

MERIDIAN *Community Monitor*

NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN

Help Make the World a Better Place

Did you know that by opening your home to a foreign exchange student you are taking on the role as a diplomat of the United States? Its true! Hosting a teenager from another country is form of public diplomacy – it gives both the host family and the student an opportunity to learn from each other, exchange cultural experiences and most of all, form life-long relationships.

All that is required of a host family is to provide three meals a day, a place for the student to sleep and a little bit of TLC thrown in. Students can share a room with a same sex sibling that is within three years of their age. The students all come with their own spending money, health insurance and an eagerness to be part of your family.

STS Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, is looking for volunteer host families for the 2020/2021 school year. We accept all different types of families, from single parents, to newly marrieds, to empty nesters to same sex couples. The application process is simple, once you are completely vetted, you will have access to our student database where you can select the student that best fits in with your family.



If you would like to find out more about hosting one of our wonderful students, please contact Vicki Odom at (832) 455-7881 or email at vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com. I can get you started in helping to make the world a better place to live.

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WELCOME

A Newsletter for Meridian residents

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian 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 activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www.PEELinc.com or you can email it meridian@peelinc.com. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome. Our goal is to keep you informed!

ADVERTISING INFO

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Lettuce Recycle!

by Dena Houston

RECYCLING AT AUSTIN-BERGSTROM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PART 1



There are many recycling challenges in our great city, one of which is recycling at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA). I was very privileged to meet B. J. Carpenter, the Sustainability Program Coordinator at the airport. He shared with me some of the wonderful initiatives in the field of recycling and reuse that are happening at ABIA.

• **POUR IT OUT** – Bottles and cans with liquid in them are not recyclable. The liquid in them contaminates the recycling stream and ruins the other recyclable materials. To make it convenient to recycle bottles at the airport, there are four “pour it out” receptacles currently provided at the front of the three security checkpoints. Two receptacles are at the largest - Check Point One – and one at each of the other two. These receptacles provide a place for passengers to empty liquids from a bottle or can and then either place it in a nearby recycling bin or carry it through security to refill in the secured area.



• **FOOD RESCUE** – So much food goes to waste in our great land. ABIA has taken some wonderful steps to rescue unused food from the concessionaires. The “food rescue” program began on March 1, 2017. Currently, Bradford Airport Logistics picks up the food from the terminal and transports it to their warehouse at the airport. The food is then picked up three days a week by Keep Austin Fed volunteers and taken to several Austin organizations that provide meals to the hungry. In 2019, 12,000 pounds of food was collected at ABIA. This food provided 10,000 meals.

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QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS:

What do I do with old trophies? Austin Creative Reuse Center will take these. Please call ahead to be sure they have room on their shelves.

Here is their website: <https://www.austincreativereuse.org/>

HOW DO I RECYCLE PLASTIC BAGS FROM SOIL AND COMPOST? Plastic bags designed to hold weight (soil, compost, litter and fertilizer) are treated with special polymers and this treatment makes these bags not recyclable. They must go into your trash can. Also, frozen food bags and pre-washed salad mix bags are also specially treated to keep food fresh and must be thrown into the trash can.

PLEASE REMEMBER – WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!!!

Here is an informative City of Austin recycling website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do>.

Stay tuned for future tips that will include creative ways to recycle or reuse. If you have any questions or recycling ideas, please send them to: recycling@hpwbana.org.



SWING Networking Group

Promote your business with local independent business owners. SWING (South west Austin Inclusive Networking Group) has been meeting every Thursday morning from 8AM to 9:30AM at the Waterloo Ice House on Escarpment for 14 years.

We have no dues, no initiation fees, we don't take attendance. Just pay for your own breakfast. The more often you show up the better we get to know you. We are an inclusive group, we will enjoy competition. So, bring your business cards and a good attitude and let's get to know you.

If you want more information, contact Liz Jensen at 512-301-6966 or lizleej@gmail.com or Peter Berardino (The King of SWING) at 512-695-2334 or peterberardino@gmail.com.

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Pollinators

— Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

There are many animal pollinators, most of those being insects. Probably the most well-known of pollinator insects are bees and more specifically, honeybees. Honeybees are pollinators, but only make up a small portion of the bee population around the world. Most bees are solitary and nest in the ground. Solitary bees are not aggressive and many are stingless, so people should not be afraid of them.



Butterflies and moths are also important pollinators. Unfortunately, due to habitat destruction and other factors, their populations are on the decline. If you want to provide habitat for butterflies and moths, you need to be sure to fulfill the requirements of all life stages. Host plants are needed for egg laying and caterpillar feeding; nectar plants are needed for adult feeding; and overwintering sites are needed for various stages.



Flies are an often-overlooked pollinator. With their poor reputation for carrying diseases, many people consider flies to be pests. Flies can be beneficial by fitting into food webs, breaking down waste material, feeding on some species of insects, and pollinating plants (including some food crops such as apples and peppers).

Ideas to help conserve pollinators:

- Plant native plants that provide nectar blooms spring, summer, and fall
 - o Provide a variety of colors
 - o Provide a variety of flower/ bloom shapes
 - o Provide multiple levels of plants (groundcover, shrubs, trees, etc.)
 - o Plant in clumps of the same plant to make it easier for pollinators to find them
- Reduce turf and replace with flowering plants
- Plant native bunch grasses to provide food and shelter for insects
- Allow fallen leaves to remain on property to provide shelter
- Create areas of bare soil for ground nesting bees (choose sunny areas that will provide dry soil)
- Use integrated pest management to reduce pesticide use
- Provide water in a SAFE manner for insects; use shallow dishes with rocks, stones, sand, or some substrate to allow insects to drink without drowning

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



COOKING SUBSTITUTIONS AID IN CALORIE REDUCTION

When looking to make permanent changes to a diet, consider using ingredient substitutions, said Roberta Anding, registered dietitian at BCM and Texas Children's Hospital.

Modifying the fat content in recipes gives the biggest calorie reduction, said Anding. Many times, applesauce can replace butter and oil in baking recipes, and Greek yogurt can replace sour cream.

Learning what substitutions work best does take some time and experimentation with cooking time and temperature, but reducing a diet by 100 calories per day can result in a 10-pound weight loss in one year, said Anding.

Other substitution options include switching to a low-fat cheese rather than a whole-fat cheese and switching from white bread and rice to wheat bread and brown rice. Not only is there a benefit in amounts of fiber, but also in magnesium, which can decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes.

"Don't look for extreme changes to your diet. Look for the common sense changes that you can make permanent," said Anding.

Watermelon Salad



- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 cups seeded watermelon chunks
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup mint chiffonade
- 2 cups baby arugula

Directions:

Add the white wine vinegar, lime zest and juice to a small bowl. Whisk in the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Add the thinly sliced red onion and let marinate for 5 to 10 minutes as you prepare the rest of the salad.

Add the watermelon, feta, mint, and arugula to a large bowl. Toss with the vinaigrette and serve immediately after dressing.

Recipe courtesy of The Neelys, www.foodnetwork.com

GO GREEN



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10 Easy Ways to Make Your Home Safe

A home should be a sanctuary and a safe haven. You can ensure that you and your loved ones remain out of harm's way in the precincts of your homestead.

To avoid all kinds of accidents you should make it an accident-proof dwelling. It's really simple if you observe specific steps to keep mishaps at bay.

Here are 10 easy ways to make your home safe and secure. These will help you take care and protect yourself, family members and house-guests. Employ these effective tips:

1. Keep interiors and exteriors well lit. This is important at nighttime and also in winters when daylight is not very effective. Critical areas that need to be illuminated are the stairs, outdoors and foyers.

2. Never leave electrical problems pending at any point. The slightest fluctuation should be attended immediately. Make it a cardinal rule to switch off appliances after use.

3. Smoke alarms are a necessity and you must have the very best. Practice regular safety drills with your family to ensure awareness of

procedures.

4. Keep ordinary appliances safely as they could be dangerous. Especially with kids around. Make electrical outlets safe by safety plugging and child proofing them. Keep sharp objects like scissors, knives, weapons and match boxes out of reach.

5. Ensure locks and bolts on doors and windows are in order and tamper-proof. Keep an eye out for suspicious characters and never invite strangers into your home. Teach your children not to entertain queries from strangers.

6. Do not share information about working or school hours. Teach family members to avoid telling people about schedules and routines. Do not put personal information online and never respond to voicemails.

7. The risk of accidents goes up when you are getting maintenance or repair work done. Ensure safety and precaution and be prepared to react quickly to accidents or injuries.

8. Do not attempt repair work of appliances involving undue risk. Many home accidents are the result of improper tampering with tools like lawnmowers and trimmers.

9. Maintain caution when driving vehicles in or out of your home. If you are backing the car up, watch out for children and pets on the road.

10. Make sure you don't leave stuff on stairs that may cause people to trip and fall. Be watchful when clearing snow from pathways that you do not heap it up in areas where people might walk.

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