

The Gazette

SEPTEMBER 2017
VOLUME 10 ISSUE 9

AUSTIN ISD 2017 BOND



The Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees unanimously approved a November 7, 2017 bond election for \$1,050,984,000, which will bring 21st century learning spaces to students without increasing our tax rate.

This bond is designed to modernize or construct 16 new campus facilities, some of which will be replacement schools. It is also planned to update campuses with capital improvement projects. Some key projects included in the bond proposition are:

- Districtwide improvements to technology for teachers and students and transportation,
- Improvements to address overcrowding and critical needs
- Reinvention programs for 21st century learning

If the bond passes, our neighborhood schools will receive the following:

Austin High School

- \$30.2 million
- HVAC improvements, new athletics, new running track, technology upgrades, theater stage repairs, and more

Bowie High School

- \$91 million
- Phase 1 of complete campus modernization – fine arts, athletics, parking structure, etc, HVAC and plumbing improvements, technology upgrades and more

Gorzycki Middle School

- \$2.1 million
- HVAC improvements, technology upgrades and more

Small Middle School

- \$1.2 million
- Technology upgrades and more

Mills Elementary

- \$1.2 million
- HVAC and plumbing improvements, technology upgrades, sidewalk improvements, and more

Patton Elementary

- \$1.7 million
- HVAC, electrical and plumbing improvements, technology upgrades and more

While addressing critical facility needs, it is equally important to use this opportunity to modernize facilities and reinvent the urban education experience for AISD.

Early voting is Oct. 23 – Nov. 3 and Election Day is Nov. 7.

More details at www.austinisd.org/bond

REGISTER TO VOTE!

New to the neighborhood? New to Texas?

The deadline to register to vote in the November election in Travis County is Tuesday, October 10, 2017. Early voting begins Monday, October 23, and Election Day is November 7.

In Travis County, you can vote early at any early voting location in the county. On Election Day, you can vote at any of the precinct voting locations, it doesn't have to be your designated precinct location. More information at www.votetravis.com.

If you live north of Slaughter but south of the dry creek bed, you're likely in Precinct 366. If you would like to get involved with your local Democratic neighbors in Precinct 366, email tcprecinct366@gmail.com for more information on upcoming events.





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MONARCHS & OE

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

The protozoan parasite *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE) infects monarch and queen butterflies. It is an obligate parasite and requires a host to live within and to grow and multiply. It was first discovered in the 1960's infecting monarchs in Florida. Since then, it's been found in monarch populations across the world. It is thought that the parasite has co-evolved with monarchs.

There are three major populations of monarchs in the United States—one east of the Rocky Mountains that winters in Central Mexico and migrate north into the US and Canada; another west of the Rocky mountains that overwinters on the coast of California; the third population are non-migratory and can breed year round in areas such as Florida, Texas and Hawaii. All three populations are infected with OE.

Monarchs infected with OE will have spores wedged between the scales on their body, with the greatest concentration usually occurring on the abdomen. The spores are very small and require a microscope to see.

Female monarchs pass OE spores onto their offspring when they lay eggs. When caterpillars emerge from the egg, they eat the egg shell ingesting the spores. When spores reach the midgut of the insect, they break open and release protozoan parasites. The protozoans move through the gut lining to the epidermis where they reproduce asexually (divides multiple times increasing the number of protozoans). In the butterfly chrysalis stage, the protozoans go through sexual reproduction (again increasing the number of protozoans). Spores form so the emerging butterfly is covered in spores. Spores can also be scattered onto milkweed from butterflies laying eggs or feeding on nectar. Spores on the milkweed can be consumed by caterpillars as they eat foliage.

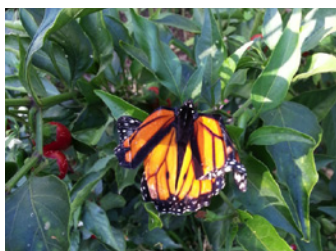
Once butterflies are infected, they do not recover. OE does not grow or reproduce on the adults; spores remain dormant until they are ingested by a caterpillar.

Infected pupae have dark blotches 2-3 days before emergence. Adults that are heavily infected often have problems emerging from the chrysalis and some may die before emerging. Others that do emerge may fall to the ground before their wings are expanded leading to them dying quickly. Many infected monarchs look healthy, so the only way to determine infection is by looking for spores.

What can you do? Check monarchs for spores and destroy any you find that are infected. I know this seems harsh, but infected monarchs further spread the protozoa and kill more butterflies in later generations. Cut down milkweed several times per year to get rid of any possible spores that may be on the plants and to encourage new, healthy growth.

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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Fire.....	911
Ambulance.....	911
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845

SCHOOLS

Elementary	
Clayton.....	512-841-9200
Kiker.....	512-414-2584
Mills	512-841-2400
Patton	512-414-1780
Middle	
Bailey.....	512-414-4990
Small.....	512-841-6700
Gorzycki	512-841-8600
High School	
Austin	512-414-2505
Bowie.....	512-414-5247

UTILITIES

Water/Wastewater	
City of Austin.....	512-972-0101
City of Austin (billing)	512-494-9400
Emergency	512-972-1000
Texas State Gas	
Customer Service	1-800-700-2443
Gas related emergency.....	1-800-959-5325
Pedernales Electric Cooperative	
New service, billing	512-219-2602
Problems	512-219-2628
ATT/SBC Telephone	
New Service	1-800-288-2020
Repair	1-800-246-8464
Billing	1-800-288-2020
Allied Waste	512-247-5647
Time Warner Cable.....	512-485-5555

OTHER NUMBERS

Oak Hill Postal Station.....	1-800-275-8777
City of Austin	
Dead Animal Collection.....	512-494-9400
Abandoned/Disabled Vehicles	512-974-8119
Stop Sign Missing/Damaged	512-974-2000
Street Light Outage (report pole#).....	512-505-7617

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TICK TOCK, GET YOUR SHOT

Doctors say get your flu shots early for maximum protection



When it comes to addressing health concerns, sooner rather than later is best. With flu season just around the corner, early vaccination is key to protecting you and your family against the nasty flu virus.

"The flu vaccine is one of our best lines of defense against the flu virus," said Cesar Gerez Martinez, MD, a primary care doctor at Seton Family of Doctors

the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system.

Protect and Prevent

The flu virus changes from year to year, so does the composition of the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control Prevention conducts studies each year to determine the most effective vaccine for the season.

The annual needle stick may not be comfortable, but it offers protection for about six months.

"The flu vaccine helps the body create antibodies that provide protection against infection," Gerez Martinez said. "Getting the shot will not only protect you, but others around you throughout the flu season."

Gerez Martinez says age, illness or other risk factors may prevent some people from getting vaccinated, so they rely on herd immunity to help keep them protected. When a large population, or "herd," is vaccinated, the possibility of spreading preventable diseases decreases. This creates an extra layer of protection for those who are too young or too sick to be vaccinated.

Risks associated with the flu vaccine are very low. You can't get the

plus Express Care. "Get the shot early, before the virus begins spreading in your community."

Seton is part of Ascension, the largest nonprofit health system in

(Continued on Page 5)

DROWNING IS FAST & SILENT KEEP KIDS IN ARM'S REACH



WATER SAFETY TIPS AT
WWW.COLINSHOPE.ORG



At least 63 Texas children have lost their lives to a fatal drowning this year.*

Take our Water Safety Quiz. www.colinshope.org/quiz

September 10: Colin's Hope Kids Triathlon

Colin's Hope will host the annual Kids Tri on Sunday, September 10. The event is limited to 400 athletes, and will close quickly! For more information visit www.colinshope.org

September 24: Colin's Hope Got2Swim

Looking for our annual Got2Swim? Join Colin's Hope and Open Water Planet on Sunday, September 24 for a 10K solo, 2, or 3 person relay on Lake Travis!



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*Source: Texas DFPS, Watch Kids Around Water

LAYERS OF PROTECTION CAN PREVENT DROWNING



**CONSTANT
VISUAL
SUPERVISION**



**LEARN
TO
SWIM**



**WEAR
LIFE
JACKETS**



**MULTIPLE
BARRIERS
TO WATER**



**KEEP BACKYARDS
& BATHROOMS
SAFER**



**CHECK POOL
& HOT TUB
FIRST**



**STAY AWAY
FROM
DRAINS**



**BE SAFER
AT THE
BEACH**



**LEARN CPR
& REFRESH
SKILLS YEARLY**

(Continued from Page 4)

flu from the shot. The most common side effects include redness, mild swelling, or soreness at location of shot. In some cases, people may experience low-grade fever, mild rash, headache and body ache, Gerez Martinez said.

Getting the flu shot doesn't always mean you won't get sick, but the immunities already built up from the vaccine can help you weather the illness with more ease.

"If you get sick even after being vaccinated, the symptoms are typically milder," Gerez Martinez said.

Sooner rather than later

The flu virus is active all year, and due to factors such as climate shift and being cooped up indoors more often, the number of infections peaks December through February. Some outbreaks can last into the spring.

Gerez Martinez says get your shot by the end of October, since maximum protection takes time.

"Full response to the vaccine takes about two weeks, but you get some protection soon after it's administered," Gerez Martinez said.

If you get to December and getting the flu shot is still on your to-do list, or even if you've already had the flu, go ahead and get the stick.

"We still recommend vaccination later in the season and even after having the flu because it will lower your risk of getting sick from

other strains," Gerez Martinez said.

The CDC recommends that most anyone aged six months and older can get a flu shot. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about the flu vaccine.

Tips to reduce the spread of flu

Gerez Martinez emphasizes that getting immunized is key to protecting you and your loved ones against the flu. For additional prevention measures, use these tips to avoid spreading germs:

- Wash your hands and hard surfaces often.
- Don't share food or drinks.
- Stay home if you're sick.

Cesar Gerez Martinez, MD, is at Seton Family of Doctors Plus Express Care, now in your neighborhood 5301-B Davis Lane, Austin TX 78749, at the southwest corner of Mopac and Davis Lane.

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NATURE WATCH

THE VALUE OF VIPERS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Throughout human history, fear of snakes has been one of our most common phobias, arising from our learned ability to detect threats to our survival in the wild. While most snake species are relatively harmless to humans, those in the Viper Family can pose a serious danger. Vipers are defined as venomous snakes with large hinged fangs, a broad head, and a stout body with a darker pattern on a lighter background. While vipers are venomous and must be treated with proper respect and caution, it is important to understand that they also exhibit many useful characteristics and are vital to keeping a healthy ecosystem in balance.

Vipers that can be found in Central Texas include the Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*), Broad-banded Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix laticinctus*), and Western Cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma*). By far the most abundant and widespread viper, the Western Diamond-back

Rattlesnake exhibits a considerable color diversity from chalky gray to dull red, but always displays a row of dark, diamond markings down the middle of its back, and has a prominent black and white banded tail.

On average, this snake



Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake

grows between 3 and 4 feet long, and can be found in the wooded hills and plateaus north and west of Austin.

The Broad-banded Copperhead found in our area is an uncommon subspecies in Central Texas, occurring near woodland streams in live oak-juniper forests in the west to Blackland Prairie and Bastrop in the east. Growing 2 to 3 feet long, this snake is



Broad-banded Copperhead

stout-bodied and marked with wide, reddish-brown crossbands that alternate with narrower tan to pale brown crossbands. A heavy-bodied snake with a stubby tail, the Western Cottonmouth is named for the bright-white skin lining its open mouth, but it is also known as 'water moccasin.' It is generally restricted to the woodland borders of rivers such as the Colorado, but can be found in cool, shallow springs a short distance away from main waterways. This snake averages 2 to 3 feet in length, and typically appears almost all black with a bit of brown, but ill-defined grayish-brown crossbands can sometimes be seen, especially on the sides.



Western Cottonmouth

All of these vipers eat rodents, so they are beneficial in keeping rat and mice populations down, which is often the reason they can be found around homes and yards. They will also eat birds found on the ground, as none are very good climbers. As snakes that live in or near water, the copperhead and cottonmouth will also consume amphibians and fish. Vipers can also be prey for other animals such as owls, hawks, and even other snakes. Finally, chemicals found only in viper venoms have a distinct value to humans, as they are used to treat many serious health ailments such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, Parkinsons, and many more. Now that's the value of vipers!

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 books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (both published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.



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