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FOUR POINTS NEWS

Volume 7, Issue 40 • 8 pages

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Thursday, October 6, 2011 • 50 cents

Steiner fire families say Thank You!

"The most precious things in life...aren't things."

It's been a month since the wildfires in Steiner Ranch brought devastation to our lives. For some of us fire victims, it seems so long ago; for others,

it seems like yesterday as bad dreams sweep by each night. But one constant has remained, and that is the love and support of our community.

We all continue to be overwhelmed by the outpouring of love which began the moment videos and photos started circulating - showing us our homes in flames or already in ashes. You were with us as we took our first shaky footsteps upon our

unrecognizable homes and as we spent the first couple of weeks digging through feet of ash and debris trying desperately to discover an identifiable memento from our past. You were with us as we looked for places to live, offering to take us in yourselves. You helped feed us, clothe us and comfort us.

There are no words to fully express our thanks to each neighbor, stranger and friend who

stood by us. As you look at our photo, we hope you see more than a crowd of people. We hope the families you see -- the children, the pets, the smiles -- portray the joy and thankfulness we have for all who took a little of themselves and gave to us.

Do we wish all this ruin hadn't come to us? That's a question to ponder. For although many of us are still grieving and find it incredibly difficult to get through

some days, we realize how much "stuff" consumed our lives - precious stuff, but still stuff.

What we have gained in understanding, goodness of humanity, unconditional love, relationships, forgiveness, and God's love and grace is far greater than what we lost. Our memories are now carried in our hearts instead of photo books, badges, souvenirs and family heirlooms. God gave us memories that we

might have roses in December. Our memories of you will help carry us through the dark times and for that we are eternally grateful.

We would like to say a special thank-you to those whose service to Steiner Ranch was outstanding.

Fire Departments and Volunteer Firefighters: We saw your sadness in our loss, but please know that we applaud you for saving 300 homes and being there to help us for days that followed.

Constables and Sheriff Departments: Our knights - standing guard and protecting our privacy day and night for weeks, bringing food, water, shovels, gloves...

Travis County STAR Flight: Patrolling and working long days - over 300 dumps of water to save our neighborhood.

American Red Cross: For obvious reasons of who you are and what you supply for those in need.

HEB: For being first on the scene with water, food, pet services and staying late serving dinner to us. Our loyalty is with you.

Community Churches: Hill Country Bible Church, St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church, Austin Christian Fellowship, Lake Travis United Methodist

SEE THANK YOU, 6



Four Points residents link cell phones to federal emergency system

CAPCOG addresses recent Steiner Ranch wildfire notification issues

By LESLEE BASSMAN
LBassman@austin.rr.com

On Sept. 4, some Steiner Ranch residents got a phone call telling them to evacuate the neighborhood and others did not. Those with their numbers registered with the Federal Emergency System got the calls.

Although the nation's Homeland Security Agency adopted a regional Emergency Notification System back in 2004, many new and longtime Steiner Ranch residents had not registered their current cell phone addresses with the system prior to the recent wildfires. Capitol Area of Governments, CAPCOG, is now campaigning to ensure that all residents within a ten-county area of Central Texas update the reverse dialing system with their current cell phone numbers, especially if their homes lack land-line telephone service.

CAPCOG's Emergency Notification System is designed to send registered participants of its program messages informing them of critical situations such as fire danger. The system exists in Travis, Williamson,

Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee and Llano Counties.

According to CAPCOG Administrative Assistant Katie Panneck, the system been available for cell phone use for five years but is more important today as cell phone-only homes are becoming more prevalent.

"They don't need texting capability for their cell phone, just voice mail for an emergency message to come to them", Panneck said. "The emergency message would be coming from 512.386.7242."

Additionally, a son or daughter of an elderly resident can register their own phone as a backup for their parent's notification.

Landline telephones should be updated as well but are not within CAPCOG's jurisdiction.

Panneck shed light on a recent situation in Steiner Ranch during which a resident received an emergency telephone call regarding the wildfires and yet, a neighbor across the street, didn't get such a notice.

"It's up to the city and county dis-

SEE CELL PHONES, 6

Mattress Firm, local director outfit hundreds with new beds

By LYNETTE HAALAND
Lynette.FourPoints@gmail.com

Philip and Melissa Busker knew they could help those who lost everything in the Steiner Ranch fires have a place to lay their heads at night.

Philip, who has had a 22 year career at Mattress Firm and is a director, was asked by a friend, Jade Ausley, via email if they could get her three mattresses for a friend who lost her home.

"I knew good and well that of course they would find me some, this is just who they are," Jade said.

She checked email the next morning to a message from Philip saying "Jade, you know we will do this but how about 40 instead of three!"

Jade screamed from the top of her lungs, danced around and could not wait to play Santa with the 40 mattresses and find them homes.

This was Wednesday and at the time Jade only knew of two families displaced from the fires. But by Thursday, the Buskers found a way to communicate through a liaison to the fire families and they were able to find

SEE MATTRESS, 5



LISD passes tax increase, reviews class size

All Four Points elementary schools have classes with too many students

By CHRISTINE BOLANOS
Hill Country News

The Leander ISD board unanimously approved a 2011 tax rate of \$1.49 per \$100 property valuation, which came out to more than a four-cent hike. \$1.04 will go toward maintenance and operation while the remaining \$0.46 is for payment of principal and interest on debts referred to as "interest and sinking."

The motion to approve the new tax rate was made by Russell Bundy and seconded by Grace Barber-Jordan at the Sept. 15 regular meeting in Cedar Park.

The board also unanimously approved the class size waiver compliance plan at the meeting and submission of an application to the Texas Education Agency for class size waivers at 19 elementary campuses.

At the beginning of each

SEE CLASS SIZE, 5

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New apartment complex under construction by VHS

By LESLEE BASSMAN
LBassman@austin.rr.com

Real estate developer Forestar Group is constructing a 289-unit apartment complex across the street from Vandegrift High

School. It is set for completion by the end of next year.

According to Chief Financial Officer Chris Nines, The Ridge at Ribelin Ranch development will boast a "resort style swimming pool, upscale clubhouse, state of

the art fitness center, theater and internet café" on its property. The majority of the apartment homes, 164 units, will consist of one-bedroom plans ranging from 670 to 840 square feet. Additionally, Forestar Group plans to construct 97 two-bedroom units and 28 three-bedroom units at the site.

Nines stated that Forestar sought out the McNeil Drive location for its proximity to areas of shopping and physicians' offices.

"With the explosion of retail development in the area, and stabilized occupancies at existing communities in the suburb, Forestar felt the timing was right to develop this heavily wooded 17

acre tract," said Nines. "The retail growth and medical growth in the area indicates a strong need for a high quality community like this development."

Forestar plans to pre-lease the Ridge at Ribelin Ranch units later this year with a final construc-

tion completion date by the end of 2012.

As for current traffic issues in the neighborhood? Nines anticipates that Forestar Group's community will "allow many more students to walk to school and should actually help traffic flow in the area."



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FEMA's recovery center in Steiner open next week

The Federal Emergency Management Agency set up a Disaster Recovery Center in Steiner Ranch last weekend and will be open several more days to help those affected by the Labor Day Weekend fires.

The FEMA center at the Lake Travis Fire Rescue Station at 3048 Steiner Ranch Blvd will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Oct. 10, 11, 13 and 14. Dates are subject to change.

Anyone affected by the fires is eligible to apply for disaster assistance, even if they have settled with their insurance company.

To apply call 1-800-621-3362 (FEMA) Or apply online at www.disasterassistance.gov or m.fema.gov using a smart phone.

- Please have the following information available when you call.
- A phone number where you can be reached
 - Social Security Number
 - Current mailing address
 - Address of the affected property
 - Brief description of the damages
 - Insurance information including policy number

Patent Reform law

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, joined representatives last week from IBM, National Instruments, AMD and Austin Technology Council to highlight the recently signed patent reform law.

On Sept. 28 at the IBM Building 904 with an audience of IBM employees, industry executives and local patent lawyers, Sen. Cornyn and

Rep. Smith hosted a panel discussion and Q&A.

The new law makes the most sweeping reforms to the nation's patent system in several decades. Local innovators shared how the new law will benefit local businesses and encourage American innovation spurring economic growth, job creation, and enhance U.S. competitiveness.

Chairman Smith is the House sponsor of the patent reform legislation that was recently signed into

law.

The Leahy-Smith America Invents Act (H.R. 1249), signed into law by President Obama on Sept. 16, is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that updates our patent system to encourage innovation, job creation and economic growth. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 1249 by a vote of 304-117 earlier this year. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 89-9.

Smith says that the much-needed

reforms to our patent system are long overdue. The last major patent reform was nearly 60 years ago.

The House patent reform bill implements a first-inventor-to-file standard for patent approval, creates a post-grant review system to weed out bad patents, and helps the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) address the backlog of patent applications. This bill is supported by local companies as well as many national organizations and businesses.

Steakhouse Benefit raises \$30,000 for fire victims

By LYNETTE HAALAND
Lynette.FourPoints@gmail.com

Steiner Ranch Steakhouse raised more than \$30,000 on Sunday for fire victims of the Labor Day Weekend fires.

"The money is going to the fire victims and the praise went to firefighters, that was the theme of the afternoon," said Bobby Steiner, owner of Steiner Steakhouse.

Around 75 Lake Travis Fire Rescue fire fighters were treated to a steak dinner and were intro-

duced to the crowd. "Everybody had a good time and we made a big deal out of the firefighters," Steiner said.

The University of Texas Golf Club was a big contributor during the fundraiser and the Steiner Ranch Muslim Community made a sizable donation that the youth raised on their own. The event brought in around \$16,000 and for every dollar raised, the Steiner Ranch Steakhouse is matching it.

Bands started playing at 2 pm on Sunday and played into the night with Paula Nelson, Drew Womack, Tres Hombres, Tommy Shane Steiner, Suede and others.

Steiner said the community has really pulled together through this. The Steakhouse had electricity during the fires and would help feed firefighters as they worked. The UT Golf Club Tailgating benefit the weekend after the

fires as well as so many others show the community support.

"We want to keep our neighbors our neighbors out here. It is a great community, the best in America," Steiner said.



Paula Nelson and the Guilty Pleasures were just one of the bands playing at the Steiner Ranch Steakhouse benefit on Sunday. The event raised more than \$30,000.

Sheriff's Office looking for grave robbing suspect

On September 8, 2011, a man visiting his wife's grave at the cemetery next door to the Decker Lane United Methodist Church, 8304 Decker Lane, found the grave disturbed and her remains scattered, according to Roger Wade, Travis County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer.

Melvin Walenta said that his wife was cremated after she died on August 24, 2011. He buried her urn, with her remains inside, in the family plot. When he returned on September 8th he found that the urn had been dug up. It appears that the urn

was thrown against a metal fence post along the north side of the cemetery and the contents of the urn were thrown over the fence. The fence is about 75 feet from the family plot and the contents of the urn were found about 20 feet north of the fence.

There is no indication why this one grave was targeted and detectives have exhausted all leads in the case, Wade said. Anyone with information about this case is asked to call Detectives at 512-854-7415 or call Crime Stoppers at 472-TIPS (472-8477).

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Gracias

Lylia Estrella
spanish_ahora@rocketmail.com

Steiner HOA is granting permits to clean up the greenbelts

The Steiner Ranch HOA is giving permission to clean up the greenbelt areas beyond property lines but residents still have to fill out the proper documents and submit a \$500 refundable deposit to do so.

Permits can be granted to clean up the areas beyond property lines when a Modification Application and Greenbelt Addendum are filled out and submitted for review and approval. Additionally the HOA is asking for a \$500 refundable, deposit check, a copy of the home and lot survey stating the distance to be considered for the clean out, and photos of the current condition of the area showing what the plan of the clean out.

Documents need to be turned into the HOA Office. The HOA encourages that all debris must be removed from the greenbelt and disposed in a safe manner.

Here are some additional safety tips from the HOA when cleaning greenbelts:

- Please take into consideration the Fire Marshall's recommendation of a "defensive space" of 30' from the structure (house), this does not mean your fence (property line).
- The drought conditions and use of gas/electric equipment in the greenbelt area poses a huge risk of fire.
- We suggest removing dead/fallen debris prior to cutting. Unfortunately these greenbelt areas have been used as dumping grounds for landscaping and construction materials for many years and we hope that this practice will cease in the future.

walls

IT'S TIME TO TEAR THEM DOWN

SATURDAY 5:30PM & SUNDAY 9:30 & 11:00AM

Upcoming college-readiness exams open doors

Leander ISD is on a mission to ensure that students graduate from our system college- and career-ready with all options open to them. To accomplish this goal, we are opening doors for students by increasing their exposure to college entrance exams.

Taking a college entrance exam while in middle school helps put students on a path toward college readiness while there is still time to target academic subjects that may need attention. To that end, LISD will offer the ReadStep exam to all eighth-grade students on Wednesday, Nov. 2. As an exam that measures the skills and knowledge students need to have to be on track for college, the ReadStep assesses the same skills, covers the same subjects and uses the same question format as both the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Exam (PSAT/NMSQT) and SAT.

LISD has a partnership with the College Board, the company that administers the ReadStep, which allows LISD students to take the exam for free, thereby opening doors for students who might not otherwise take the test. The ReadStep is a wonderful opportunity for young students to gain valuable testing experience and identify areas for improvement.

Once they enter high school, LISD students take the PSAT/NMSQT. This exam, also offered for free through the College Board, gives students an opportunity to preview the SAT, just as the ReadStep exam prepares students for the PSAT/NMSQT. The PSAT/NMSQT measures the critical reading, mathematics and writing skills students need to succeed in college. This year, freshmen, sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT/NMSQT in just a few days on Wednesday,

Oct. 12.

If juniors score high enough on the PSAT/NMSQT, the College Board recognizes them as National Merit Semifinalists, one of the most prestigious academic honors a student can receive in high school. This year, six LISD students were named Semifinalists in the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program. They are: Joshua Anderson, Alexander Huynh, Keri Lawrence, Jason Noeller, Matthew Szostak and Colin Walker. These students are among some 16,000 Semifinalists in the 57th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

In addition, 32 LISD students were named Commended

Scholars based on their stellar performance on the PSAT/NMSQT. These students are:

Samuel Baldazo, Matthew Broussard, Cody Cox, Casey Cox, Lauren Daniels, Jenna Diven, Zachary Felice, Gregorio Flores, Sophie Grossman, Kelsey Hart, Leah Havens, Jessica Huebschman, Alexander Huynh, David Jacobson, Christopher Jensen, Chan-Joong Kim, Anthony Martillotti, Jordan Ng, Jessie Ostrander, Nathaniel Pfeiffer, Cole Sawyer, Gretta Smith, Jessica Stauber, Ryan Stephenson, Aubrey Swilling, Kendall Turner, Oliver Uitz, Guillermo Vargas, Jeffrey Walker, Davis Wilkinson, Marshall Wilson and Manuel Zamora.



BRET CHAMPION

After taking the PSAT/NMSQT, we encourage students to take the SAT or ACT (another college entrance exam), a critical step required by most college and university admission applications.

Leander High School recently announced that senior Joshua Wills scored an astounding perfect composite score of 36 on the ACT, putting Joshua in an elite 0.0368 of one percent of the total students who took the ACT nationwide. LISD is extremely proud of Joshua, our National Merit Semifinalists and Commended Scholars, and we congratulate all of them on their outstanding academic achievements.

Each year we are pleased to see more of our students taking the SAT and ACT in preparation of higher education. Research has shown that students who meet college readiness benchmarks on

these tests are more likely to be successful in college.

I believe that our college and career readiness initiatives are central to our efforts to open doors for the students of LISD. We believe in educating the whole student — students who exhibit knowledge, skills and character and graduate prepared to succeed in college or careers. Whether our students' plans include enrolling in a community or technical college, attending a top university, enlisting in the armed services, or entering the workforce, we are committed to giving them the skills needed to embark on paths that have limitless potential.

For more information about all of the college-readiness exams, visit <http://www.leanderisd.org>, select the Parents/Students tab, and then click College and Career.

82nd Legislative recap, VHS traffic update on Oct. 18

On Oct. 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Vandegrift High School, Texas Tribune Education Reporter Morgan Smith will deconstruct the 82nd Legislative Session as it pertains to education, explaining what was passed and what to expect down the road.

Smith, has published several articles on local public education issues will discuss the recently convened 82nd Legislative Session and what you can expect from the implementation of laws affecting Texas children's education.

The Texas Tribune, established in 2009, is a local digital news alternative. Their articles posted during the legislative ses-

sion provided introspection into the education debates among members of the legislature and state government officials.

At the Oct. 18 meeting, Pam Waggoner, LISD Board of Trustee, will present the latest information and next steps regarding traffic issues on 2222 near VHS. Waggoner hosted the July neighborhood meeting with TxDOT which generated a large vocal audience of concerned school staff and parents.

Dr. Bret Champion and district staff will also be on hand to answer questions. You'll not want to miss this informational opportunity sponsored by the Vandegrift PTA Ladder.

Free PSAT Oct. 12

All LISD ninth-, tenth- and eleventh-grade students, home-schoolers and non-LISD students may take the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) for free this fall. Students do not need to register. The PSAT will be administered on Wed., Oct. 12 at all LISD high schools. In addition, teachers will be holding reviews on the PSAT study guide on September 19 and 20 for the English portion and September 22 and 23 for the math portion.

Home school students that need information about testing for the PSAT, please contact Jennifer Colman, Dean of Instruction at CPHS.

VHS students part of National Hispanic Recognition Program

Vandegrift High School has four students who have been selected as recipients of the National Hispanic Recognition Program: Maximo Estrella, Ashley Munoz, Alejandro Santillana-Fernandez and Connor Thomas.

The NHRP identifies nearly 5,000 outstanding Hispanic/Latino students each year in a pool of over 235,000 students who took the PSAT/NMSQT/PAA. The program sends a list

of all recognized students to subscribing colleges and universities that are particularly interested in academically outstanding seniors of Hispanic/Latino heritage.

This nationwide list includes students from the United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Mariana Islands and Marshall Islands, as well as U.S. citizens attending schools abroad.

Viper Choir success

Recently the Vandegrift High School Choir competed at the District Choir Auditions in Marble Falls. This is the first audition in the All-State Choir process and the audition where most students are eliminated. Out of the 31 VHS Choir students who auditioned, 11 students will be advancing to the Region Auditions. The following students will be auditioning on October 24th at Stony Point HS to qualify for the Region Choir:

Martha Ruby Clark, Alyssa Muir, Allison Carruthers, Nicole Tate, Jennifer Van, Jordan Roberts, Nicole Rossi, Audrey Pyle, Heather Fuller, Nicolas Birk and Joe Hernandez.

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Just a thought

Neighbor helping neighbor draws Four Points closer

Bobby Steiner says it best when asked if he and Joleen ever wish Steiner Ranch was still a ranch?

"Never, I am so proud and honored to have my name attached to a community like this," he said.

The type of community he is talking about has really pulled together over the past month since the fires.

There are countless examples of friends and strangers helping neighbors get through.

In one example, Jade Ausley rallied her base of friends to help two families who lost everything. Her motivation was stirred when the evacuation was lifted:

The Tuesday we were all able to return to our homes was the most beautiful day, especially after Satan took his hellacious weather back. As we were finding how to get back into the neighborhood without waiting for hours, all I could think about were our friends TJ and Norma Harais. They had no reason to rush back to their ashes.

I made dinner for the kids and my husband Greg and I looked in the backyard to see laughter as they all threw the football around. Once again my heart



LYNETTE HAALAND

was breaking as we were all getting back 'in the groove' while at the same time there were families who didn't have homes or mementos to remind them of past laughter and past tears.

I sat down to the computer before dinner was even finished and wrote an email to my friends and neighbors to see how we could help just two families.

By noon on Friday the rally cry resulted in dozens of people coming together. A temporary home was found and furniture acquired including new mattresses, thanks to the Busker family and Mattress Firm. Also there were new pillows, new bedding and new towels gathered, the refrigerator and pantry filled, and closets filled of clothes hung on hangers donated from the local dry cleaners.

Some friends even scanned last year's Christmas card so at least one of the families would have a framed family photo in their new home.

"Four Points, these are our neighbors, our friends and our comfort when we are in need," Ausley said. "I have lived and traveled all over the world and I am proud to say, I am from Austin and I live in Steiner Ranch."

FOUR POINTS OF VIEW

What is your favorite subject in school and why?



Rachel Berke
River Place

Math, Algebra I, because it is so helpful and I guess it is pretty fun.



Ella Fischer
Steiner Ranch

I like science because I like experimenting with things and seeing how they turn out.



Lindsay Lui
Grandview Hills

Math, I like math in general and we are learning new things in Algebra.



Cassidy Cavanaugh
River Place

Athletics because right now we are in volleyball season and I like it.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Four Points News welcomes all Letters to the Editor. All letters must be signed and include phone number for verification. Deadline is Friday before publication. Four Points News reserves the right to edit letters for clarity, length and for libelous or objectionable statements. Letters containing more than 400 words will be edited for length.

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Investment strategies amid downgrades, downturns and slowdowns

By JON FLETCHER
Guest Columnist

Investors are being forced to cope with what many perceive as unprecedented circumstances in the economic and political environment. At the same time that the U.S. economic recovery appears to be slowing, one independent agency downgraded its rating on debt issued by the U.S. Treasury. Confidence that government policymakers can do anything significant to help improve the environment is low.

These and other concerns are contributing to a sense of unease for many investors. How should the major events occurring in the global environment affect your personal portfolio strategy?

Here are five realities to give you an appropriate perspective on the challenges that lie ahead:

#1 - The downgrade may be

justified, but might have been premature.

Standard & Poor's shifted the nation's credit rating from AAA to AA+. Part of their rationale appeared to center around concerns that a dysfunctional political environment will prevent budget issues from being resolved in an effective manner. However, history is filled with examples of how American politicians have forged deals to resolve crises. It may not be fair to discount the potential that policymakers will come to agreement not just on budget issues, but other legislation designed to give the economy a boost.

#2 - The economy is being tested, but a repeat of 2008 is not inevitable.

Recent memory can have a

significant impact on investor behavior. The financial crisis that put the global economy on the brink in the fall of 2008 (and contributed to a 50 percent drop in the value of the S&P 500 stock index) remains etched in most of our memories. Fears have been raised that we may be facing a similar situation this year spurred on in part by the problems many governments (Greece, Ireland and Spain to name a few) are facing with their own debt issues. But it is not a foregone conclusion that we're headed for the same result as three years ago. Circumstances are different today. For instance, many of the economic problems

in the last downturn were related to the housing market bubble and excessive consumer debt. Today, housing prices are dramatically lower and consumers have begun to wind down their debt. There are other challenges facing the economy today, but a "double-dip" recession in the U.S. is far from certain.

#3 - Good news is often hidden
In periods like these when troubling news leads the headlines, investors are often surprised when markets perform well. This is due to the fact that some market observers are looking beyond the headlines to see other trends that are favorable. The same is true in today's environment. Corporate profits remain strong and companies in the U.S. and elsewhere generally have solid balance sheets.

Emerging markets are growing robustly and will likely help spur ongoing economic activity in other parts of the world, including the U.S. Prices for gasoline have moderated in recent weeks, boosting consumer purchasing power. Even in difficult times, seeds of future prosperity are planted.

#4 - Stocks may offer more attractive value than bonds
Many individuals have been pulling money out of the stock market and investing in bonds (or bond funds). Yet with interest rates on U.S. Treasury securities near their historic lows there appears to be limited upside. Worse yet, bonds paying extremely low interest rates can be risky for investors. If interest rates begin to rise, bondholders could be in for a negative surprise. That's because bond prices

decline when interest rates rise. Stock values, meanwhile, remain well below the peak they reached in the fall of 2007 before the dramatic, 50 percent downturn occurred. At that time, the S&P 500 Index topped out at 1,565. Today the S&P 500 is 20 percent to 25 percent below that all-time peak. This indicates that upside potential remains over the long run, though the market will likely continue to suffer through ups and downs along the way.

#5 - Market gyrations should not overtake your investment strategy
Are you a long-term investor? Most everybody should be, at least with a portion of his or her portfolio. Even if you are retired or close to it, you may need to invest some

SEE INVESTMENT, 5



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LWB Elementary Girl Scouts take action to reduce hunger

Junior Girl Scout Troop 2206 held a food drive at Laura Welch Bush Elementary recently, collecting 1,811 food items and several bags of clothing. "The response to the food drive was overwhelming," said Kathy Weir, troop leader. The Girl Scout curriculum teaches the girls the "Power of One" equals individual strengths/opportunities, the "Power of Team" shows how a team works and that more can get accomplished in a group than by oneself, and the "Power of Community" teaches how a group can get a larger group to rally behind a cause or issue. Out of this a Take Action project is created.

Troop 2206 chose hunger as the issue for their Take Action project. They toured Mobile Loaves and Fishes and made the decision to run a food drive at Bush Elementary called Mission Hunger and a clothing drive at River Ridge called Mission Clothing. Mission Hunger and Mission Clothing ran Sept. 19 through 23. The girls created a PowerPoint presentation to educate the students about the issue of hunger, Mobile Loaves and Fishes programs, and to introduce the drives. The grade level with the most donations won a PJ Day at a future date.



The girl scouts sort through the food items that have been collected. Pictured left from right are Mia, Madeline, Reagan, Aditi and Camille.

INVESTMENTS, FROM 4

of your money in stocks to help meet increasing income needs over the course of what could be a long retirement. If you are uneasy with your current asset mix, it is worthwhile to review your holdings and determine if there is a more appropriate solution for

your circumstances. Keep well diversified, and avoid putting too much of your money into a single asset or asset class to limit the risk of a dramatic change in its price. Don't let today's headlines overwhelm your investment decision process.

Jon Fletcher, Financial Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. has an office at 9442 N Capital of Texas Hwy, Arboretum Plaza One, Ste 800. Jon Fletcher is licensed/registered to do business with U.S. residents only in the states of Texas, Florida and Minnesota.

MATRESS, FROM 1



the size of beds everyone desired.

On Saturday morning, Jade gets a call from Philip that they have gotten the ball rolling and Mattress Firm President Steve Stagner was working to get more mattresses to more fire victims.

Did they ever get the ball rolling. Philip and Melissa personally donated 46 mattresses in Steiner, two in Spicewood, and two in Bastrop. Mattress Firm donated 15 truckloads at a total of 900 that went to Bastrop.

"We are truly blessed to have people like the Buskers as part of our community, they don't just talk the talk, they walk it and bring beds with them," Jade said.

Pictured are: Philip and Melissa Busker of Steiner Ranch with children Dillon, Lauren, Brenden and Justin.

GVH Elementary participates in art project with Abrakadoodle



Photos by Cindy Hathaway

Grandview Hills Elementary students were Artists in Action. GVH students were given the opportunity to interact with artists on Sept. 27 through a PTA sponsored event. The kids participated in an exciting collaborative circus project, coordinated by Abrakadoodle. Top: GVH Art Teacher Ms. Henderson was on hand to assist and answer art class questions.

CLASS SIZE, FROM 1

year, Texas school districts are required to review class size enrollment to determine whether its class sizes for kindergarten through fourth grade meet TEA requirements. According to the review, LISD exceeds the 22-students-to-one-teacher ratio in various sections and must submit a request for TEA exception. LISD exceeded the ratio in the following sections:

- Bagdad Elementary 1 of 19 sections (Acceptable campus, average class size in K-4 17.9)
- Laura Bush Elementary 7 of 34 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 21.4)
- Cox Elementary 5 of 31 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.8)
- Deer Creek Elementary 6 of 30 sections (Exemplary campus, av-

- erage class size in K-4 21.0)
- Faubion Elementary 2 of 21 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 19.7)
- Giddens Elementary 4 of 22 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.3)
- Grandview Hills Elementary 3 of 21 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.2)
- Mason Elementary 5 of 27 sections (Acceptable campus, average class size in K-4 20.4)
- Naumann Elementary 3 of 30 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.8)
- Parkside Elementary 8 of 27 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 20.3)
- Plain Elementary 10 of 30 sections (Acceptable campus, average class size in K-4 21.1)
- Pleasant Hill Elementary 3 of

- 27 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.8)
- Reagan Elementary 11 of 32 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 21.5)
- River Place Elementary 5 of 31 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 20.7)
- River Ridge Elementary 7 of 31 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 21.5)
- Rutledge Elementary 2 of 29 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.8)
- Steiner Ranch Elementary 8 of 28 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 20.8)
- Westside Elementary 3 of 23 sections (Exemplary campus, average class size in K-4 20.7)
- Whitestone Elementary 2 of 26 sections (Recognized campus, average class size in K-4 20.5)

According to school officials, the class sizes are a result of having additional students enroll after all sections are full, with subsequent students withdrawing. This has created slightly unbalanced class sizes of 23, 22, and 21.

While the total number of sections over the class ratio is 95, 530 kindergarten through 4th grade sections are under the 22-to-1 ratio. The average class ratio for kindergarten through 4th grade remains below the 22-to-1 ratio.

The next LISD board meeting is Thursday at Four Points Middle School at 6:15 p.m.

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By LESLEE BASSMAN
LBassman@austin.rr.com

No doubt, Dr. Joseph Kerwin is a hero. Not only was he the 'lifeline' between NASA's control room in Houston and the astronauts aboard troubled Apollo 13 but he also counted among the first Skylab 2 space pioneers. Last week, Longhorn Village residents and guests 'climbed aboard' as Kerwin reminisced about our nation's triumphs and tragedies during the years we ventured into our universe.

Audience members were riveted as Kerwin, whose interest in space stemmed from reading science fiction novels as a youth, described the race between the United States and Russia to orbit the Earth and ultimately, reach the moon. The U.S. Navy trained flight surgeon spoke of the "guts" of the early program scientists who accepted the challenge of sending unmanned spacecraft into orbit and the "glory" of being the first country to land on the moon. The crowd was hushed as Kerwin spoke of his attempts to fix a 'stuck' solar panel during the Skylab 2 mission, forcing him to venture outside, tethered to the floating spacecraft, to remedy the problem.

"Looking out the window [of the spacecraft] is one of the big reasons to go into space," said Kerwin who recalled the magnificent views of Earth he captured while orbiting in Skylab 2. "It's different every



day and it's just wonderful".

Kerwin, who spent 28 days in space and ranked as the first medical doctor in orbit, was asked to speak as part of the retirement community's Active Aging Week with its 2011 theme of "Oh, the Places You'll Go".

"The furthest you can go is the moon," said Longhorn Village Events Manager, Dawn Lindsey, RMT. "It's [space talk] just a perfect parallel to the places you'll go".

Kerwin wasn't the only retiree in the room who once donned a NASA employee badge.

Longhorn Village resident Dr. Jerry Fineg had been looking forward to Kerwin's talk for quite some time. Fineg was one of two NASA veterinarians who

were involved in rearing chimpanzees, Ham and Enos, for their voyages into space.

"The primary purpose of chimpanzees in space was to verify the viability of astronauts in space," said Fineg. "We [speaking of Kerwin] kind of crossed paths while at NASA."

Although retired and living in College Station, Kerwin remains active in the space medicine arena today.

"It was a fun mission and it was an important mission a long time ago," Kerwin said. "At the end of next year, private passengers can travel into space for \$200,000 in a totally commercial, non-governmental program. Now, you can save up and have a wonderful summer vacation."



Left: Seated among last week's Active Aging Week seminar audience were students from Concordia University Texas who were observing Longhorn Village for a group dynamics class. Pictured: (front row, from left) David Hunt, Cassidy Woodall, Marc Valdoria, Tynisha McDowell; (back row, from left) resident Dr. Jerry Fineg, Dr. Joseph Kerwin, resident Don Travis.

Above: Staff members and residents of Steiner Ranch's Longhorn Village were treated to an autograph by former astronaut Dr. Joseph Kerwin (pictured) following last week's space travel presentation.

Community Events

Oct. 4

National Night Out

Oct. 16

2nd Annual Pumpkin Patch, hosted by Four Points Chapter Circle of Friends at Steiner's John Simpson Park, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Proceeds benefit Dell Children's Medical Center.

Oct. 18

VHS & RM 2222 Traffic meeting and Update 6:30 p.m. at Vandegrift High School

Oct. 20

Four Points Chamber of Commerce Business Expo River Place Country Club 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Oct. 22

Digs & Dunks Clinic Fundraiser for K - 8th Lady Vipers teach volleyball and basketball skills 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. @ Vandegrift High School

THANK YOU, FROM 1

Church, The Church at Canyon Creek, Riverbend Church, St. Thomas More and many others. Your prayers and humble service to us was unwavering. You did whatever it took to meet our needs.

Four Points News: For recording the truth while being sensitive to our situation, not easily done.

School in the Hills: Your support and donations from your school and members was overwhelming.

Mattress Firm and the Busker Family: Supplying new mattresses for all of us and Bastrop too - so generous.

Steiner Ranch HOA: You were beside us from the beginning and we know you will continue to be there.

University of Texas Golf Club:

For your outstanding fundraising and donations. So grateful.

Steiner Ranch Steakhouse: Creating a whole day of fun, food, bands and fundraising. You rock.

Our River Place Neighbors: You took so many Steiner residents into your homes during the evacuation. We are so very proud to be your neighbors.

Our Steiner Neighbors: We are blessed by each kind word and action you displayed. We have a stronger bond now - one we hope will only strengthen in years to follow.

And to all the local business owners and those who looked after our missing pets, your service was invaluable.

Many of us homeowners had been in our homes for nearly 20 years. We've seen our community

grow from 100 to nearly 3,900 homes. Things will never be the same. We are forever changed. But change can be a good thing.

One week ago, a precious little girl found a rock my daughter made in school years ago which was properly displayed near our backyard fountain. She gave it to me with thoughts of it being something to help carry us through. It reads, "The most precious things in life...aren't things." A simple truth we all now cling to.

So thank you again to our wonderful Four Points community. We are very blessed to call Steiner Ranch "home."

Written by Norma Harais on behalf of all the Steiner Ranch Fire Victims.

CELL PHONES, FROM 1

patcher in the field to determine the parameters of the calling section," Panneck said. She stated that, in the above situation, one street may have been the outer limit of the calling parameter at the time, adding that parameters can change as the crisis evolves.

To register, residents can go to <http://wireless.capcog.org> and follow the directions for activation. If a resident does not have a computer, CAPCOG's telephone number, 512-916-6000, can be used for assistance.



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Routine Monitoring Violation Total Coliform Rule

LCRA Glenlake WSC/PWSID 2270167 failed to collect the required number of bacteriological samples for coliform monitoring of the Glenlake and Westminster Glen water distribution system during May 2011. This monitoring is required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's "Drinking Water Standards" and the federal "Safe Drinking Water Act," Public Law 95-523.

Bacteriological samples are used to monitor water quality and indicate if the water is free of coliform bacteria. LCRA is required to submit two (2) bacteriological samples each month for this water system. Failure to collect all required bacteriological samples is a violation of the monitoring requirements and LCRA is required to notify you of this violation.

LCRA's contract operator, Severn Trent Environmental Services, failed to collect the required bacteriological samples for the month of May 2011. Although samples were not taken as required from the Glenlake and Westminster Glen distribution system samples were collected from the water supplier, River Place Municipal Utility District, and all samples tested negative for coliform.

If you have any questions regarding this violation, you may contact Jeff Garrett of Severn Trent Environmental Services at (512) 246-0498.

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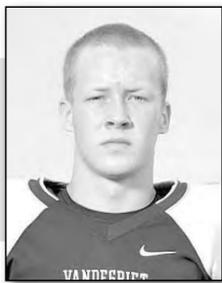
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FOOTBALL



Jesse Smith
Senior

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Football:
I love being part of the Viper football team. It's a family. It's really hard to explain unless you're part of it. But I love all these guys like brothers.

CHEER



Kim Faver
Senior

Favorite part of being involved in Viper Cheer:
The close bond we have with each other this year. As a senior, its amazing to see how much the squad has progressed since we first started. The amount of improvement in talent, determination, and especially unity is indescribable. We are not just a cheer squad anymore, we are a family.

DANCE



Merritt McCall
Sophomore

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Legacies:
I love that we are a family! I love that we can just be ourselves and have fun. It's great knowing that anyone of the girls on the team, Mrs. Lyons and Mrs. Reich are there for me no matter what!

BAND



Taylor Gaskins
Freshman

Favorite part about being in the Viper Band:
I love that band is such a big family, yet the competition is really fierce.

VOLLEYBALL



Bryn Recker
Freshman

Favorite part of being involved in volleyball:
Having the opportunity to compete and play the game I love. It is exciting to compete against tough teams, and I love the thrill of the close games. I'm so happy to be a part of this team, and I'm looking forward to my next three years as Lady Viper volleyball player.

CROSS COUNTRY



Isabella Chestney
Freshman

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Cross Country:
I love cross country because when you are racing, nothing else matters, it's just you running, and even though it hurts, it makes you stronger and what you give is what you get. A lot of sports are all about natural talent, but not cross country, it's about working hard and giving EVERYTHING you have.

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Viper Football Head Coach Drew Sanders weekly comments

VS. 21-17 Loss to Dripping Springs:

It was a disappointing finish to a very hard fought game. Our young men did an excellent job overcoming all the obstacles and fought to the very end. We are currently 5 points away from being undefeated.

VS. this week's game vs. Lake Travis 7:30 p.m. at home

LT comes into our stadium currently ranked the #1 team in the state in Class AAAA. They obviously are a very good program and we will need to play our best game to win. I have no doubt that our young team will be up to the challenge. Be early because it will be packed!

Lady Viper Volleyball played two hard fought matches

Vandergrift High School Lady Volleyball Vipers have had a busy schedule against Vista Ridge and Dripping Springs lately.

During the Vista Ridge match on Sept. 27, the team was building momentum.

"We started off very flat against Vista Ridge and were not serve receiving well. I made some line up changes and we did better the second and third game," said Kelly McCarter, VHS Head Volleyball Coach.

Vista Ridge ended up defeating Vandergrift 25-7, 25-16, 25-23.

"We had a 16-10 lead in the third game, but failed to finish.

Vista chipped away at our lead and came back to win 25-23 in the third set," McCarter said.

Then on Sept. 30, the Vipers played well and had the lead in all three games against Dripping Springs.

Dripping Springs had a great server that VHS did not have an answer for, McCarter said.

"She had 8 service aces against us, two of which were match points in set number 3," she added.

Dripping Springs defeated Vandergrift 25-19, 25-21, 25-23.

"We struggle to finish and continue to make too many unforced errors at the end of each set allowing the other team to win," McCarter said.



Digs & Dunks clinic, fundraiser Oct. 22 at VHS

The Digs & Dunks fundraising clinic is open to K through 8th graders to learn volleyball and basketball skills from Lady Vipers.

"The clinic put on by the VHS Lady Viper Volleyball and Basketball teams is a fundraiser," said Jody Hormann VHS Head Girls Basketball Coach.

Digs & Dunks will be held on Oct. 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Vandergrift High School. RSVP for the \$35 Pre-Registration fee by Oct. 17th and walk in price will be \$45.

Participants are asked to wear athletic wear, tennis shoes and knee pads. A T-shirt, take home memory picture and Vandergrift hair ribbon will be given free to participants.

Additionally a snack will be provided at the clinic.

Call Lori @ 512 663-4592 or Wendy @ 512 784-4333 with any questions.



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Viper Cross Country competes at OK meet

The Varsity Boys and Girls Teams competed in the 75th Annual OSU Cowboy Jamboree this past weekend in Oklahoma. Both teams competed in the 6A division. The boys finished 8th out of 34 teams. J.R. Hardy led the ways for the Vipers finishing 7th with a 5k time of 16.24.36, Topher Jensen was 9th, Brandon Keys 34th, other contributing team members were Marshall Wilson, Keith Taylor, Connor Thomas and Matt Villegas, said Coach Jennifer Gegogine.



The girls team finished 3rd out of 30 teams, just falling short to the number one ranked 4A team in the state. Nikki Keys led the way for the Vipers finishing 5th and resetting her previous school record finishing the 3200M course in 11 min. and 24.75 seconds. Gretta Smith was 9th, Leah Butterfield, 41st, Isabella Chestney 52nd, other contributing team members were Haley Conroy, Zhanya Griffin and Courtney Davis, Gegogine said.



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Leslee Bassman

Four Points Pop Warner 'kicks off' Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This Jr. Pee Wee Black team isn't afraid to be seen in pink on the gridiron during Saturday's game at Monroe Stadium. They used duct tape to accent their shoes with pink and accessorized with a pink ribbon on their helmets. "Some of the kids were talking about what to do for the month," said FPPW Coach Scott Hanna. "So we went out and got some pink duct tape so everyone knows that it's Breast Cancer Awareness month."

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