are super-efficient to own as their cost of ownership is far lower than utilizing a managed portfolio strategy. Second, many index funds have performed better over time than their professionally managed counterparts.

But, here's the thing. As the stock market continued to hit new highs this year, we must begin to think about the fact that this may not go on forever. It is possible the market could have some pretty drastic valleys over the next several years.

A strong argument can be made that it might be time to take a portion of your current assets invested in stocks and mutual funds and protect them from future negative volatility. If only

we had an accurate prediction of how things will perform in the future.

Have you ever purchased an investment that lost money over the course of the year and then wished you could go back and purchase it at today's value instead?

This is where our creative indexing strategies make a lot of sense. Did you know it is possible to invest in index funds inside of fixed asset accounts? These accounts still grow based on the upward movements of the markets, but, if we head into a negative year, you are protected from losses. Then, at the end of the period, you have the ability to "re-buy" at the current levels.

Being that hindsight is almost always 20/20, these strategies allow us to continue to participate in the market if we move into year 8 of the bull market, but if not we can rebalance things again next year without risk of losing any principal.

Depending on how you set these accounts up, there can be additional tax benefits to these strategies as well.

This opportunistically conservative approach has helped many of our clients over the years achieve relatively decent returns without the headaches of paying active managers and experiencing market volatility.

I would be happy to visit with you further about whether these creative indexing strategies might be a fit in your unique situation. Feel free to give me a call or email retirebetter@platinumwealthadvisory.com.



512.369.3817



www.PlatinumWealthAdvisory.com



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NATUREWATCH

Christmas Cactus

by Jim and Lynne Weber



Tasajilo Bloom

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.*



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photos by Leandra Blei Photography



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