



FOUR POINTS NEWS

SERVING STEINER RANCH, RIVER PLACE, GRANDVIEW HILLS, WESTMINSTER GLEN AND COMANCHE TRAIL

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Upcoming Articles

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- C2 Club promotes culture of caring at local schools
- VHS Band students advance to Area

Lake Travis Level

Full at.....681.5 ft.
Current level631.8 ft.
Percentage full 40%

Source: LCRA Updated: Dec. 11, 2012

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LISD Christmas Break
Dec. 24 - Jan. 4

Fate of RP nature trail is in hands of federal agencies

City, county claim stake in outcome of fed decision

By LESLEE BASSMAN
Four Points News

Just a month shy of the first anniversary of River Place's upper nature trail closure, the River Place Municipal Utility District Board is now seeking permission through federal channels to reopen the popular hike.

In late November, board members met with staffers from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), City of Austin Water Quality Wildland Conservation Division and Travis County Natural Resources & Environmental Quality Division to discuss reopening a 1993 federal permit issued when River Place was being developed. This action may result in allowing the later-constructed trail to remain in an area designated as habitat for endangered species.



Leslee Bassman

Although the River Place MUD Board has agreed to remove a segment of its nature trail which encroaches on City-owned preserve land, the entire upper portion of the trail remains closed pending the resolution of issues involving its construction on federally permitted habitat land.

If the USFWS and USACE conclude that the trail does not impact the breeding grounds of the Golden Cheeked Warbler and other endangered species found on the habitat, then the trail can be open to the public once again. A section of the newer trail was originally closed earlier this year by the City of Austin as encroaching on city-owned wildlife preserve.

Issue dates back to 1993 docs

Aside from the nature trail's encroachment issues on City of Austin property first reported by the Four Points News in March, a USFWS representative who declined to be named stated that the newer trail section was built in an area designated as 'habitat preserve' when the community plans were made years ago. The

original documents which allowed the first River Place homes to be constructed in 1993 included a section 404 of the Clean Water Act permit from the USACE. Since the section 404 land was also situated on a habitat for endangered species, the USFWS was involved.

River Place's developer set aside 320 acres on-site and fenced the property

RP TRAIL, 5

Collisions on RM 2222 pin drivers

Adds to list of recent accidents in Austin

By LESLEE BASSMAN
Four Points News

Two major traffic accidents occurred on the same stretch of RM 2222, between McNeil Drive and RR 620 last week, with both drivers pinned beneath or in their vehicles.

The first incident occurred at around 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 6 on RM 2222 in front of Castle Dental, just before the intersection at RR 620.

Austin Police Department reported that a motorcycle was hit by a pickup truck, resulting in the motorcycle falling on top of its driver, pinning him underneath. The driver of the

COLLISIONS, 6

Jingle Bell Fun Run



Joe Barger, 87, and daughter Cindy Rosier of North Austin come out every year for the 5K. The two ran the Lights of Love 5K the night before. Right: Laura Welch Bush Elementary hosted the 6th annual Jingle Bell Fun Run on Saturday in Steiner Ranch. Volunteers served donuts, hot cocoa, water and fruit.



Photos by Lynette Haaland



Santa high-fives Eden Stockdell, 2, and mom Gaby as they cross the 1K finish line.



Vandegriff HS Track Coach Kevin Helm gives Sugar a drink after the 5K which they finished in 23:45. "It is fun and easier for me to go with Sug, then I don't focus on myself," Helm said. More photos page 7.

Hunan Riverplace, Pizza Hut burglarized

Police have no leads, suspects

By LESLEE BASSMAN
Four Points News

On Friday, the Austin Police Department released the names of two area restaurants burglarized in the

early morning hours of Nov. 28.

The River Place restaurants, located in the 10600 block of RM 2222, were broken into within hours of each other, with Hunan Riverplace hit first at around midnight. Pizza Hut's alarm went off at about 4:48 a.m.

BURGLARY, 6



Leslee Bassman

Hunan Riverplace and Pizza Hut, RM 2222 and RP Blvd., were burglarized within hours of each other on Nov. 28. Although now repaired, the suspects smashed the restaurants' front doors to break in.

LISD projects 28 percent growth by 2022

Champion gives State of the District address

By RICH KEITH
Four Points News

Leander ISD enrollment is projected to increase by 12.3 percent over the next five years and 28 percent over the next decade to a projected 44,000 students in 2022.

This was one of the points LISD Superintendent Brett Champion made at his State of the District address to an audience of 50 at Florence Stiles Middle School in Leander on Nov. 26.

Today LISD is comprised of 34,270 students: 23 elementary schools (16,712 students), eight middle schools (8,188 students), five high schools and two alternative schools (9,370

students.)

LISD is still in a building mode with the Florence W. Stiles Middle School opening this school year.

Staff levels have returned to near pre-budget crisis numbers of two years ago even though the number of students has increased dramatically over that time. This results in an ever increasing student-to-teacher ratio which has increased

LISD, 3

MLB players pitch more than sports

Concordia hosts community event

By LESLEE BASSMAN
Four Points News

Famed professional baseball pitchers Scott Linebrink, Chad Qualls and Huston Street graced the stage at Concordia University Texas' auditorium last week to address students, faculty and Four Points community members about their "Passion and Persistence" to succeed on and off the diamond.

The Dec. 6 program was the fourth and final lecture in the Concordia College of Business' series, "Conversations With..." sponsored by Regions Bank this fall.

According to Concordia's College of Business Administrative Assistant Linda Greenwald, the broad topic prompted last week's speakers to delve into the glory they achieved in the sport as well as the struggles each had to overcome in order to succeed. Concordia baseball Head Coach Tom Boggs encouraged his players to attend the hourlong seminar.

MLB, 7

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FOUR POINTS

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Spotlight Members of the Month

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Featuring Bobby Steiner

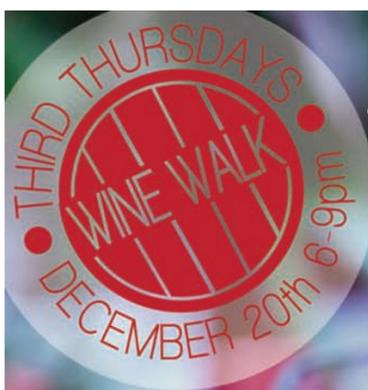


Bobby Steiner will share his family history from the rodeo business to real estate and the Steiner Ranch Steakhouse.

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Leander ISD community gives back



BRET CHAMPION
Leander ISD Superintendent

There are many reasons Leander ISD is a great place for learning. We have fantastic schools, talented students, terrific staff, dedicated parents and supportive community members, many of whom give back by donating their time and energy by volunteering in some way. Our parent volunteers are among our most dedicated supporters. LISD boasts a staggering 12,000 volunteers, who last year gave more than 252,000 hours, totaling more than \$5.5 million worth of their time (as calculated by the IndependentSector.org) to LISD students. That's 7.4 hours per child!

Our volunteers' time is spent in a variety of valuable ways. They may judge senior projects, serve on their campus Parent Teacher Association (PTAs) or

booster clubs, chaperone school dances and field trips, serve as room parents, help with field days, organize book fairs, serve Thanksgiving lunches, participate as a Literacy Partner, stuff weekly take-home folders, help with class projects, assist in the front office, mentor or tutor students, sign up for the Watch D.O.G.S. program... the list is endless. Organizing them all are our campus volunteer coordinators who strive to make sure all of our volunteers are spending their time effectively. Regardless of how they are involved, volunteers send a powerful message to our students — a message that education is important. Since the program began in 1984, we have seen again and again that our district's educational environment is greatly enhanced because of our parent and community volunteers.

Another popular avenue for volunteering in LISD is our student mentor program, a program that pairs a student with a trained adult volunteer for one-on-one support. Students

may be considered for the program because they may need help with academic achievement, character development, problem-solving skills, improving self-esteem, relationships with adults and peers, or school attendance. Mentors commit to spending 30 minutes per week with their student, giving them their undivided time and attention. Currently, about 100 individuals are serving as mentors, but we have many more students who are waiting to be matched with a mentor.

One of our newer volunteer opportunities is our Literacy Partners program, which is plugging adult volunteers into our elementary schools to help young students improve their reading skills. To date, the Literacy Partners program has paired more than 280 volunteers with approximately 430 LISD students at 23 elementary schools. This program is in its infancy but has the potential to have a powerful impact on struggling readers.

This spirit of giving back is evident throughout our district, and I know that

many LISD staff members personally go above and beyond in their roles each and every day. Consider what's been taking place at Bagdad Elementary over the last few weeks. Teachers at that campus are volunteering to provide after school enrichment opportunities for students at no cost to families. Clubs such as cheer, art, Spanish, soccer, band, chess, technology, sign language, gardening, crafts, fitness, reading and theater arts are being offered during two sessions — November through February and February through April — allowing students to participate in multiple engagement opportunities. Approximately 300 students have signed up this year. Several Bagdad parents have volunteered to teach, lead and support the teachers in running the clubs, as well. This is an amazing bright spot in our district!

If you have a student in LISD, you know that we encourage students to give back to the community. The LISD 10 Ethical Principles and Graduate Profile

identify characteristics that speak to civic contribution because our district desires our students to be consciously engaged in the world as life-long learners. This is demonstrated in countless ways throughout the district every day. Running Brushy Middle School art students, as a recent example, just sent cards to wounded soldiers, as well as men and women in the armed services who are stationed overseas this holiday season. The cards contained heartwarming messages which thanked the recipients for their service to our country.

As part of our efforts to ensure that students are college- and career-ready, we remind students that it's worthwhile to volunteer in the community or with a non-profit. Not only do

students gain valuable real-world skills through their service, involvement in these activities can serve as supporting credentials on college and job applications and set them apart from their peers.

We are fortunate to have so many parents, students and staff who are willing to make a difference by volunteering. I am thankful for and inspired by the individuals who are already giving back. If you would like to get involved in LISD as a volunteer, mentor, or Literacy Partner, visit www.leanderisd.org and select the Community tab. I challenge you to join LISD and get involved, because when our school communities come together in service to others, we are all taking steps to make LISD an even greater place to learn.

LISD, FROM 1

Teacher to student ratio	
2010-2011 Teachers	2,206
2011-2012 Teachers	2,159
2012-2013 Teachers	2,234
2010-2011 Students per Teacher	14.6
2011-2012 Students per Teacher	15.4
2012-2013 Students per Teacher	15.4

Data from the PEIMS Fall 10/11, 11/12 and 12/13 preliminary submissions.

LISD Teacher experience		
Over 20 Years Experience	341	15.2%
11-20 Years Experience	666	29.8%
6-10 Years Experience	605	27.1%
1-5 Years Experience	536	24%
Beginning Teachers	86	3.9%
Total Teachers 2012-2013	2,234	

from 14.6 in 2010 to 15.4 in 2012.

On the academic side, LISD fares well compared to other schools in Texas but Champion stressed closing the gap between Leander and its Texas peers concerning the academic performance of economically-disadvantaged students.

College and career readiness is a core component of the LISD philosophy. Champion pointed to LISD topping Texas and the nation in the 11th grade PSAT critical reading skills. Similar results were shown on average SAT scores for both reading and math as well as average ACT composite scores.

LISD students earned a record 6,818 college credits through Austin Community College last year.

LISD does well in testing compared to other Texas schools with the district spending a lot of student hours in preparation. Champion sees the value in that but admitted he is not interested in any additional testing being placed on students.

Another strong test score is reading at or above grade level by the end of the 2nd grade. This metric is a leading indicator of learning, he said. In 2011-12, LISD had 80 percent of all students reaching the mark.

A record number of Advanced-Placement exams were taken by LISD in the previous school year, with LISD topping Texas and the nation on scores.

A challenge for LISD is the 22 percent of students classified as economically-disadvantaged. The district desires to "close the gap" of academic performance between this group (known as "eco") and non-eco stu-

dents, Champion said. The district actively manages this gap to become smaller between groups for graduation rates, state test results, advanced course enrollment, and participation in extracurricular activities.

A major component of school life is encapsulated in the "Focusing on the Whole Child" initiative. Attendance, discipline, anti-bullying, extra-curricular activities, and community engagement are important factors which influence a child's growth and development into the citizens of tomorrow, Champion ex-

plained.

One fact he pointed out is that there are 65 languages spoken within LISD classrooms. Looking at the ethnic mix, the majority of the students, or 63 percent, are white and Hispanic students make up 24 percent.

Champion admits much work is yet to be done but overall the district is pleased with the trends they are seeing.

The full presentation, along with a voice-over video may be found at <http://www.leanderisd.org/users/0001/docs/StateDistrict2012.pdf>

Flu season reminders

Flu season is here! Remind your children to cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze, to dispose of tissues in the trash, and to clean their hands often using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water. It is not too late to get a flu shot.

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PUBLISHER'S POINT OF VIEW



LYNETTE HAALAND

Decorating cedars catches on in Four Points

Decorated cedar trees are starting to pop up more and more in Four Points. I've seen a SpongeBob tree, one tinsel wrapped trunk with a big red bulb and various other festive arrangements lining our local streets.

Steiner Ranch, River Place, Grandview Hills all have decorated trees in random places. This is part of a bigger Austin trend.

Officials with the Texas Department of Transportation say the decorating of trees along the southern stretch of Loop 360 has been a tradition that has gained momentum over the past two decades.

Chris and Laura Nickens of Steiner Ranch decorate a bumblebee tree with other family members along the scenic West Austin highway in memory of his mom, Beverly Nickens, who passed away two years ago around the holidays.

Beverly was known as "Bee" or "Honey Bee" by her friends and grandkids.

"My sister-in-law collected recyclable bottles, spray painted them yellow and put black tape around them for the stripes. Then she put netting for the wings," Laura said.

Chris' sister Melissa Moze of Great Hills is the artist behind the idea. She preps and repaints the bumblebees

each year to get them ready for display along the highway.

"Every year we claim the same tree. It's a tribute tree," Laura said. "(Honey Bee) spent so much time getting on the floor with the kids. She was a be-in-the-moment type person. We wanted to carry on her legacy."

The Nickens are not alone. Many people make it a tradition to decorate a tree. Many decorate in the middle of the night.

It doesn't matter how small or large; any type of cedar seems to work. Some are decorated in a traditional Christmas style, while others have more of an Austin flair with flamingos, teddy bears and of course bees.

It used to be less prevalent and was concentrated mainly around the Arboretum. Now the trend is more visible, extending to the Westlake area and Four Points.

In the past, police ticketed would-be-decorators for littering, but people thought that was too extreme.

Technically, it's illegal but most enjoy our quirky, annual Austin tradition... as long as decorations come down after the holidays.

It is one of our kitschy Austin ways of celebrating. Let's "Bee" in the moment!

FOUR POINTS OF VIEW

What is one of your favorite parts of the Christmas season?



Ethan Trinh
Steiner Ranch
Kindergarten

Having presents.



Ryan Deelstra
Steiner Ranch
Kindergarten

Jesus birthday.



Jack Ritter
Steiner Ranch
First Grade

On Christmas morning we always get to eat cinnamon rolls.



Laila Daigle
Steiner Ranch

Putting up ornaments on the Christmas tree.

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GARDENING GAB

Gardens in miniature



MAGGIE TATE
Master Gardener

Last week I was in London and was thrilled to be able to visit the flagship of the Royal Horticultural Society, Garden Wisley. (<http://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley>)

As my friend who lives in London said, "It's Mecca for Master Gardeners."

What inspired me most this trip were the miniature gardens. I know very little of container gardening save the usual recommendations of "fillers, spillers and thrillers."

At Wisley, old stone sinks and troughs were repurposed into fantastic little beds. These interesting old stone containers were filled with the tiniest of plants nestled in between rough cut pieces of limestone and granite.

While we wouldn't likely to be able to use the same plants because our climates are so different, I wanted to find a way to make the idea work in Austin.

I picked up the Royal Horticultural Society Gardening Techniques book at a local store to see what I

could find out.

- To create the effect, use an old stone container or an old rectangular porcelain sink covered with a bonding agent and a mix of concrete/peat/sand or another rectangular container with sides about 12- to 18- inches tall.

- Make sure there's a drainage hole!
- Put a 2-inch layer of coarse gravel in the bottom of the container, filling the rest of the container with compost within 2 inches of the rim. Or, fill it to the height where you can nestle in some vertical pieces of limestone or granite, then continue to fill with compost.

- RHS Gardening Techniques recommends selecting miniature plants in keeping with the scale of the garden, so don't choose annuals that will crowd smaller plants out.

- Once the plants are in, cover with 1 inch of gravel, crushed granite would be great.

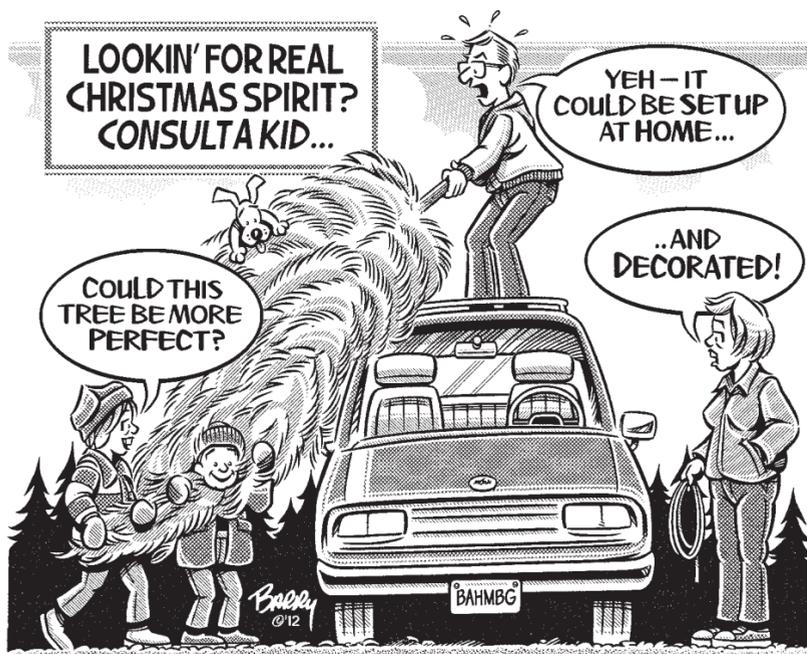
I imagined filling my container with various succulents and short stoncrop and maybe some Elfin Thyme. Can't wait to get started!

Maggie Tate is a Master Gardener with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County...For more information on this and other horticulture and gardening topics, please see our website, <http://travis.tx.tamu.edu/>, or contact our gardening hotline at 854-9600.



Maggie Tate

Garden Wisley, London, England



5 tips to make your holiday season glamorous



ALINE HANLE
French Lifestyle Expert

Christmas is the time when moms are transformed into super-moms... cook, interior designer, Mrs. Claus, fairy, Martha Stewart and who knows what else!

When the holiday season starts, visions of sparkles and glitter cross the heart. And as the days unfold, the mind gets easily overloaded with duties, tasks, lists and boxes to check.

One of the secrets by which the French lives is the idea that "Where living remains joyful, life remains blissful."

So, here are a few tips to help you unfold the magic of Christmas with fun, charm and essentially - just like the French live their glamorous way.

Be you

There is enough magic inside of you to let your family fall in love with your holiday's vision. Stress has never been a great leader and has left poor results in terms of memories that make us smile. So, allow yourself to be you and to know your limits, your strengths and your weaknesses. Christmas is a family event and mom does not have to be alone to make it happen!

Create a list

Christmas is a business on its own and as so, you, as the leader, must be willing to run the

show as well as delegate the tasks to ensure that the show will go on! Create a list of your Christmas needs and delegate tasks. Engage your loved ones in a Christmas conspiracy. Let the whole come together with the will of everyone.

Be simple

There is a great deal of wisdom in simplicity and an amazing amount of beauty as well. The best ideas are always hidden in the essentials that surround us. Remain authentic and find your own voice, your own color, your own way. These are priceless values that will come out as precious holiday season memories.

Research on the Web

Many websites have inspired many women with ideas, creativity and endless possibilities. Give yourself a little time to surf the net and find inspiration through the genius of those who have dared sharing it! Whether it is for a centerpiece, a Christmas card or an original Christmas spirit vintage gift, you will find a way to be inspired while inspiring your family and guests.

Give of yourself

Christmas is, before anything, the gift of oneself. While we give things, we tend to forget that more than things, our little ones seek to experience the magic of Christmas through the spirit of Christmas. Let's give them the beauty of sharing love in all the moments we have to spend with them as each of them is the most invaluable gift of all.

Aline Hanle, owner of Mademoiselle Aline, lives with her husband and two wonderful children in neighboring Four Points. She has a passion for sharing the French experience.

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LI-0007203

Four Points Chamber Holiday Party

The Four Points Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Holiday Party on Thursday at the Steiner Ranch Steakhouse. Members of the business community came together to celebrate the season. Blackjack tables were a hit and so were the raffle prizes!



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FOUR POINTS
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Photos by: Sherwin Field
sherwin@fieldphotography.com

Sobani reopens new menu, chef, decor

By LYNETTE HAALAND
Four Points News

Sobani Kitchen, Bar and Patio in Lakeway reopened with a revamped menu, new chef and interior renovations.

The new Sobani will feature casual American comfort fare along with Japanese-inspired dishes. The restaurant, located at 1700 RR 620 N., now serves more plates geared toward sharing.

Austin native James Mc-Millan is the restaurant's new executive chef. Mc-Millan recently served as executive sous chef at Brennan's Restaurant and was executive chef at Rattan Pan Asian Bistro, both of Houston. He brings extensive knowledge of Japanese cooking from working with his family's restaurants, Kyoto, Origami and Brentwood Tavern.

"We're excited about getting our loyal guests and new friends in to Sobani to see and taste what's new. Chef James brings a lot of talent and energy to the kitchen, and we're confident it's going to be a real standout in the local dining scene," said owner, Taako Parker. Originally opened two

years ago, Parker has revamped the concept to a more casual setting. Additionally the menu offers a creative twist on American favorites along with a nod to her Japanese heritage. Sobani means "neighbor" in Japanese.

Sobani's new menu now has small and large plate categories with group-friendly pricing. Small plates are priced from \$5 to \$12. They include tuna tartar of sashimi tuna served on crispy wontons with wasabi aioli and balsamic glaze and Prince Edward Island mussels sautéed with fresh shallots, garlic and white wine.

Prices for entrees range from \$11-\$21. One entree highlight includes pork katsu made with Berkshire pork loin breaded and fried in panko, served with steamed white rice and tonkatsu sauce.

On the sweet side, dessert highlights include a green tea crème brulee with mixed berries and white chocolate bread pudding served with fresh berries and amaretto whipped cream.

The restaurant now has a full bar of beer, wine and cocktails and its trellised patio is dog-friendly.

RP TRAIL, FROM 1

exchange for the habitat land taken by the new community. This fenced land was then conveyed to the River Place MUD which assumed the developer's responsibility to manage the property as a habitat for the Golden Cheeked Warbler under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Years later, the River Place MUD built a nature trail, of which a portion of the hike crosses onto this property.

The USFWS representative stated that the MUD had an obligation to maintain the land under the same standards that the original River Place developer agreed to, as a habitat for endangered species. Additionally, the pertinent "documents don't allow for a trail to cross through the 320-acre tract."

"They weren't authorized to build the trail in the first place," said the USFWS representative of the River Place MUD's actions. "We have to consider, 'What are the impacts currently proposed and are they in keeping with what was originally authorized?'"

US Army Corp of Engineers reviewing habitat change

According to USACE Regulatory Division's David Madden, the River Place MUD Board has proposed repermitting the trail; that is, reopening the 1993 permits to make an exception

for the trail if it does not impact the Golden Cheeked Warbler's habitat. This finding may allow the trail to remain open.

The USFWS representative stated that although no repermitting documents, referred to as Reinitiation of Consultation, have been filed by the River Place MUD yet, "we think it will happen."

Madden is concerned that the nature trail's encroachment into preserve area means there is less habitat for endangered species.

"With the trail passing into the preserve area, that changes the amount of habitat available and affects both the 404 permit (Clean Water Act) and the (USFWS) biological opinion (section 7 of the Endangered Species Act)," said Madden.

Madden stated that his office "tasked the MUD to provide new information as to whether the trail would impact the breeding success of the the birds." To date, Madden has received a copy of the survey performed by the River Place MUD's consultant Horizon Environmental Services, a firm specializing in endangered species habitat assessments, but has not been handed any additional information about the trail itself; specifically, the length and dimensions of the trail sections which cross into the preserve. Once the USACE receives the requested information from the River Place MUD, Madden will

pass the proposal to the US-FWS for their determination as to the trail's impact on its endangered species.

Travis County, City of Austin's interests in the outcome of the trail designation

On December 31, 2017, the 320-acre tract which now includes a segment of the River Place nature trail, will be annexed by the City of Austin. Representing the City of Austin's interests, Austin Water BCCP Coordinating Committee Chairperson Willie Conrad wants a "seat at the table" to discuss the fate of the trail with the River Place MUD and pertinent federal agencies. As part of its annexation agreement with the River Place MUD, Austin stands to inherit the nature trail, currently out-of-compliance with the property's

designation as a habitat for endangered species, along with the 320-acre property it sits on.

Conrad stated that the City of Austin was never advised by the River Place MUD that they were building the trail on the property and now his office would be at risk for managing a trail which violates section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, Austin Water is generally prohibited from using water utility revenues for recreation facilities, such as the trail.

"Austin Water (would be) responsible for managing a trail that was never contemplated or provided for in the annexation agreement," said Conrad of the Strategic Partnership Agreement executed prior to the start of the trail controversy.

However, not everyone is welcoming the City of Aus-

tin to the escalating River Place nature trail issue.

According to USACE's Madden, the City of Austin has "no real stake in it (trail controversy) as it's not their property yet". Madden is addressing only the current ownership and today's stakeholders in the issue.

The USFWS acknowledged that River Place already executed an annexation agreement with the City of Austin for the 320 acres, finding that the "City of Austin is an integral player in resolving these questions."

"We just want them (River Place MUD) to follow their federal permit," said Travis County's Natural Resources Program Manager Rose Farmer. The 320-acre tract is counted as part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve.

Upper trail to remain closed pending resolution

The River Place MUD Board voluntarily closed the entire upper trail extension until the matter is resolved with the City of Austin and federal agencies.

"We are exploring options that will protect wildlife and allow residents and Central Texas hikers to enjoy the special environment in and around the nature trail" stated Jim Casey, President of the River Place MUD Board of Directors through the board's spokesperson, Meg Meo, Elizabeth Christian & Associates Public Relations. "We do trust that the entities involved will work out a solution that is beneficial to all. The original nature trail remains open."

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Home prep for freezing temps

Austin Water Utility advises area residents to take precautions to avoid property damage during the chilly weather.

Before a freeze

- Wrap all exposed pipes located outside or in unheated areas of the home.
- Remove garden hoses from outside faucets; insulate with Styrofoam covers, rags, paper.
- Cover vents around foundation of home.
- Know where your property owner's cut-off valve is located and how to use it. Apply oil such as WD-40 to the cut-off valve before operating to prevent the valve from breaking. The valve is located adjacent to the water meter box under a 6"

metal lid.

In sub-freezing weather

- Drip outside faucets 24 hours a day (5 drops per minute). This is not necessary unless temperatures are expected to be 28 degrees or below for at least 4 hours. (Be sure to turn off the faucets after the threat of freezing weather.)
- Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- In unheated garages, shut off water to washing machines. Water softeners should be drained and protected from freezing temperatures.
- In sustained sub-freezing weather, let water drip slowly from inside faucets.
- Take extra precautions to protect pipes that have fro-

zen in the past.

If you are not going to be home

- Shut water off at the property owner's cut-off valve.
- Drain all outside water faucets if your house will be unoccupied for several days (leave outside faucets open).
- Or, leave home heating system on at a low setting.
- Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.

If a water line breaks and the cut off valve does not work or the customer is unable to locate or operate the valve, Austin Water is available to turn off the water. Austin Water Utility's 24-Hour Emergency Hotline is 512-972-1000.

BURGLARY, FROM 1

According to APD Detective David Knutson, the "smash and grab" incidents are "probably related" and involved the perpetrators breaking the glass front door of the establishments and removing or attempting to remove the cash drawer before leaving the premises.

Knutson stated that the suspects found cash in one business's drawer but were not able to find any cash in the other restaurant.

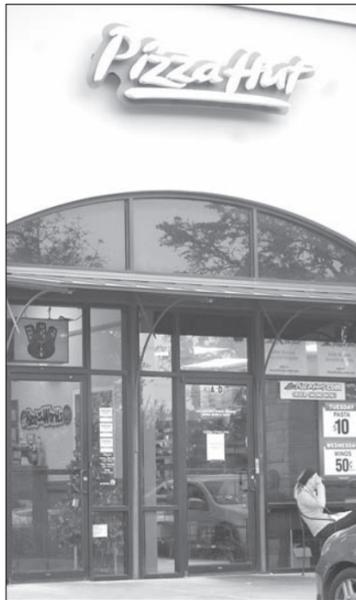
Currently, APD has no video or leads on the suspects.

"We just made an arrest of suspects in similar burglaries," Knutson said. "(Although) the MO (modus operandi) is the same, there is not enough evidence to link them to these burglaries."

Pizza Hut shift manager Jeri Brooks stated that a rock was thrown into the restaurant, shattering the glass in the front door. Brooks said that the alarm system in her establishment went off and alerted the police who came out to investigate.

Hunan Riverplace issued a statement through its manager, Mike McMonagle: "We are just grateful that no one was hurt in this unfortunate incident"

Knutson asked that anyone with information about these crimes should please call the APD Burglary Unit at 512-974-6941.



Leslee Bassman

Cleaned up now, RM 2222's Pizza Hut and Hunan Riverplace in Four Points were burglarized in the early hours of Nov. 28.

COLLISIONS, FROM 1

motorcycle was taken to Round Rock Hospital with serious injuries. APD Senior Police Officer Veneza Bremner stated that he was listed in "critical condition" at the hospital.

The second accident occurred at around 6:30 a.m. the following morning, Dec. 7, in the 10300 Block of RM 2222 at the cross streets of McNeil Drive and Sitio del Rio Boulevard.

According to APD, two vehicles, a Ford Focus and a Prius, collided and one driver was pinned inside the vehicle. Emergency Medical Service personnel were dispatched to the scene and freed the driver who was reported as having "non-life-threatening injuries."

Motorcycle accidents claim two more lives in Central Texas, Dec. 9

At 3:05 a.m., at the intersection of Magin Meadow Drive and Stoneleigh Place, a Hispanic male, 25, was killed. APD's preliminary investigation shows that a white and blue 2003 Suzuki motorcycle was traveling westbound on Magin

Meadow Drive towards Stoneleigh Place at a high rate of speed. The motorcycle skidded through the stop sign and into the west curb line of Stoneleigh Place.

A few hours later, at 9:02 a.m., a white male, 49, was also killed. APD's preliminary investigation shows that a black 2007 Honda motorcycle with blue flames was traveling northbound on North IH-35 just past the Parmer Lane exit. The motorcycle left the roadway to the right, struck the guardrail and laid the bike down.

The drivers of the motorcycles involved in these accidents were transported to area hospitals, the first to University Medical Center at Brackenridge Hospital and the second to Round Rock Hospital. Both victims died a short time later as a result of their injuries.

"People need to be aware of holiday traffic," said Bremner. "They need to be observant and watch out for pedestrians and motorcyclists as they are more difficult to see when you are

in a vehicle."

These are Austin's 72nd and 73rd traffic fatalities of 2012. At this time in 2011, there were 50 traffic fatalities.

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to call APD Vehicular Homicide Unit Detectives at (512) 974-5594.

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Donate Life to honor Ben Breedlove in Rose parade

Float decorations begin Dec. 16

Cook-Walden Funeral Home and the Dignity Memorial* providers in Austin are inviting friends of Ben Breedlove and his family as well as those in support of organ donation to honor the courageous teen by participating in a floragraph - a portrait made of floral and natural materials - which will be adhered to the Donate Life float entry in Pasadena, California's 124th Tournament of Roses Parade on Jan. 1.

The floragraph decoration will take place on Sunday, Dec. 16 at 12:00 p.m. at the Cook-Walden Funeral Home, 6100 North Lamar, Austin.

Ben Breedlove, a spir-

ited and compassionate 18-year-old Austinite, passed away on Christmas night 2011 from complications of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). He lived his life to the fullest and found great joy in helping others. Breedlove, a Westlake High School student, captured his messages of hope in YouTube videos that have been viewed by thousands of people around the world, including neighboring Four Points area adults and teens. His family decided to donate his organs and tissues, allowing Ben's compassion to live on to give life to those in desperate need of transplants.

The Donate Life Rose Parade Committee is shipping Ben's floragraph to Austin so that his family and friends can participate

in the decorating experience and put the final touches on his floragraph at Cook-Walden. Friends of Ben and the Breedlove family and those in support of organ donation are invited to attend this special event.

The completed floragraph will return to California as part of Donate Life's 2013 Rose Parade Float, Journeys of the Heart. The Donate Life float's riders and floragraph honorees represent millions of people touched by organ and tissue donation, including donor families, their deceased loved ones, living donors, transplant recipients and transplant candidates.

For more information, contact John Onstott, (512) 454-5611.

Rising Stars collects 470 coats



Rising Stars Preschool has won the Coats For Kids drive, collecting 470 coats this year, beating last year's number by 50.

"It is quite amazing to know that the families of Rising Stars generosity had a positive influence on the lives of so many people this winter," said Kelly Zermeno, co-owner of Rising Stars and Steiner

Ranch resident.

Students of the Bumblebee class (photoed) won the class contest by collecting 128 coats.

"The school does a lot of charity work each year and has participated in the Coats For Kids drive for the past five years," Zermeno said.

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VHS Winter concert moves to Austin Baptist

Band has outgrown VHS facility

By RICH KEITH
Four Points News

The Vandegrift High School band will perform their Winter Concert at the new Austin Baptist Church at Ribelin Ranch Road on Thursday at 7 p.m.

The church auditorium seats 900 and is said to be "acoustically excellent." The Performing Arts Center at Vandegrift is now too small, at 380 seats, to hold the students and their families without violating fire codes.

The annual fall concert at Canyon Ridge Middle School caught the attention of the Travis County fire marshal, who decided that no codes were broken and allowed the concert. But this week's CRMS band concert is relocated to their own gymnasium which holds more people than the VHS PAC.

"We realized after the fall concert that we no longer fit in the VHS Auditorium. We are currently in the pro-

cess of finding a new venue to host our future concerts," said Carter Matschek, Associate Band Director at CRMS.

The VHS PAC is so limited that band students, after performing, are not able to return to the auditorium and watch each other perform in a live setting. That is important in the future growth of young musicians, according to the Texas Music Educators Association.

The stage at VHS is also nearly outgrown. VHS band students are divided into four concert bands. During the concert each band plays their music selections in turn. Later when the full band plays together the 190 students barely fit on the stage.

"Austin Baptist Church has been gracious in allowing us to use their facility," said Vandegrift Director of Bands Jeremy Spicer.

The arrangement works logistically because the church is so close to the school. The band will not have to spend hours packing all their gear into a large truck to go north to Cedar Park High School, whose

auditorium seats 880. Instead they use a smaller panel truck and make a few quick trips, Spicer said.

"This situation affects not only band but theater and other fine arts programs," admits Bret Champion, Leander ISD Superintendent, adding, "There are no imminent plans for expansion to the PAC at Vandegrift."

For their part, Austin Baptist Church enjoys a warm relationship with LISD after three months in their new location.

"We consider it a privilege to host the band concert," said Executive Pastor David Procter. He said the two nearby school principals welcomed them and that the church anticipates "being open to partnerships with the schools and the parent organizations," noting upcoming programs related to mentoring and tutoring.

Procter stresses the inclusion of all the neighborhood schools in his vision of partnering. "We are convinced it is one of the reasons the Lord directed us to this wonderful location," he said.

FUN RUN, FROM 1

Photos by: Lynette Haaland



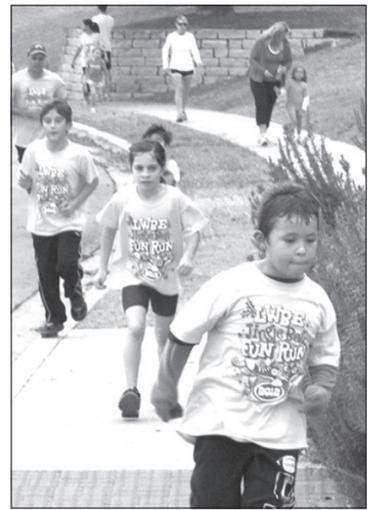
Santa congratulated the tiniest of participants in strollers at the 6th annual LWBE Jingle Bell Fun Run on Saturday.



The free event hosted by the LWBE PTA was enjoyed by hundreds. Canned foods were also collected for the Capital Area Food Bank.



Sisters Piper and Kate York (left to right) enjoyed their time with Santa, who some mentioned was a little too skinny.



MLB, FROM 1

"For the baseball side, they get to listen to three major leaguers talk about their hard work and dedication," Boggs said. "But there's so much more you can learn from a guy who made it to the major leagues." Boggs played for the Atlanta Braves and Texas Rangers clubs before retiring in 1986.

Combined, the guests possessed a total of 32 years in the major leagues and pitched 1,726 innings in 1,661 games. However, the journey each took to achieve success in the sport was vastly different.

Both Linebrink and Street grew up in Austin with Street graduating from Westlake High School and recruited by his top pick, the University of Texas at Austin's baseball squad. He received Rookie of the Year college accolades in 2005 but, once drafted by the "big leagues," Street realized that he was back at "the beginning."

"There are distractions in life and in the game," Street said. "They give you a lot of money and money allows you to do a lot of things in your free time. You have four months in the off season and its your choices which allow you to stay (in baseball). My father always said, 'Every day you get either a little better or a little worse; you don't stay the same.'"

Despite such distractions, Street has maintained his 'sense of self' by staying humble and focusing on his job, not the famous names he sees on the backs of the jerseys on the field.

He has pitched in play-off games for the Oakland Athletics and Rockies and is signed to play for the San Diego Padres through 2015.

Linebrink was a small kid and didn't come into his own as a player until he hit a growth spurt while attending Concordia. Two years later, Linebrink transferred to Texas State and was drafted by the Giants in 1997. His years in the pitching profession included contributions to the Houston Astros and San Diego Padres.

Early on, Linebrink recognized what was expected of him in the major leagues and put his faith in God for the future, a step which relieved some of the pressures he experienced in his career.

Recently retired, Linebrink is considering returning to college to finish his degree program "as a sense of accomplishment" and "to set an example for (his)

kids." "Now that the game's over, it boils down to relationships," said Linebrink, who hopes to continue to offer words of encouragement to younger players and maintain the friendships he made while in the sport.

To keep grounded, Linebrink refers to a quote he has heard from time to time: "You're going to be a former ballplayer a lot longer than you were a player."

"You're going to have a long and lonely life if that's all your identity is (a ball player)," said Linebrink to the crowded auditorium.

Qualls "always wanted to be a baseball player" although his mother warned him to "have a backup plan"

just in case. He was drafted by the Houston Astros in 2000 and continued his career with the Round Rock Express, San Diego Padres, Philadelphia Phillies and Pittsburgh Pirates. He is currently a free agent.

For the California-native, peer acceptance has been key to his success on the field.

"I'll always have fair-weather fans but as long as my peers respect and understand me, that's all I need in baseball," Qualls said. "In life, raising a family and being an all-around good person (is most important) - it's not really about how much money you make."



Leslee Bassman

Austin area major league baseball pitchers (from left) Huston Street, Scott Linebrink and Chad Qualls, addressed students, faculty and Four Points residents at the fourth and final "Conversations With..." Speaker Series sponsored by Regions Bank at Concordia University Texas last week.

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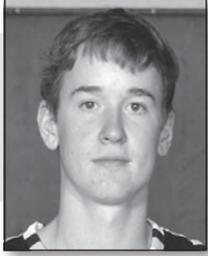
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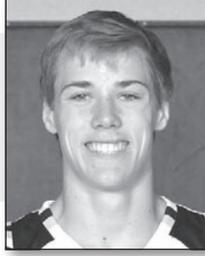
BASKETBALL



Zach Hartman - Junior #4 (Point Guard)

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Basketball:
Playing alongside a great group of teammates and being able to represent the community.

BASKETBALL



Luke Peterman - Junior (#11) - Forward

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Basketball:
Playing with my bros on the court and playing under a great coaching staff.

VOLLEYBALL



Kerry Szostak - Junior - #15

Favorite part about being involved in Viper Volleyball:
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VOLLEYBALL



Loryn Johnson - Junior - #8

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VHS Wrestling wins over Shoemaker

In its second week of competition, Varsity Black/Silver combined on Wednesday to win a close dual over Shoemaker HS. The dual was clinched in the final match with a pin by Austin Crawford (Junior, 126lbs). Final team score was 45-38.

Viper Wrestling was well represented by JV and Varsity Black wrestlers at the 30th Russ Pederson Invitational Tournament in San

Antonio on Friday and Saturday.

Eleven out of 20 JV wrestlers place in the top four on Friday. Varsity wrestlers wrestled over both days with most of the team advancing to wrestle again on Saturday and finished with two wrestlers placing. Adrian Barraza (Sophomore, 113lbs) won first place and Brent Peterson (Junior, 145lbs) earned third.

The Viper Varsity Wres-

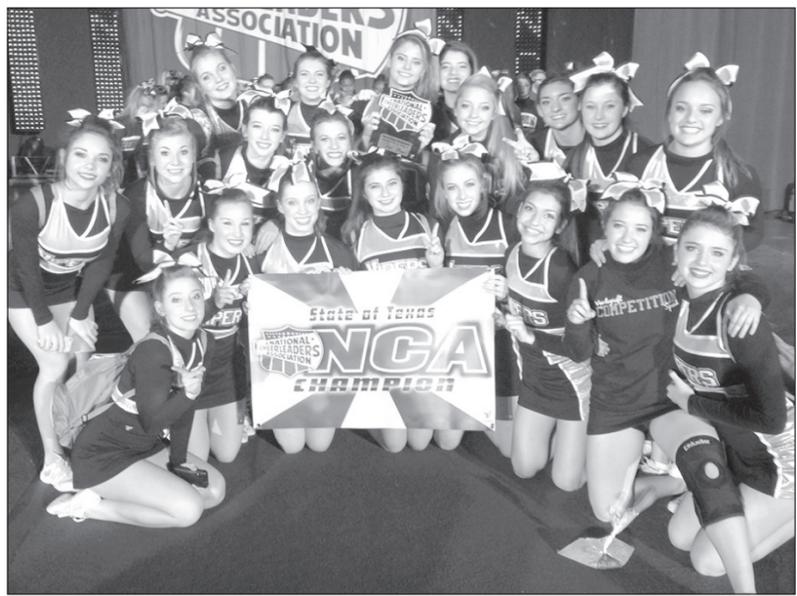
ting team finished 8th out of 42 schools and second of the 4A schools.

Scheduled this Wednesday, dual matches against Georgetown Eastview and Dripping Springs at 7 p.m. in the VHS Main Gym. Friday JV heads to San Antonio for the TR Roosevelt Invitational Tournament. Saturday Varsity Black team will be in SA for the varsity side of that tournament.



Vandegrift High School wrestler Zach Collmann (Junior, 160lbs) executes a switch during his match against a Shoemaker High School wrestler which ended in a major decision at 14-0.

Viper Cheer is NCA state champions



The Vandegrift Competition Cheerleading Team won the NCA State Championship in their division of Intermediate JV/Freshmen. This team is the school's first State Champs in cheerleading

"We are so very excited for this honor and huge accomplishment for our school," said Lindsey Kalb, Head Cheer Coach at VHS.

CRMS basketball, cheer at Toros



Canyon Ridge Middle School 8th Grade A Team basketball players, cheerleaders and coaches at a recent Toros game. Last week we ran a photo of the Four Points Middle School team.

The Canyon Ridge Middle School 8th Grade A Team played the Four Points Middle School A Team at the Cedar Park Center on Dec. 1.

They played before the season opener of the Toros. Four Points walked away with the winning score 65-52. Following the game was a Toro's pregame performance by both school's cheerleaders and Four Points Middle Schools' Dance Team.

The finale was when the Toros came out to play against the Idaho Stampede. To kick off the game, the Four Points Middle School Choir sang the National Anthem.

The Toros played their

season opener and received their NBA D-League Championship rings from

last year. The Austin Toros defeated the Idaho Stampede 99-81.

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4 Points Baseball hosts Christmas camp

Four Points Baseball is hosting a Christmas Camp Dec. 15 and 16 for elementary, middle, high school students.

Dominic Ramos and Matt Hagen have started a new program for students who will attend Vandegrift High School.

Ramos and Hagen arrived in Austin in September after their own professional season in Sugar Land, and since have been working on building the program to suite the needs of the area.

They have been working with Viper Head Baseball Coach, Chris Seaman, and have been able to use the baseball facility to give lessons, run a tryout, and form two 14 and under select baseball teams.

For more information, go to www.4pbb.com

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Action shots by:
Jim Parker
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2012 Vandegrift Basketball Roster

#	Name	Yr.	Ht.
1	William Graham	Jr.	6-0
2	Nick Fionda	Jr.	6-3
3	Zach Amundson	Sr.	5-9
4	Zach Hartman	Jr.	5-11
5	Hunter Gross	Jr.	6-2
10	Ryan Brewster	Jr.	6-2
11	Luke Peterman	Jr.	6-2
13	Davis Florence	So.	6-1
21	Jamie Hudson	So.	6-1
24	Mitchell McShane	Sr.	6-3
35	Christian Holt	Jr.	6-6

2012 Vandegrift Varsity Boys Schedule

Nov 13	Austin Crockett @ Crockett HS	8 pm
Nov 16	Austin Travis @ VHS	8 pm
Nov 19	Kyle Lehman @ VHS	2 pm
Nov 20	Hays @ Hays	1 pm
Nov 27	Belton @ Belton	7pm
Nov 29-Dec 1	Corpus Christi Tournament	
Dec 3	Cedar Creek @ VHS	8 pm
Dec 6,7,8	Cedar Creek Tournament @ Cedar Creek HS	
Dec 11	Austin Lanier @ Lanier HS	8 pm
Dec 14	Georgetown East View @ East View	7 pm.
Dec 21	Vista Ridge* @ VHS	7 pm.
Dec 27-29	Wimberley Tournament @ Wimberley HS	TBA
Jan 2	Dripping Springs* @ Dripping Springs	2 pm
Jan 5	Leander* @ VHS	2 pm
Jan 8	Marble Falls* @ Marble Falls	7pm
Jan 11	Cedar Park* @ VHS	7pm
Jan 15	Rouse* @ Rouse	7pm
Jan 22	Vista Ridge* @ Vista Ridge	7pm
Jan 25	Dripping Springs* @ VHS	7pm
Jan 29	Leander* @ Leander	7pm
Feb 1	Marble Falls* @ VHS	7pm
Feb 5	Cedar Park* @ Cedar Park	7pm
Feb 8	Rouse* @ VHS	7pm
Feb 12	TBA @ TBA	7pm

(* denotes district)

Play-offs

Feb 18-19	Bi-District
Feb 21-23	Area
Feb 25-26	Regional Quarterfinals
March 1-2	Regional Tournament
March 7-9	State Tournament



Q & A

Head Boys Basketball
Coach Cliff Ellis

Forming a team identity and defensive rebounding

3. Who is Vandegrift's biggest rival?

That is a tough one, but I would have to say the kids always get most ready to play Cedar Park. Especially since that is where we broke away from.

4. What has surprised you most so far in this season?

I've been surprised at how fast this young team has adjusted to the speed of the varsity game. With only three returners with varsity experience that was going to be a huge obstacle to overcome, but the players are adapting quickly. In addition, sophomore Davis Florence has emerged as our leading scorer on the team averaging 16 points per game.

5. Do you have an interesting story to share about the team that most would not know about?

Not a single senior on the team (Zach Amundson or Mitchell McShane) started enrolled at Vandegrift as a freshmen.

6. What motivates you as a coach?

The daily competition of basketball and a chance to enhance these young men's lives through athletics.

Record last season: 17-18 Bi-District Finalist

Returning Leaders: Zach Hartman and Ryan Brewster

Top Newcomers: Sophomore Davis Florence and Junior Nick Fionda



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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY TEXAS WINTER BASKETBALL CAMPS

YOUTH DAY CAMPS

December 21-22, 2012 (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

Cost: \$90 per camper (lunch \$6/day) Eligibility: Boys and Girls ages 8-14 only

This camp is designed to improve player's skills. From beginning levels to advance levels the focus will be on individual fundamentals, team competition and individual competition. Campers will also be split into teams and play competitive games every day. In addition, the coaches will provide specialized skill training to the individual's position on the floor.

REGISTRATION athletics.concordia.edu

Registrations are currently being accepted online or via mail. You can view and print a brochure to mail in your registration. Please note: all campers are **REQUIRED** to turn in a registration and waiver form **PRIOR** to participating in camp. Whether you register online or via mail, **FULL** payment must be submitted through the mail. Concordia accepts checks and credit card payments. Payment should be submitted along with the waiver form.

Mail payment and registration/waiver forms to:
Concordia Athletics
ATTN: Greg Sigler, Summer Camps
11400 Concordia University Dr.
Austin, TX 78726

WALK-UPS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CAMP.

LOCATION All Concordia boys basketball camps will be held at the Concordia Field House, which is located on campus.

WHAT TO BRING Campers should bring appropriate shoes for the basketball court. A water bottle and towel are also suggested.

QUESTIONS Call the Concordia men's basketball office with any questions about either camp at (512) 313-4513 email: barak.alzaid@concordia.edu



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[a transmission from the year 2052]

Dear Great, Great Grandpa,
You haven't met me, but if you're reading this in 2012 via time travel, your granddaughter is now six years old. She will grow up happy and healthy and have a son - That's me. I'm 18, and I bear a striking resemblance to you, from the pictures I have seen.

Anyway, just wanted to say thanks for hookin' me up with that sweet college fund. That was cool of you!

With love,
Your great, great grandson, Joseph

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Come and worship with us as we sing carols and read the beautiful Christmas story from God's Word. Pastor Gary Dyer's message will be "What If There Were No Christmas?" We will worship together as a family, concluding with "Silent Night" by warm candlelight.

Monday, December 24, 2012

6:00 p.m.

Main Worship Center



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