

THE BULLETIN

Belterra Community News

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News for the Residents of Belterra



Memorable Family Moments

Educational Activities Ideal for Making Memories Together

Educational activities and plans that allow kids to flex their brain muscles in fun and creative ways can be ideal ways to spend family time that makes lasting memories.

While children typically gain invaluable knowledge and experience in the classroom, purposeful activities done outside of that setting can help encourage kids to keep learning and make family moments more enjoyable for everyone involved.

From planning trips that celebrate animals and the great outdoors to rainy day activities at home that inspire creative expression, these ideas can produce some family moments worth remembering.

1. Go on a scavenger hunt. From native species of plants, animals and insects to neighborhood landmarks, there are plenty of interesting things that can be found right in

your own backyard. Organize a scavenger hunt and work together in teams of family members to search for each item on the list, then do more research on the things you found once you return home. For a real challenge, expand your hunt to the city limits of your hometown and make a day trip of the adventure.

2. Hang out with wildlife. Learn about different species of animals, how to help protect them and the importance of eco-friendly everyday practices by visiting a destination like an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited zoo or aquarium. You can explore the challenges facing endangered species, discover how community programs are spurring positive change for conservation and learn more at aza.org. After learning about animals that need help, you can visit

(Continued on Page 2)

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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EMERGENCY 911
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 Dripping Springs Elementary 512-858-3700
 Walnut Springs Elementary 512-858-3800
 Rooster Springs Elementary..... 512-465-6200
 Dripping Springs Middle School..... 512-858-3400
 Dripping Springs High School 512-858-3100

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 Trash – Texas Disposal..... 512-246-0498
 Gas – Texas Community Propane..... 512-272-5503
 Electricity – Pedernales Electric 512-858-5611

OTHER

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 Animal Control..... 512-393-7896

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**The Dripping Springs
 Farmers Market
 is each Wednesday from
 3p - 6p.**

TEENAGE JOB SEEKERS

NAME	AGE	BABY SIT	HOUSE SIT	PET SIT	PHONE
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+ CPR TRAINING / FIRST AID TRAINING * HAS REFERENCES

If you are a teenager and want to be included on the babysitter/pet sitter/house sitter list or if you are on this list and want to update your information, contact advertising@peelinc.com.

(Continued from Cover Page)

zebrapen.com/aza for fun kids games, coloring pages and other activities that encourage creativity. Many animal sanctuaries and wildlife recovery centers also have endangered species and offer educational information about them.

3. Visit a national park. Many park ranger programs provide opportunities to interact with the animals that live in the area, as well as information about any endangered animals and how you can help with conservation efforts. While in the park, you can also enjoy a nature hike, have a picnic lunch and view the different species of plants in the region.
4. Enjoy an arts and crafts day. Spending time doing an art project is a hands-on way to help introduce kids to new ideas and ways of learning. Engage the entire family by creating crafts with different subjects of interest. This can help create conversations and opportunities to further explore what your children are interested in.
5. Organize a game day. A play day can be just as fun as it is educational. Choose from a variety of games that can allow players to get extra creative. Options like Pictionary or charades tap into different types of creative skills, which can keep everyone engaged while they're learning to express themselves effectively in new ways.



BRINGING FAMILIES CLOSER TOGETHER

The YMCA of Austin has something for the whole family— from youth programming like sports, dance, gymnastics and martial arts to state-of-the-art exercise equipment, gym facilities and pools. Time spent together at the Y will help build your family's connections, health, confidence and well-being. If you're looking to strengthen your family, the Y is the perfect place to start.

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CAPTURE MOMENTS THAT MATTER



Make your family's learning adventures more memorable by encouraging kids to capture their experiences on paper. The practice of communicating on paper can help lock in memories, plus it's a clever way for kids to practice practical skills in an engaging and productive way.

Adjust these ideas as needed to match the ability level of each child so the whole family can participate.

1. Write about experiences in a journal or diary. For older kids, encourage them to use words to describe their adventures. Ask younger kids to draw a scene or image that captured their attention or excited them the most.
2. Design a diorama about your family's adventures to display in your home to show extended family and friends. Make it a conversation piece by asking kids to think about an endangered species and depict its living environment. Available in standard, glitter, neon, metallic and pastel colors, tools like Zebra Doodler'z[®] allow little designers to explore the nearly endless possibilities for color coding, sketching, journaling and embellishing.
3. Take photos to share with friends and family both online and in-person. Get creative with your photo-taking by encouraging kids to think about the story they'll tell through the images.

It might be a series of selfies tackling exciting new activities or documenting a sibling's first experience at the petting zoo. Another way to capture photographic memories is a photo treasure hunt, where kids have a list of items to search for and photograph during each outing.

4. Create a family calendar to plan your summer activities together. Anticipating upcoming adventures is part of the fun. Let kids help you keep track of what's coming up and build excitement with a personalized calendar. Make it a work of art by asking kids to draw icons or small images that depict upcoming activities with an option like Zebra's Sarasa[®] Fineliner Pens, which are available in 12 vibrant colors.
5. Share experiences on social media. Let friends and family in on the fun by sharing your photos, drawings, dioramas and other creations online. Seeing the positive interaction and praise-filled comments from loved ones can help reinforce the value of creative expression to impressionable young minds.
6. Create scrapbooks to help remember family moments. Keep the pace of life from fading those precious memories by assembling scrapbooks to commemorate family adventures. Make the scrapbook a family affair with everyone contributing their own creations.

Find more ideas for capturing and sharing experiences at zebrapen.com.


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NATURE WATCH

by Jim and Lynne Weber

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LONGHORN



'Cottonwood Borer'

The Cerambycidae are a family of longhorn beetles, typically characterized by extremely long antennae, often as long as or longer than the beetle's body. Also called longicorns, over 400 species have been described in Texas alone. The scientific name of this beetle family is named after the shepherd Cerambus, a mythical Greek figure who was transformed into a large beetle with horns after an argument with nymphs. Most of these beetles can fly well and are be found on tree trunks, logs, flowers, or at lights at night. Some even squeak when held, making a rocking motion with their head which rubs tiny ridges against the inside surface of their thorax.

Two of our more common longhorn beetles are the Cottonwood Borer (*Plectrodera scalator*) and the Long-jawed or Horse-bean Longhorn Beetle (*Trachyderes mandibularis*). The Cottonwood Borer is one of the largest insects in North America, reaching 1.6 inches in length and 0.5 inches in width. It has a bold black and white pattern on its body with long black antennae. The white portions of the pattern are actually microscopic masses of hair. Adults are active by day, feeding on leaf stems and shoots of cottonwood trees. The female bores small holes in the base of the tree to lay her eggs. The larvae take up to 2 years to mature, then they pupate for about 3 weeks in a root below ground, and once metamorphosis is completed, they chew their way out of the root and dig their way to the surface.

Long-jawed Longhorn Beetle has a glossy black or dark brown body with 4 generally large but sometimes reduced yellow to yellow-orange markings, and segments of its antennae and legs alternating between black and yellow-orange. It can grow to a length of 1.3 inches and is generally common from March to November. Its species name comes from the fact that the males have much expanded jaws or mandibles. Active during the day, adults are mostly found near wounded trees as they feed on oozing sap, and

its larvae feed on native hackberries as well as non-native ficus and tamarisk species.

This large family of longhorns includes beetles called sawyers, pruners, and girdlers in addition to borers. Most are found in dead or dying wood, and some mine live plants. While many of these beetles are considered to be occasional pests, it should be noted that they literally help shape the forest canopy and assist in recycling dead wood into precious soil. All the more reason to appreciate this different kind of longhorn!

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*, *Nature Watch Big Bend*, and *Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies* (all published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.



'Long-jawed Longhorn'



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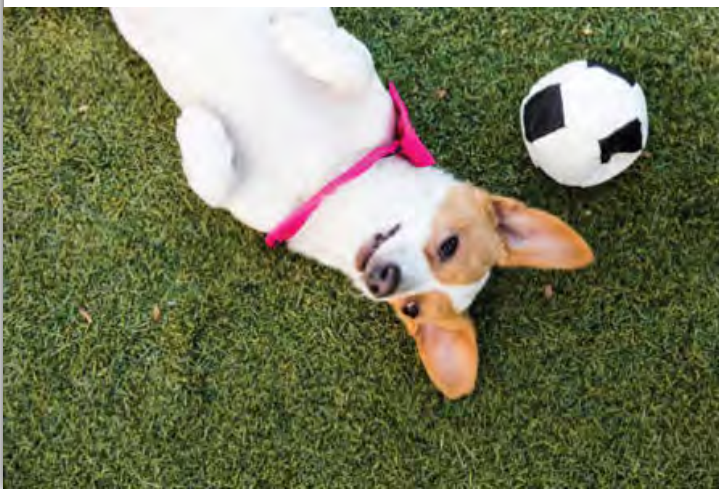
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TIPS FOR PACKING A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH

by Stephany Pando, *cooksmarts.com*, edited for space



Packing lunches for your back-to-schoolers is no easy task. It takes time and planning. Plus, every parent knows that just because you pack it, doesn't guarantee your kids will actually eat it.

However, this doesn't mean you have to fill your kids' lunchboxes with pizza and cookies everyday. Below we offer 5 tips for how to pack a nutritious lunch that your kids will look forward to eating and you'll feel good about giving them.

Tip #1: Get Your Kids Involved

- Give your kids healthy food options from each food group and let them make the final decisions on what goes in their lunch.
- Take your child grocery shopping with you and let them have a say (to a certain extent) in what goes into the cart. This promotes feelings of responsibility and empowerment.
- Designate a part of your kitchen as the "lunch packing station" and spend some time there with your kids the night before to get lunch ready for the next day.

Tip #2: Turn Healthy Foods into Fun Foods

- Use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, deli meat, cheese, or a melon-baller for fruit.
- Use kid-friendly skewers to make colorful food kebabs.
- Create a theme for the day and have all of the foods in their lunch relate to the theme

Tip #3: Make Your Own Snacks – and limit processed ones

Kids rely on snacks to keep their energy up, but the type of snack

is important to consider. Packaged snacks tend to lack important nutrients and can be high in sugar, sodium and saturated fats. Take control of what is in your kids' snacks by making them yourself!

Tip #4: Incorporate All Food Groups

A balanced diet includes all of the food groups. Luckily, there are so many different ways to enjoy each food group:

- Fruits: fresh, frozen, dried, canned, baked (think apple chips!) or pureed.
- Vegetables: fresh, frozen, or baked (think kale chips!)
- Lean protein: baked chicken, deli meats, hard boiled eggs, beans or nuts (be aware of nut allergy regulations at your child's school).
- Low-fat dairy: milk, cheese or yogurt
- Whole Grains: pita, sandwich bread, tortillas, wraps, and pastas

Tip #5: Encourage Hydration

It's recommended that school-aged kids drink between 6-8 cups of water a day (even more in hot weather or if their activity level is high).

- Let your child pick out their favorite water bottle and encourage them to drink the whole thing at least twice at school. They'll be more inclined to do it if they feel like they are completing a challenge!
- If the "flavor" of water is too boring for them, throw in a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up – and keep it cooler.

With these tips in mind, you and your child are ready to start out the school year on the right foot. Good luck – and happy packing!

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