

# THE OBSERVER/ ENTERPRISE

Serving Coke & Sterling Counties

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Friday, July 6, 2007

## Local "Support A Soldier" campaign ready to mail first packages

According to Pat Gunnells, local coordinator, the Support a Soldier campaign is preparing nine boxes of personal items to be mailed to our military in Iraq. Gunnells' grandson, Zac Lewis, is stationed in Iraq with the Army Second Division Airborne. Lewis communicated with his grandmother and compiled a list of the types of items that our service personnel were needing. Pat also gained some insight into the needs of our military from the anysoldier.com website.

The community has been very supportive in donating items listed below for the Southside Church of Christ project. If you would like to help, the types of items they are mailing to our military men and women are listed below, along with the cooperating businesses, who have the boxes in which donated items may be placed.

In addition to the items listed below, our military men and women are giving candy and soccer balls to the Iraqi children, if you would like to assist in this effort.

The soccer balls can be purchased deflated with a little pump; so more of them can be packed in the boxes.

### Women

Tampons/Pads, Moisturizing Cream (small bottles), Hydrating shampoo/conditioner (small bottles), Razors, Baby wipes (easily carried type), Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Small bar soap, Hair clips/bobby pins, Underwear Tube socks, Hard candy, Gum, Visine, Books, cards, board games, Movie DVD's (cheerful themes), Flashlights (easily carried types), Batteries for flashlights, Cup of Soups, Canned Meats, Jerky, Baggies to carry these things in, they put them in there pockets.

### Men

T-shirts Light Brown, Tube Socks, Flashlights/batteries, Snacks, Visine, Chapstick, Gum, Jerky, Cup of Soups, Underwear, Baby wipes (easily carried type), Movies DVD's (cheerful themes), Small bar soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Shampoo (small bottles), Razors, Games (card games, horseshoes, board games,



**Basketball Camp!** Students from Robert Lee and around the area participated in the Robert Lee Basketball Camp, the week of June 4-8. They worked on basketball fundamentals and had a great time competing for awards in the hot shot, free throw and layup contests.

hand held games), Hard Candy, Baggies.

The boxes are being put in the following businesses: Super H Foods, C & H Hardware, This and That Shop 1 & 2, Ivy Motor Co., Key's Feed Store, Coke County Library, Southside Church of Christ, Victory Assembly of God, Wild Cat Taxidermy, Robert Lee State Bank, June Dang Sandwich Shop, Especially for you Shop, and The United Methodist Church. If you

need a box, or want to contact anyone, call Pat Gunnells at 453-5503.

To contact a soldier visit [www.anysoldier.com](http://www.anysoldier.com). Any letters or cards to the troops supporting them can be put in the boxes also.

### 4-H County Camp slated for July 12-13

4-H multi-county camp will be held July 12-13, 2007, at Buffalo Gap. Any 4-H member 3rd grade through 8th grade is encouraged to attend. Deadline for registration is July 5. Please contact the Coke County Extension office at 453-2461 to register and obtain more information.

### Sid and Bernice Evans Scholarship to be awarded

The Bronte United Methodist Women announce that applications for the Sid and Bernice Evans Scholarship are now being accepted. The Evans were long-time members of the Bronte First United Methodist Church. The Scholarship Foundation has been established by their family.

The Scholarship is for students 20 years of age and older. Applications are available from Pat Martindale at the City Hall, 114 South Washington, Bronte.

Applications must be returned to the City Hall by July 6. The Scholarship recipient will be announced on July 18.

### RL Project Graduation meeting slated for Monday

There will be a Project Graduation 2008 meeting for Robert Lee High School senior parents on Monday, July 9, at 7 pm in the high school library. Plans will be made for the upcoming school year. All senior parents are urged to attend.

### Rabies Clinic at Bronte High School

Bronte FFA and Pioneer Vet Clinic will hold a rabies clinic on Thursday, July 12, from 4pm until 6pm at the Bronte High School foyer. All types of vaccinations for dogs and cats will be given. For further information, or for specialty items that the vets may need to bring, contact Pioneer Vet Clinic at 325-754-5487.

### Singing Winds to host tourney

There will be a 27 hole, two person golf tournament on July 21, 2007, at the Singing Winds Golf Course, Bronte, Texas. For more information, call 473-2156.

### Andrew Martin Blood Drive slated

Robert Lee Baptist Church will be sponsoring the Andrew Martin Benefit Blood Drive on Sunday, July 22 from 9 am - 1 pm. Andrew will receive credit toward his total hospital fees based on the number of units collected during the drive.

(Continued on next page)



**Summer Volleyball!** The Bronte 5th grade and 6th grade girls volleyball team recently completed the summer volleyball season at Central High School in San Angelo. The team includes (from left to right) Megan Yackley, Reagan Harris, Stacia Emfinger, Addie Rosson, Marley Braswell and Jensen Reed. Not pictured are Jessica Arthur, Savannah Arthur, Madison Harris and coaches Stephanie Emfinger and Leah Rosson.

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**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

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**Death Notices**

**Storie**

Word has been received of the death of MSgt. Ret. Gerald M. Storie on June 19, 2007. A memorial service was held Saturday, June 23, at Barnes and Johnson Funeral Home. At his request he was to be cremated and his ashes to be deposited in the Clawson family plot in Hayrick Memorial Cemetery in Robert Lee.

Jerry was survived by his wife, Mary Jo; two children, a son, Gary Frank and a daughter, Sherry Jean. Other survivors include a sister, Vera Storie; his stepmother, Faye Storie; and several nieces and nephews in Oklahoma and Missouri.

**...Andrew Martin**

(Continued from front page)

Ten to fifteen units could mean \$500. Two buses will be set up in the church parking lot to allow donors the freedom to come and go from morning church activities as needed.

In conjunction with the drive, a church-wide potluck luncheon will be held following the morning service.

Be a donor, worship the Lord, and bring your favorite dishes for a luncheon fellowship. Everyone who has already gotten an appointment to donate blood in honor of Andrew Martin on July 22 is appreciated. There is room for 37 more appointments, so pray about it, consider a time that is good for you, and contact Becky at 453-2724 or rlbaptist1904@wtxs.net to schedule.

Please feel free to share this with anyone who might be a possible donor. This special little boy and the family will need all the help and prayers that they can get.

**Runnels County to host Conservation Tillage Conference**

The Runnels County Conservation Tillage Conference, presented by Texas Cooperative Extension, will start at 8 am, July 6 at St. Mary's Hall in Ballinger. Key topics will include

"Ethanol and the Future of Grain in the Southern Rolling Plains" and "Economics of Bio-Fuels and Developments in the New Farm Bill".

Other talks will be on herbicide weed resistance, soil insects and soils analysis methods.

Two Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be offered.

The program is free and open to the public. Complimentary lunch will be at 12:15 pm.

For more information call 325-365-2219.

**West Texas Wind Energy Trade Fair slated**

The 3rd Annual West Texas Wind Energy Trade Fair is set for Tuesday, July 10 through Thursday, July 12 at Trent ISD in Trent, Texas. The fair will kick off on Tuesday with the Small Wind portion (small turbines for home, ranch and school use). There will be an all day seminar on turbine choices, interconnection, economics, case studies and much more. Wednesday, July 11, is slated as Mega Wind Day. The latest on large developments and utility-scale turbines will be discussed. There will be a variety of topics and seminars to satisfy everyone. Registrations will be between 7:30 am and 9:15 am. There will also be a Texas BBQ lunch from 11:45 am until 1 pm. The topics and individual seminars and times are listed below.

**Wind Energy 101**  
 9:15 am - 10:15 am, West

Texas Wind Update; 10:20 am - 11:20 am, Transmission Update; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Landowners Perspectives; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Development Initiative Case Study; 4 pm - 5 pm, Developer Perspective

**Wind Operations**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, Development Issues; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Transmission Grid Issues; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Construction Issues; 4 pm - 5 pm, Operations Issues

**Landowner Legal Issues**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm and 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Attorneys' Q&A

**Counties**

10:20 am - 11:20 pm and 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, County Perspectives; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, County Initiatives Case Study

**Schools**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, Schools Panel; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Attorneys' School Q&A; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, School District Case Study

**Industrial Development**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, Workforce Training; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Texas Industry Case Studies; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Texas Manufacturing; 4 pm - 5 pm, Texas Economic Development

**Policy**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, Federal Policy; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Transmission Action Update; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Broader Renewable Energy; 4 pm - 5 pm, Texas Policy

**Emergency Response**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, Regional Response Issues; 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm, Regional Response Capabilities; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm, Best Practices Roundtable; 4 pm - 5 pm, Landing Zone Operations

**CPR Certification**

10:20 am - 11:20 am, 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm; 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm and 4 pm - 5 pm, CPR/First Aid Training.

Wind Ranch Tours will be held on Thursday, July 12. For more information on the fair, go to [www.westtexaswind.us](http://www.westtexaswind.us).

Robert Lee is hoping to host a booth at the fair and are looking for some volunteers to man it. If you are interested, call Beth Prather at 453-2495.

**WCCHD Board Meeting minutes**

By Pat Stephens

The West Coke County Hospital District Board of Directors met in regular session on Thursday, June 21, 2007, in the conference room of the Care Center. Members present were Mary Bessent, Dessie Kendall, Mike Lomas, Marilyn White, and Pat Stephens. Others present were Cy Jenkins, Administrator, Jan Magness, Human Resources Manager, and Janie Munoz, Business Office Manager. President Bessent called the meeting to order, and Cy Jenkins gave the invocation. There were no visitors present, and no absent Board Members. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

An in-depth discussion of accounting followed as the Board expressed concern about the reconciliation of the monthly statements. The Board requested the statements be reconciled every month, the books closed by the 15th, and Board packets be made available in a timely manner.

Progress on the Alzheimer's unit was discussed, and the Board was made aware of training available for staff to be considered at a future date. Marilyn White reported the planter box, discussed at an earlier

meeting, has been built for the beautification of the unit, and the enjoyment of residents, staff, and visitors.

Cy Jenkins gave an update on the new lift, saying the video has been viewed, and staff training for use of the lift is in progress. The new steam table has been installed, and the kitchen staff reports it is very functional and they are enjoying it very much.

The date for the completion of the employee handbook, as well as the Board Policy book, is pending. Cy reports he hopes to have all information in place for the Board to review shortly after the first of July.

Mike Lomas made a motion, seconded by Dessie Kendall, for the Board to abide by, and support the open records act. Motion passed.

The Board broke for lunch at 11:42 am, and reconvened at 12:15 pm.

After lunch, the Board voted unanimously to contact the law firm of Clark, Thomas, and Winters, regarding the accounts receivable and collection process and development of the Care Center. The financial reports were accepted, and Cy Jenkins gave his administrator's report.

Future agenda items were discussed, and the next meeting date was selected. The Board will meet Monday, July 30, 2007. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.

**Area Churches  
 Invite You to Worship**

**Bronte Church of Christ**  
 PO Box 346 • 118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
 (325) 473-3291  
 Preacher John V. Driggers  
 Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

**Central Baptist Church**  
 324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
 (325) 473-4811  
 Dale Patterson, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am & 6 pm Worship  
 Wed. 6 pm

**Emmanuel Pentecostal**  
 PO Box 683 • 1019 Colorado City Hwy  
 Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2360  
 Rev. Ray Aldridge, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

**First Baptist Church**  
 424 S. Washington • Bronte  
 (325) 473-2331  
 Bro. Morris Johnson, Pastor  
 Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,  
 10:55 am Worship,  
 6 pm Youth and Worship  
 Wednesday 7 pm Prayer Meeting

**First United Methodist Church**  
 PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne,  
 Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2417  
 Rev. George Bradley, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am Worship  
 Wed. 7 pm Choir

**Iglesia Bautista Bethel**  
 101 Houston • Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-5003 • 453-2296  
 Pastor: Basilio Esquivel  
 Sun. 9:45, 11:00, & 11:30 am  
 & 6 pm, Wednesday 7 pm

**St. James Catholic Church**  
 215 N. Washington, Bronte  
 (325) 365-2687  
 Rev. Hubert Wade, Jr., Pastor  
 Sun. 5 pm

**Southside Church of Christ**  
 PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
 Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2176  
 Frank J. Daniels, Preacher  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 7 pm, Worship

**Northside Church of Christ**  
 PO Box 388 • 9th & Chadbourne  
 Robert Lee  
 (325) 655-9784 or 453-2685  
 Portis Ribble, Minister  
 Services: Sun. 10 am & 1:30 pm;  
 Wed. 6 pm

**Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church**  
 601 W. 10th, Robert Lee  
 (325) 365-2687  
 Rev. Hubert Wade, Jr., Pastor  
 Sat. 6 pm

**Pecan Baptist**  
 PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of  
 Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy  
 (325) 453-2004  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship

**Robert Lee Baptist Church**  
 PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th  
 (325) 453-2724  
 Jason Martin, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting

**Tennyson Baptist Church**  
 Hwy 277 • Tennyson  
 Joe Hodges, Pastor  
 (325) 473-2040  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 11:00 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting


**Victory Assembly of God**  
 PO Box 638 • 6th & Houston  
 Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2208  
 Rev. Irving Smith, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting

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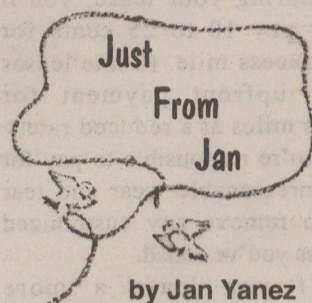
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**Baptism!** Robert Lee Baptist Church held baptismal services recently at Lake Spence. Those who were baptized include (back row, left to right) Wes Henson, Bro. Jason Martin, Erika Sheldon, David Sheldon, Jodi Sheldon (front row, left to right) Sydney Sheldon, Luke Sheldon, Taylor Sheldon and Brandi Sheldon.



by Jan Yanez  
Cooperative  
Extension Agent

**Health and Safety  
Tips While Hiking**

Hiking and camping provide exercise and interest for people of any age. Just getting out and walking around is a wonderful way to see nature. Since unexpected things happen, however, the best way to help guarantee a good time for all is to plan ahead carefully and follow commonsense safety precautions.

\* If you have any medical conditions, discuss your plans with your health care provider and get approval before departing.

\* Review the equipment, supplies and skills that you'll need. Consider what emergencies could arise and how you would deal with those situations. What if you got lost, or were unexpectedly confronted by an animal? What if someone became ill or injured? What kind of weather might you encounter? Add to your hiking checklist the supplies you would need to deal with these situations.

\* Make sure you have the skills you need for your camping or hiking adventure. You may need to know how to read a compass, erect a temporary shelter or give first aid. Practice your skills in advance.

\* If your trip will be strenuous, get into good physical condition before setting out. If you plan to climb or travel to high altitudes, make plans for proper acclimatization to the altitude.

\* It's safest to hike or camp with at least one companion. If you'll be entering a remote

area, your group should have a minimum of four people; this way, if one is hurt, another can stay with the victim while two go for help. If you'll be going into an area that is unfamiliar to you, take along someone who knows the area or at least speak with those who do before you set out.

\* Some areas require you to have reservations or certain permits. If an area is closed, do not go there. Find out in advance about any regulations--there may be rules about campfires or guidelines about wildlife.

\* Pack emergency signaling devices, and know ahead of time the location of the nearest telephone or ranger station in case an emergency does occur on your trip.

\* Leave a copy of your itinerary with a responsible person. Include such details as the make, year, and license plate of your car, the equipment you're bringing, the weather you've anticipated and when you plan to return.

Here are some things to be sure and bring while hiking.

What you take will depend on where you are going and how long you plan to be away, but any backpack should include the following:

- \* Candle and matches
- \* Cell phone
- \* Clothing (always bring something warm, extra socks and rain gear)
- \* Compass
- \* First aid kit
- \* Food (bring extra)
- \* Flashlight
- \* Foil (to use as a cup or signaling device)
- \* Hat
- \* Insect repellent
- \* Map
- \* Nylon filament
- \* Pocket knife
- \* Pocket mirror (to use as a signaling device)
- \* Prescription glasses (an extra pair)
- \* Prescription medications for ongoing medical conditions
- \* Radio with batteries
- \* Space blanket or a piece

of plastic (to use for warmth or shelter)

- \* Sunglasses
- \* Sunscreen
- \* Trash bag (makes an adequate poncho)
- \* Water, Waterproof matches or matches in a waterproof tin
- \* Water purification tablets
- \* Whistle (to scare off animals or to use as a signaling device)

Always allow for bad weather and for the possibility that you may be forced to spend a night outdoors unexpectedly.

It's a good idea to assemble a separate "survival pack" for each hiker to have at all times. In a small waterproof container, place a pocket-knife, compass, whistle, space blanket, nylon filament, water purification tablets, matches and candle. With these items, the chances of being able to survive in the wild are greatly improved.

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Cans

**Light**

**\$12.39**



Reg., Light or Select

**Budweiser**

18 Pack  
Cans

**Beer**

**\$12.39**



### Bronte Board of Trustees Meet

The Bronte ISD Board of Trustees held a special meeting on June 26, 2007, at 8:00 pm. Those in attendance were Wayne Coalson, Jeff Schoenfield, Quinda Feil-Duncan, Terry Charles, Kendall Gibbs, Bob Frazee, and Alan Richey, Superintendent. Also present were Donna Poehls, Michael Bohensky, and Terry Marrs. Absent was Scot Frasier.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Terry Marrs.

Donna Poehls, Assistant Elementary Principal; Michael Bohensky, Assistant Secondary Principal; and Terry Marrs, K-12 Principal, reported TAKS results. Discussion was held on the Home Economics Program.

Alan Richey, Superintendent, reported on Budget items for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school years. The Board was informed of the resignations of Terri Frazee, Linda Dagenhart, and Kathy James. Mr. Richey also gave an update on summer projects.

Bronte ISD offices will be closed the week of July 2-6, 2007.

The meeting was adjourned by the President at 11:48 pm.

### Long Hours Outdoors Increase Risk for Skin Cancer

Sports and outdoor activities are daily events for children attending camp. If children are not properly protected, the time they spend outdoors leads to painful sunburns, premature aging and skin cancer.

"Just one blistering sunburn in childhood can double the risk of getting melanoma later in life," said Perry Robins, MD, President of The Skin Cancer Foundation. "That risk can be avoided by following some simple sun safety guidelines."

To find out if a camp is sun safe, the Foundation recommends asking the following five questions:

-- Are counselors trained in sun safety? UV protection should be a regular part of the training counselors receive. They should be well versed about the dangers of the sun and how to protect against them.

-- When are outdoor activities scheduled? Ideally, most should be scheduled for early morning or late afternoon since UV is most intense from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

-- Does the camp have adequate shade structures? While large shade trees provide some protection, a truly sun-safe camp should have structures such as pavilions where campers can seek shade during outdoor activities.

-- Are campers directed to apply sunscreen before going outside? A SPF 15+

sunscreen (water-resistant formulas are especially good) needs to be used regularly. Campers and staff should be instructed to bring it from home, apply it 30 minutes before outdoor activities, and reapply every 2 hours and right after swimming or sweating. The camp should also have a supply.

-- Are campers urged to wear protective clothing? Historically, campers wore only a T-shirt, shorts, and perhaps a baseball cap. We now know that's not enough. Children should wear sun-protective clothing including long pants (or at least shorts); long-sleeved shirts, UV-protective sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat to protect their face, neck and ears.

With proper guidance, children can learn to protect themselves and enjoy summer fun without sacrificing the health of their skin. For additional information, visit [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org) or call 1-800-SKIN-490.

### Summer Months Provide Youth with Opportunities to Start Abusing Drugs

School's out and there is a feeling of freedom in the air. For some teens this means spending time with old friends and meeting new ones. For others this means no adult supervision and plenty of opportunities to find and use drugs or alcohol. Statistics show that many of our teens are doing just that.

Every day during summer vacation, an average of 6,000 youth try marijuana for the first time. Twenty-four percent of teens drink alcohol for the first time during summer break. Unfortunately, for many, drug or alcohol abuse does not stop there.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, one in ten of our children aged 12-17 binge drink each month. Eighty-three percent of high school seniors state that it is "easy to get" marijuana and nearly 40% of them smoked it in 2005. In 2001, almost 3 million youths aged 12-17 had used prescription-type drugs nonmedically at least once in their lifetime.

All told, a full 50% of high school students have used an illegal drug by the time they graduate, more than 20% of them starting in eighth grade.

"Do you think drug dealers have missed the fact that

school-aged children have plenty of free time during the summer?" asks Ryan Thorpe, Director of Admissions at Narconon Arrowhead, one of the country's leading drug and alcohol rehabilitation and education centers located in Canadian, Oklahoma. "Statistics show higher initial drug and alcohol use in the summer. The Drug Enforcement Agency reports increased sales of club drugs-most popular among teens and young adults-during the summer months, and marijuana availability increases because domestically grown plants flourish in the warmer months. This is a critical time for parents to educate themselves and their children on the dangers of drugs and addiction. This is why we are making the Healing Addicted Lives booklet available to parents at no charge. We want parents to truly understand how addiction occurs so they can use this knowledge to effectively educate their children on the problem".

To receive your own copy of Healing Addicted Lives at no charge, call 1-800-468-6933 today or visit the website [www.healingaddictedlives.com](http://www.healingaddictedlives.com).

### Hot weather driving tips

With summer's arrival on June 21st, can overheated cars be far behind? "Hot weather brings unique challenges," cautioned Ray Palermo, director of public relations for Response Insurance, a national car insurer. "It can present dangerous conditions for both the vehicle and its occupants." Each summer more than 7 million cars break down on the road, but he suggested that most breakdowns could easily be avoided.

Before heading out be sure you check out the basics, including: oil, transmission fluid, windshield washer, battery level and strength, tire pressure (including the spare), cooling system (which should be flushed and refilled at least every two years), belts, and hoses, and a well equipped emergency kit and tool box.

"Drivers need to stay cool as well," noted Palermo. "Our national driving habits surveys have shown that 75% of drivers are fearful of encountering road rage and 37% said they had personally experienced it in the previous six months." Do not escalate aggression on the road by responding to it. Take along moist towelettes and water to refresh yourself, and stop to stretch and relax.

When driving in hot weather, it is particularly important to keep an eye on

the lights and gauges. If your temperature gauge moves up, turn off your air conditioner and turn on the heater to its highest and hottest setting. It will be uncomfortable, but it will help draw some of the heat away from the engine.

If you are stopped in traffic, put the car in "park" and lightly step on the gas to help circulate coolant.

If the temperature light goes on or if the gauge enters the red zone, immediately pull off the road to a safe spot, well away from traffic. Do not drive any further - not even to the next exit. Driving with an overheated engine can cause serious damage to the engine.

Do not attempt to remove the radiator cap itself. The hot, pressurized coolant will spray out with great force. Do not pour water over the radiator or engine, since a dramatic change in temperature could cause damage. After the engine cools, add a 50-50 mix of coolant and water to the reservoir to bring it up to its proper level.

Even when not stranded due to a breakdown, summer heat can pose dangers. Never leave a child or pet in a parked car. Even an outside temperature in the 80's can quickly bring a car interior to lethal levels.

Bring a cell phone for emergency calls, but do not use it while driving.

More information on this and other travel topics can be found at [www.response.com/safety](http://www.response.com/safety).

### Know when to lease or buy a car

By Jason Alderman

When it comes to getting a new car, many people wrestle with whether to lease or buy. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages, so it's important to understand your needs and payment habits before signing on the dotted line.

With a loan, you borrow money to purchase the car then own it once the loan is paid off. With a lease, however, you agree to pay a leasing agency (a lender often identified through the car dealer or manufacturer) to use the car during the lease period - but you're never the owner unless you decide to buy it after the lease ends.

Leasing advantages. Some people prefer to lease because monthly payments and upfront costs can be significantly less than with a

loan; thus, they can either budget less for transportation or drive a more expensive car. Many who lease prefer driving a new car every few years, don't mind permanent monthly payments and like that the car is usually under full warranty throughout the lease.

And, if you use the car for business, you can usually deduct depreciation and interest from your taxes - not so when you purchase outright.

Leasing does have potential downsides, however:

\* It's often difficult and expensive to get out of a lease, so if you think your income or employment status may change dramatically, tread carefully (for example, should you lose your job, retire, get sick, etc.)

\* Standard mileage allowances are typically 12,000 to 15,000 miles annually. If you average more than that per year during your lease, you'll likely pay 10 to 25 cents for each excess mile. (Some leases allow upfront payment for excess miles at a reduced rate.)

\* You're responsible to pay for any unreasonable wear and tear and to remove any customized features you've added.

\* If you lease a more expensive car, your insurance costs likely will be higher. And remember bigger cars usually get worse gas mileage.

If you do decide to lease, always try to negotiate a lower initial sales price for the car, because your monthly lease payment is largely based on the difference between this price and what the leasing agency thinks it can sell the car for when the lease expires. Thus, the smaller the difference between those two costs, the better for you.

Compare leasing packages from multiple dealers and leasing agencies, and don't hesitate to arrange your own financing. A dealer may be willing to find you similar or better financing to get your business.

If you think you might want to buy the car when the lease ends, check how much comparable used cars cost at sites such as Kelly Blue Book ([www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com)), [www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com), and [www.cars.com](http://www.cars.com), to make sure you get a good deal. And don't be afraid to offer less - the lender may have a glut of cars to sell and be receptive to your offer.

So bottom line: Weigh the choice between leasing and owning carefully to make sure you pick the right option for your situation.

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### Ten Tips To Avoid Being Targeted By Email Scams

Sometimes it seems that nearly every email you receive is either junk mail or a scam trying to separate you from your hard-earned cash.

Some of the more nefarious emails are known as 'spoof' emails that lead consumers to counterfeit Web sites designed to trick them into divulging financial data such as credit card numbers or other sensitive account information.

"With the growing complexity of online fraud and brand abuse on the Internet, it has become increasingly difficult for consumers and email account holders to identify fraudulent mail and they are often times subject to attack simply by opening the email," said Hugh Hyndman, the Chief Technology Officer at BrandProtect, an online brand protection company.

To help protect email account holders from being targeted by these types of email scams, the experts at BrandProtect are offering ten ways to help avoid having your email account compromised:

- \* Avoid entering your email address on mass email sites, such as some newsletters, "Joke of the Day" emails and coupon distributions.

- \* Do not click on unknown emails you receive. Spam emails can contain reply scripts that inform spammers that your email account is active -- and that you click on links!

- \* Stay clear of chain emails and do not reply to any you receive. Often times, these can be illegitimately sent from an email account address book.

- \* Avoid publicly listing your email address on any Internet forums.

- \* Do not participate in sending any mass forwarded emails. You don't know who your email address can be passed along to in the chain.

- \* Set up a spam filter that will weed out emails with malicious coding.

- \* Use an alternate email address for your banking information that you do not share elsewhere. This will help you to avoid confusion when receiving inbound emails regarding banking accounts and also better protect your personal information.

- \* Use a separate low-limit credit card for online transactions. If the information is 'hijacked' somehow, there is low credit limit to which fraudulent charges can be made.

- \* Avoid the checkboxes during any online transaction. These boxes are often pre-selected, including your email on a mailing distribution or permitting it to be 'shared.'

- \* Be proactive and stay aware of current email

scams. Many organizations and technology publications report on current trends and spreading emails scams.

To learn more about how to protect your personal information or your company's brand from online infractions, visit [www.brandprotect.com](http://www.brandprotect.com).

### How To Save At The Gas Pump

Sometimes it seems that gas prices only rise and never fall. While this is not entirely true, during peak summer driving season gas prices usually are their highest.

With the goal of helping drivers save at the gas pump while helping to save the environment by driving more fuel efficiently, the Alliance to Save Energy is offering these tips:

- \* Maintain your vehicle. Fixing a faulty oxygen sensor can improve mileage by as much as 40 percent. Fixing a car that is noticeably out of tune or has failed an emissions test can improve its gas mileage by an average of four percent.

- \* Keep your tires properly inflated to improve gas mileage by around 3.3 percent and also improve safety and tire life.

- \* Use the manufacturer's recommended grade of motor oil to improve gas mileage by one to two percent. Also, look for motor oil that says "Energy Conserving" on the API performance symbol to be sure it contains friction-reducing additives.

- \* Avoid idling, which gets zero miles-per-gallon. Cars with larger engines typically waste even more gas while idling than cars with smaller engines.

- \* Obey the speed limit. It's safer and less expensive. Gas mileage usually decreases rapidly above 60 miles per hour (mph). As a rule of thumb, each five mph over 60 mph is like paying an additional 20 cents per gallon for gas.

- \* Curtail "road rage" or aggressive driving. Speeding, rapid acceleration and braking can lower gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds and five percent around town. Sensible driving is safer, too -- so you may save more than gas money.

- \* Use cruise control to help cut fuel consumption by maintaining a steady speed during highway driving.

- \* Are you carrying around too much excess "baggage?" Pack lightly when traveling, and avoid carrying items on

your vehicle's roof. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk cuts a typical car's fuel economy by up to two percent.

- \* Combine errands into one trip to drive fewer miles, use less fuel, and reduce wear and tear on your vehicle. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as a longer, multipurpose trip when the engine is warmed-up and efficient.

- \* Investigate other options for getting to work and other places -- carpooling, ride-sharing, public transportation, biking, walking.

- \* Telecommute or stagger work hours if your employer permits, to avoid sitting in traffic and wasting gas, especially during peak rush hours.

- \* If you own more than one vehicle, drive the one that gets better gas mileage whenever possible. If you drive 15,000 miles a year, driving a car that gets 20 mpg rather than 30 mpg will cost you \$1000 or more this year.

- \* Buying, leasing, or renting a vehicle? Select a model that gets better fuel economy. Check out [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov), for information on fuel-efficient vehicles.

- \* Take advantage of 2007 federal income tax credits that reduce what you owe to Uncle Sam or increase your tax refund by \$250 to \$3,400 for purchases of hybrid-electric or diesel vehicles. Amounts are based on the vehicle's efficiency and fuel savings.

For more information about saving energy in your home, office or car, visit [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org).

### How To Find A Summer Job

Hitting the pavement and the phone to search for a summer job was another rite of passage for most of us growing up. Today these searches can include pounding the computer keys online, but for the most part, finding a summer job is as tough as it ever was.

"The best way to find a summer job depends largely upon the type of job for which you're searching," says Steven Rothberg, President and Founder of [CollegeRecruiter.com](http://CollegeRecruiter.com), a Web site for student job-hunters.

"If you're looking for a retail or fast food type of a job, walk into the store during their slow time and ask to speak with a manager," he advises. "Get their business card or write down their name, fill in their employ-

ment application, attach a copy of your resume, and then mail a thank you note to the manager the same day. Then follow-up by phone on the day they told you that they'd have a decision."

If you're hunting for a more professional position, apply online and network with current employees in the department you're targeting, suggests Rothberg. You can even take some of them out for coffee or lunch to learn how they got their job, if you're really adventurous and they're willing to help.

For more resources for student job-seekers, visit [www.CollegeRecruiter.com](http://www.CollegeRecruiter.com).

### Stay Safe When Traveling On Vacation

A vacation should be a time for family fun and new experiences, and taking some basic safety precautions can help make your next trip a successful one.

Over two million people will travel domestically this year, with the majority of leisure travel occurring in the summer months.

When choosing the perfect vacation and planning family activities, it is important to incorporate some basic safety measures. From securing your home to boarding the plane and checking-in to the hotel, there are a few simple actions every individual or family can take to secure their belongings and themselves.

The experts at Universal Protection Service, a security services company, recommend the following safety tips when planning a summer vacation:

- \* Provide family/friends with your contact information, emergency plans and itinerary.

- \* Before leaving your home, make sure it is secure and ask a neighbor to check your home every few days and collect your mail.

- \* Create a wallet-sized card that includes the medical information of each traveler.

- \* When making hotel reservations, request a room near the elevator, since this area is typically the safest.

- \* Identify the fire safety information and evacuation routes when arriving at your hotel room.

- \* If using a taxi, obtain a list of licensed companies from the airport or hotel and never get into an unmarked cab.

- \* Stay with your luggage at all times and maintain a clear view of your belongings during airport screening processes, while on the plane and at the hotel check-in.

- \* If traveling abroad, check with the U.S. Department of State for travel warnings.

- \* Know how to contact the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate and keep this information in several different places.

With just a little advance safety planning you can help make your vacation more relaxed; and isn't that what a vacation is all about?

### How To Choose A Cell Phone Plan

It seems like ads for cell phones are truly everywhere with some claims sounding too good to be true.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is offering tips on what to ask when choosing a cell phone:

Who will be using it? If the phone is for business, consider a Personal Digital Assistant or speaker phone. For teens you may want to consider text messaging capability or games.

Where will you be calling to and from? Will you be making mainly local, long distance, international calls or a combination?

What time of day and which days of the week will see heaviest usage? How many minutes a month will you use it? Will family members call one another primarily on cell phones?

What type of plan meets your budget? Does a local, regional, national or family plan make most sense? What are monthly fees based on? How are "peak" calling times and "local" calling areas defined? What minutes are included monthly, and can you "roll over" extra ones?

Check online and in stores for promotions. If a rebate is offered, what are the terms? If extra phones are included, what fees apply? Does the contract permit you to switch plans or upgrade phones?

Don't make a decision without checking cancellation and return policies. There are plans that will let you try a phone for several days without a cancellation fee. Lastly, obtain a BBB report ([www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)) on the provider.



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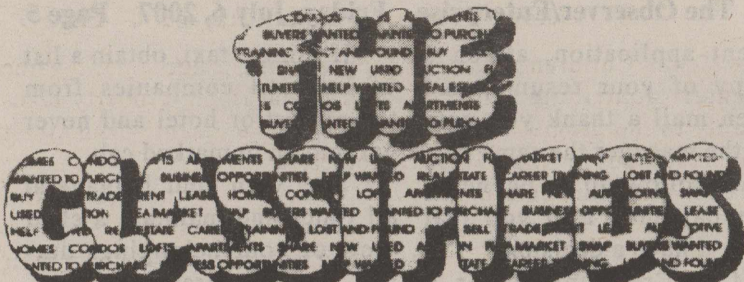
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**FOR RENT**

2 bedroom, 1 bath house in Robert Lee. FMI call Ray Aldridge. 453-2360. 49-tnc

**TAKING APPLICATIONS**  
 for one, two & three bedroom apartments. Washers, dryers, RO water systems in each unit. Contact Housing Authority of Robert Lee, 710 N. Bishop, 453-2912. Equal Housing Opportunity. 16-eow

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**FARM FRESH**  
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**LAWN CARE SERVICE**  
 Large or small. Robert Lee/Bronte area. 453-2329. 50-2tc

**THE "BARBER" SHOP**  
 Debora England, 107 W. Main, Bronte. 650-1970. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. 9 am - 5 pm. 33-tnc

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**PARKER PLUMBING**  
 Residential & Commercial. All types plumbing repair - new construction, remodeling, fixtures, and sewer service. Licensed Master Plumber. 473-2131, Bronte. 34-tnc

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**HELP WANTED**  
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**MAINTENANCE POSITION AVAILABLE**  
 The Colorado River Municipal Water District has an opening for a Maintenance Worker at E. V. Spence Reservoir. A CDL license and mechanical experience are helpful. District benefits include paid vacation and holidays, sick leave, retirement plan, and group insurance. The CRMWD is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Applications are required to be considered for employment and are available at the District's office, 400 East 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas or by calling 432-267-6341 or 325-453-2811. 50-3tc

**GARAGE SALES**

**YARD SALE**  
 9 W. 16th, Robert Lee - July 6 & 7 @ 7:30am - 3:00pm. Due to NO air conditioning, JuneDang's Sandwich Shop & Book Store is going out of business. Items for sale prior to yard sale at business (403 W. 10th): gas stove \$65, Counter w/ 3 sinks \$75, card display \$25, table & 4 chairs \$75, picnic tables \$20 each. Yard Sale Items: microwave, dishes, flatware, pots, pans, books, knick-knacks, filing cabinet, entertainment center, some clothes & lots of miscellaneous items. No Early Birds at yard sale PLEASE. 50-1tp

**MOVING SALE**  
 Furniture, TV, clothes, dishes, bedroom set. Too much to list. Saturday, July 7. 8 am to 3 pm. 222 NE Railroad, Bronte. 50-1tp

**GARAGE SALE**  
 Friday, Saturday & Sunday, July 6, 7, & 8. 506 W. 9th Robert Lee, 3 families. Furniture, tools, lots of clothes (all sizes) from children to plus sizes, toys, dishes, misc. 50-1tpw

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**MOVING SALE**  
 103 Parkwood, Bronte. Saturday only. 8am-???. 50-1tp

**CARD OF THANKS**

**THANK YOU**  
 so much for the flowers, cards, memorials, food, and prayers that we have received for the loss of Clay Antilley. The numerous special friends who showed their love and devotion during this sorrowful time cannot be thanked enough. Clay was fortunate to have touched the lives of so many true friends who supported him and for that we express our sincere appreciation. Clay would have loved to see all of them together in his honor. A special thanks goes to Robert Lee Baptist Church for the wonderful meal.  
 Tommy, Kei, Scott and Casey Antilley 50-1tp

**NOTICES**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 CITY OF ROBERT LEE PUBLISHES WATER QUALITY REPORT  
 In accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, a Consumer Confidence Report has been prepared for distribution to customers of the City of Robert Lee. The report was mailed on 6-25-07. Copies are available at City Hall. 50-1tc

**Things To Think About**  
 1. The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.  
 2. Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness

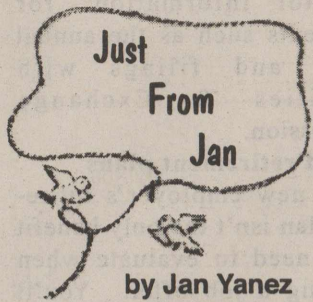
- will make him wag his tail.
- 3. If you don't have a sense of humor, you probably don't have any sense at all.
- 4. Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.
- 5. A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
- 6. How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?
- 7. Business conventions are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.
- 8. Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?
- 9. Scratch a dog and you'll find a permanent job.
- 10. No one has more driving ambition than the boy who wants to buy a car.
- 11. There are no new sins; the old ones just get more publicity.
- 12. There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 A.M. It could be a right number.
- 13. Think about this...No one ever says "It's only a game" when his team is winning.
- 14. I've reached the age where the happy hour is a nap.
- 15. Be careful reading the fine print. There's no way you're going to like it.
- 16. The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.
- 17. Do you realize that in about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos? (And RAP music will be the Golden Oldies!)
- 18. Money can't buy happiness--but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Corvette than in a Yugo.
- 19. After a certain age, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you are probably dead.

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- Large 4 Bedroom **Under Contract** as office! Located on Acreage! \$90's!!!
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by Jan Yanez  
Cooperative  
Extension Agent

### Freezing Produce Preserves Taste of the Seasons

Ever get hungry for produce that is out of season? Want to preserve some of that flavor for the times of the year when it's unavailable? Look no further than your home freezer.

Freezing is a simple and fast method of home food preservation that maintains the natural color, fresh flavor and nutrient value of most fruits and vegetables.

But it is not just a matter of tossing a few peaches or plums into the freezer. The quality of each frozen product is affected by the freshness of the product used, the methods of preparation, the packaging and the freezing conditions.

Here are some tips:

\* Choose the highest quality produce available for freezing, because "the quality of the food coming out of the freezer will be no better than the quality of the food before it was frozen."

\* Preparation should be done carefully and quickly to help control the growth of bacteria, yeasts and molds and stop the chemical actions of enzymes.

\* Proper packaging helps protect the frozen foods from moisture loss and preserves nutrition, flavor, color and texture. Suitable containers for freezing include wide-mouth can-or-freeze glass jars, freezer-quality plastic containers, freezer bags placed inside freezer cardboard containers and freezer-grade self-lock plastic bags. Containers should be labeled with the name of the food and the date it was frozen.

\* For maximum efficiency, "do not overload the freezer with unfrozen food. Add only the amounts that will freeze within 24 hours--usually two to three pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer space.

\* While food that is frozen is preserved for longer storage, it won't last indefinitely. Use food first that has been stored the longest. Thaw food properly, ideally in the refrigerator, and use immediately after thawing. Since bacteria are not killed by freezing, they will become active as the food thaws.

Fruits that can be successfully frozen include: apples and applesauce, apricots, avocados, berries, cranberries, cantaloupe, cherries, citrus fruits and juices, figs, fruit cocktail, grapes,

peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple, plums and strawberries.

Some vegetables that can be successfully frozen are asparagus, beans of several varieties, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, eggplant, greens, okra, onions, peas, peppers, pimientos, potatoes- both sweet and Irish, pumpkin, rhubarb, squash, tomatoes and tomato juice, and turnips.

For directions on how to choose and prepare specific kinds of produce for the freezer, contact Jan Yanez, Coke County Extension Agent, and ask for publication L-2215, or visit the Website at <http://agpublications.tamu.edu/catalog/idenx.html>, click on the link to Foods and scroll down to "Freezing Fruits and Vegetables" (under the subheading, Preservation).

### Texans are Working to Find a Cure

By Kay Bailey Hutchison  
You may know someone, perhaps a loved one, whose life was cut short by cancer. Each year in Texas, an estimated 35,000 people die of this devastating disease, and 85,000 new cases are diagnosed. These are heart breaking statistics. However, it is also likely that you know people who have won their battle with cancer. Early diagnosis and better public awareness have increased cancer survival rates in recent years.

When I was a young woman, breast cancer and cervical cancer simply weren't talked about publicly. But thankfully, in the early 1980s, a courageous woman from Dallas named Nancy Brinker was determined to break that deadly silence. Nancy had lost her sister, Susan G. Komen, to breast cancer, and she was convinced that Susan's outcome would have been better if patients knew more about cancer prevention and treatment. She made a promise to

her sister that she would find a way to speed up breast cancer research. In 1982, I was present when Nancy honored that promise by creating The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

In the 25 years since that historic meeting, Komen has dedicated nearly \$1 billion to building public awareness and finding a cure for breast cancer, making it the nation's largest private funding source for breast cancer. And Komen has pledged to invest an additional \$1 billion in education, community health programs and research in the next decade. For all of these reasons and more, this year, I was pleased to introduce a Senate resolution congratulating Komen on its silver anniversary and many years of life-saving work.

In addition to Komen, non-profit organizations like the American Cancer Society, the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation and the Lance Armstrong Foundation have significantly increased public awareness about the need for early and regular screenings, and have also raised billions of dollars for cancer research.

Many of those research dollars are being poured into Texas hospitals and research institutions. In fact, Texas has become one of the global leaders in cancer research, and it's possible that the cure for cancer could eventually be discovered right here in our state.

The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston is the nation's leading recipient of National Cancer Institute (NCI) research grants and has been working to eliminate cancer for more than six decades. M.D. Anderson has ranked as one of the top two hospitals in cancer care every year since U.S. News & World Report began its annual "America's Best Hospitals" survey in 1990. Other influential Texas institutions like The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and

the Texas Children's Cancer Center contribute significantly to the progress of cancer research in the United States and throughout the world.

As your U.S. Senator, I am proud to do my part at the federal level. Earlier this year, I worked with my Senate colleagues to reauthorize and increase funding for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, which has provided nearly 6.9 million screening exams for disadvantaged women. I have also introduced legislation to extend the sale of the Breast Cancer Research Stamp. This is America's first fund-raising stamp, and it has succeeded in raising more than \$53 million for much needed research over the past 9 years. This success is from thousands of people paying only a few cents more for a postage stamp to do their part to eliminate breast cancer with a cure.

There is hope in the fight against cancer, but we must be vigilant in our efforts. As we work toward a cure, regular screenings and early diagnosis are the best ways to prevent and beat this disease. I encourage you to talk to your doctor to determine which screenings you need and how often you should have them. Most of these tests are quick outpatient procedures, and may be covered by your insurance plan. Please also continue to volunteer your time and make donations to life-saving charitable organizations. You can be sure that I will continue to make this a national priority. Together, we can find a cure and defeat cancer.

### Property Taxes a Worry for Some Retirees

By Bryan Pope, Associate Editor, Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University  
Much has been written about the substantial growth in property tax rates over the past 20 years. With the first large wave of baby boomers

approaching age 65, some worry that rising property taxes could force them from their homes.

"Retirees living on fixed incomes have struggled with rising property tax bills as their homes increase in value," said Dr. Charles Gilliland, research economist with the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University. "Many have grown concerned that tax increases will force them from their homes, even though they have paid off their mortgages."

In response to these concerns, legislators have devised a number of provisions designed to protect seniors.

"Texans 65 or older qualify for both general homestead exemptions and others specifically designed to help seniors," Gilliland said. "All owners of qualifying homesteads are eligible for an exemption of at least \$3,000 from county taxes in counties that levy taxes for roads and flood control and \$15,000 from school district taxes."

Gilliland said seniors may qualify for an additional \$10,000 exemption from school taxes, bringing their tax exemption to at least \$25,000. Other exemptions may be available for seniors if local taxing jurisdictions choose to adopt these exemptions.

Homeowners, including seniors, must file applications with the chief appraiser to receive homestead exemptions. If a qualifying individual dies, a surviving spouse can continue to receive the exemptions if he or she is 55 or older and the property is his or her homestead.

Gilliland said the tax code provides further protection for seniors by limiting school taxes on their homesteads.

"Although the appraisal district continues to appraise and calculate taxes, the school taxes levied on a qualified homestead cannot exceed the amount paid in the first year the owner qualified for the over-65 homestead exemption," he said.

(Continued on next page)

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### ...Property Taxes

(Continued from Page 7)

School taxes cannot be increased above that amount as long as the qualifying owner maintains the property as his or her homestead. And should that taxpayer pass away, his or her qualifying, surviving spouse can continue to receive the limitation.

The property tax code also contains provisions to soften the property tax burden on seniors, from paying taxes in installments to deferring tax collections.

For example, seniors may pay tax payments on a quarterly schedule without incurring delinquent tax penalty and interest.

If the tax burden becomes too onerous, seniors may defer collection of taxes, stop a delinquent tax suit or even stop the impending tax sale of their homestead. To do so, the owner must file an affidavit stating that he or she is 65 or older and that the property is a residence homestead. This deferral also applies to the qualifying surviving spouse.

"A tax lien still applies to the property and the unpaid tax accrues interest at 8 percent per year, but further penalties and the delinquent tax interest is waived," Gilliland said. "Delinquent tax penalty and interest liabilities incurred before the owner filed for the deferral remain."

He said this type of deferral continues until 180 days after the property no longer qualifies as the individual's homestead. Activating this deferral could forestall tax collection until an elderly owner dies, at which time the owner's estate would face a potentially sizable tax bill plus all accrued interest.

Still, Gilliland said the provision offers some assurance that the elderly will not be forced from their homes to satisfy property tax liens.

For more information on property taxes and retirees, read "Will Work for Property Taxes" in the April 2007 issue of *Tierra Grande*, online at [recenter.tamu.edu/tgrande/vol14-2/1808.html](http://recenter.tamu.edu/tgrande/vol14-2/1808.html).

The Real Estate Center (<http://recenter.tamu.edu>) has been providing solutions through research for 35 years. Funded primarily by Texas real estate license fees, the Center was created by the state legislature to meet the needs of many audiences, including the real estate industry, instructors, researchers and the general public.

#### Pet Talk

To phrase it in literary terms, to declaw or not to declaw — that is the question.

Making the decision to remove a cat's fingernails has pros and cons, and cat own-

ers should consider both before going through with the procedure, experts say.

The most important thing to consider is the fact that the procedure is permanent. Dr. Mark Stickney, a veterinarian at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University, advises against declawing if the cat will be outdoors because it will have difficulty defending itself against predators.

"Once it is declawed, it is declawed forever, so you have to be able to make the commitment that the cat will be an indoor-only cat," says Stickney.

In addition to permanently making the cat an indoor pet, a cat owner should consider several other things before deciding to declaw a pet:

- When should the cat be declawed? The ideal age to declaw a cat is six to eight months.

"At that age the procedure is simple to perform and the kittens are usually back to their regular selves about a day after the procedure," says Stickney.

Older and overweight cats have a rougher recovery; they may be lame for a week or two after the surgery.

- Will the cat feel pain? "Like any surgical procedure, there is pain involved," says Stickney.

"Because cats are going to be walking around on those feet afterward, there is no way to avoid tenderness."

To alleviate the pain, he adds, cats should be sent home with an anti-inflammatory or other medicine from your veterinarian.

- What can owners expect after surgery? Cat owners should expect some lameness in their pet with daily improvement. Also, if the cat is walking around, especially on a hard tile floor, there may be a little spotting for a day or two after the procedure.

- How should the owner care for the cat after surgery? Restricting the cat's exercise by confining it to a small area will help keep the feline off its feet. Pet owners should move food and water bowls near the cat and use shredded newspaper or paper towels as litter for the few weeks following the surgery. The gravel from clay litter can get into the incisions and disrupt the healing process, Stickney says.

- Will the cat's behavior change? Once the cat has healed from surgery, the animal should be back to normal.

"If the cats were scratchers to begin with, they'll still act like they have claws and scratch," says Stickney.

"They don't act any differently than before surgery."

If nipping a cat's nails is not an option for a pet owner, a few alternatives exist that may help dull the damage

done by a cat's claws.

Stickney suggests providing a scratching post for the cat. By doing this, the cat owner gives the animal an alternative to the furniture.

Spray-on products that act as cat repellent are available for furniture, and soft rubber covers that can be glued onto the tips of the cat's nails are also available.

A final option is trimming the cat's nails. Trimming the claws on a weekly basis will keep them from becoming sharp and pointy. However, Stickney adds that the cat will still be able to destroy things with them.

Regardless of the reason for declawing a cat, it is important for cat owners to weigh all of the options.

"It is very rare that there is a medical necessity to declaw a cat," says Stickney. "It is more of a preference so the cat can continue to live in the household and not have to be given up."

### Plan Your Next Trip Through A Texas Heritage Trail Region

With the summer vacation months upon us, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) encourages vacationers to plan their next trip using the "itinerary builder" function available for the 10 regions of the Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP). With gas prices reaching an all-time high, travelers can save money by staying close to home and visiting one of the scenic heritage trail regions filled with beauty, culture and history. From towering mountains to the soothing call of Lake Texoma and every thing else in between, the sites in each heritage region provide the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable summer excursion.

With more and more travelers utilizing the Internet as a travel resource, the user friendly "itinerary builder" feature allows adventurers to find information and build custom travel plans to adjust to varying needs. Designed specifically for the THTP, the "itinerary builder" allow users to easily move between all 10 regional sites. Vacationers can plan their trip based around attractions, cities and events. Options include printing the created itinerary, saving it for future reference, or e-mailing it to friends and family.

The THTP increases tourism at cultural and heritage sites in regions across Texas and revitalizes local economies through regional tourism development and marketing. The THTP has sparked resurgence in Texas travel and has helped boost economic development throughout the state. The program also stresses the importance of historic preservation to tourism and fosters effective local tourism leadership.

Based around 10 scenic driving trails, the routes incorporate the perfect partnership between historic preservation and tourism. The heritage regions included in the program are: Texas Brazos Trail, Forest Trail, Forts Trail, Hill Country Trail, Lakes Trail, Independence Trail, Mountain Trail, Pecos Trail, Plains Trail and Tropical Trail Regions.

To visit the 10 regional web sites visit [www.thc.state.tx.us/travel](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/travel). Use the map to select a region of interest. For free heritage trail guides call 866/276-6219. For additional information on Texas travel events and vacation destinations, visit [www.TravelTex.com](http://www.TravelTex.com), for a free Texas State Travel Guide call 800/8888-TEX.

### Consider benefits before changing jobs

If you are thinking of switching jobs-especially in mid-to-late career-you'll want to pay careful attention to the benefits offered by your new employer. At this stage of your life, you've got a lot to protect.

For starters, you'll need to take a close look at your new employer's retirement plan. If your new job comes with a 401(k), find out when you'll be eligible to contribute, if there's an employer match and if the match also applies to "catch-up" contributions you can make after age 50. You'll also want to find out if your new plan will accept a rollover of your old 401(k). If it does, and you like the investment options that come with your new plan, you may want to make this move.

In any case, if your new job does offer a 401(k), take full advantage of it. Contribute as much as you can afford and increase your contributions whenever you get a raise. Look carefully at your investment options and spread your money among them in a way that reflects your risk tolerance, long-term goals and time horizon. And no matter how much you like your new job, don't "overload" your 401(k) plan with company stock-a downturn in your employer's fortunes could drag its stock price down for quite some time.

Of course, not all companies have 401(k) plans. If your new employer offers a "defined benefit" plan-the traditional pension that pays benefits based on years of service-you'll want to ask a lot of questions about the plan's solvency. As you may know, many pension plans are currently under-funded or face other major problems. If you are concerned about a potential new employer's financial status, you might want to visit the company's Web site and search under

"investor information" for documents such as the annual report and filings with Securities & Exchange Commission.

### Beyond retirement plans

Your new employer's retirement plan isn't the only benefit you'll need to evaluate when weighing a job offer. You'll also want to consider the following:

\*Disability insurance-Have you ever thought what would happen to your family and your long-term financial goals if you become disabled and couldn't work? Disability insurance can help protect you against this risk. Some employers offer short-term disability coverage as an employee benefit. But if your former employer offered disability insurance, and your prospective new employer doesn't, you may have to purchase your own coverage.

\*Life insurance-Some employers also offer life insurance as an employee benefit. Even if you are not that far from retirement, life insurance may benefit you in various ways, so the presence or absence of an employer-backed life insurance policy is a factor you'll want to consider before taking a different job.

A new job may offer you more money and the chance to do work that you will enjoy. But before you make the move, take a close look at the benefits package-it can play a big role in your comprehensive financial strategy.

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