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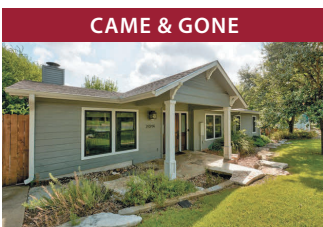
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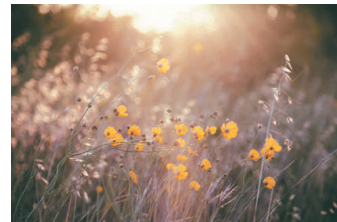
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## Making choices

One of my personal goals this year is to reduce my sugar intake. Self-quarantine for so many months created too many opportunities to indulge in baking cookies, pies and cakes. And while I enjoyed the science and art of creating tasty doughs and fillings, less than desirable results began appearing in physical ways.

So, when it came time to decide on a cover for this month's issue of the Outlook, I discovered some adorable Sweet Tart hearts imprinted with clever, modern versions of an old-school Valentine's favorite. The shoot capturing a worthy cover was quick and easy thanks to my talented photographer husband. Next came the choice of what to do with a minor mountain of Sweet Tarts.

Nibbling on something while I sit at my keyboard has been an established practice for the past year. And I loathe wasting food. I stared at the pile. Then I remembered how so many habits I had in 2019 were upended in 2020; going to coffee shops to visit with friends, dinners with my family at a favorite local restaurant, going to a movie a couple of times a month. I stopped doing those things with barely a moment's notice. I could refuse candy not just at that moment, but for the rest of the year.

It was a small victory but an important one. This year will also be about change, and about making choices which create benefit for ourselves and others. I am onboard with this thought and adopt it as a mission.

My heart is in it! Thank you for joining us.

*Victoria*



# Dripping Springs Outlook

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*The Dripping Springs Outlook*, a subsidiary of Pedal Ranch Publications, is mailed monthly to all street addresses serviced by the Dripping Springs Post Office in 78620, plus selected routes in 78737.

It is also distributed to businesses throughout the community.

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**Pedal Ranch Publications**



# Dripping Springs Outlook

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

- Every Sun. 12:30. Christ-centered anxiety/depression Hope Group Zoom Meeting. Contact Marsha Young at 512-738-5109.
- Every Mon. 12pm, DS Rotary Club meets at Flores, 2440 E Hwy 290 W. For more information visit [DrippingSpringsRotary.org](http://DrippingSpringsRotary.org).
- Every Mon. 9am All Abilities Chair Exercise, Dripping Springs Community Library, 501 Sportsplex DR, 512-858-7825 or [DSCL.org](http://DSCL.org) for info. No exercise on library holidays.
- Every Sun. 12:30. Christ-centered anxiety/depression Hope Group Zoom Meeting. Contact Marsha Young at 512-738-5109.
- Every 1st Mon. DS Ag Boosters meet in Ag Building behind DS Middle School at 7pm. Visit [DSAgBoosters.org](http://DSAgBoosters.org) for updates.
- Every 1st & 3rd Mon. 6:30pm, Lions Club meets at Dripping Springs Ranch Park located at 1042 Ranch Road 12. Across from the DS Elementary School. For information call Sharon Goss at 512-923-8630 or email [dslionsclub@gmail.com](mailto:dslionsclub@gmail.com).
- Every 2nd Mon. G.O.D.S. Moms. Free Childcare. Contact Joanne Thomas at 512-894-0581 for more details.
- Every 2nd Mon. Dripping Springs 4-H Club meets at 6:30pm at the Ag Booster Building (located behind DS middle school).
- Every 3rd Mon. Eastern Star meets at Rambo Lodge at 7:30pm. Call Kathy Clark for more info, 512-858-7004.
- Every 3rd Mon. 7pm. Hill Country Centering Prayer Community meets at a local residence. Call Myra at 512-496-1531 or Sharon at 512-413-3248.
- Every Tues. 6:30pm Toastmasters of Dripping Springs meet at Pioneer Bank, 100 Creek Rd. Visitors welcome. For more info visit [DSToastmasters.com](http://DSToastmasters.com).
- Every Tues. 5:30pm Al Anon meeting is being held at the Dripping Springs Presbyterian Church, 26650 Ranch Road 12. It is a general discussion meeting. Childcare provided.
- Every Tues. 6pm Nar Anon Family Group at Friendship Creekside Fellowship 14455 Fm 1826. Nar Anon is a 12-step program for family and friends of drug addicts. We share our experience, strength and hope.
- Every 2nd Tues. Bluebonnet Auxiliary meets at 2pm at Hill Country Care Nursing and Rehab Center, 1505 W. 290. Call Janice Ruyle, 512-264-2538 for more information. Volunteers needed. The Bluebonnet Aux provides entertainment and special events for the residents of HCC.
- Every 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tues. 7pm, DS Boy Scout Troop 101 meets at the DS United Methodist Church. Call Tim Short at 512-743-2537.
- Every 4th Tue. Artists Alliance of the Hill Country meet alternating between The Barn on 4000 Bell Springs Road in Dripping Springs and Artists studios. For more information visit [ArtistsAllianceHC.com](http://ArtistsAllianceHC.com).
- Every Wed. - Sat. Noon-3pm, Dr. Pound Pioneer Farmstead and Museum is open for tours. Call 512-858-2030.
- Every Wed. Farmer's market at the Triangle, 3-6pm. For more info contact [CityofDrippingSprings.com](http://CityofDrippingSprings.com) or 512-858-4725.
- Every Wed. at 8:30am. The Hill Country Christian Business Networking Alliance meets at El Rey. For more info visit Hill Country Christian Business Networking Alliance (HCCBNA) on Facebook.
- Every Wed. 5-6pm. Christ Centered Prayer, meditation and class. McArthur Hall Meeting Room #1, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 6000 FM 3237. For more info call 512-847-9956
- Every 3rd Wed. Dripping Springs Cook-Off club meetings in the VFW hall in Dripping Springs. For more information call Michele Ryon 512-299-7455.
- Every 1st Thur. 7pm Vince F. Taylor American Legion Post 290 of Dripping Springs invites all eligible veterans to 101 Old Fitzhugh Rd. For information call 512-858-5637.
- Every 1st Thurs. 6-7:30pm, Nonfiction Addiction Book Club at the Dripping Springs Community Library, [DSCL.org](http://DSCL.org), 512-858-7825. Newcomers welcome. Email [AdultServices@dscl.org](mailto:AdultServices@dscl.org) for details.
- Every 1st Thur. Apr.-Dec. *First Thursday Dripping Springs*, merchants extend their hours until later in the evening and have a variety of specials which might include one-day sales, special activities, food, music and art. For more info visit [FirstThursdayDrippingSprings.org](http://FirstThursdayDrippingSprings.org).
- Every 3rd Thur. at 7pm, Thirsty Thursday is co-sponsored by the City of Dripping Springs and New Life Lutheran Church at City Hall, 511 W. Mercer St. Area poets, musicians, songwriters and storytellers share work. For details call 512-858-2024.
- Every 3rd Thur. 7pm, DS VFW Post 2933 invites all eligible veterans with foreign service to 101 Old Fitzhugh Rd. Call 858-5637.
- Every 3rd Thur. 7pm, Family Support Group for family members, parents, adult children, and partners of individuals living with a mental health condition. Meets at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church, Room 1. Contact [info@namicentraltx.org](mailto:info@namicentraltx.org) for more information.
- Every 4th Thur. 6pm, Photographers of Dripping Springs meets at the Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, 301 Hays Country Acres. Visit [Photographersofds.us](http://Photographersofds.us) or on Facebook.
- Every 2nd Fri. Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group meets at 9am at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit (301 Hays Country Acres at Hwy 290W). Childcare available. For information call 512 858-4924 or email [DrippingSpringsMOPS@gmail.com](mailto:DrippingSpringsMOPS@gmail.com).
- Every 1st Sat. On or after the full moon, 7:30pm, Rambo Masonic Lodge 426 meets. Dinner at 6:30pm. Call 512-858-7177.
- Sun. Feb. 14, Valentine's Day

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# The COVID-19 vaccine

by Angela Solis



Some people are still “on the fence” about whether to get the new COVID vaccine. My review of the science, as well as reviews by health professionals and scientists who have much more expertise, has led me to conclude that you *should* get the vaccine. I want to share with you

an explanation of how it was developed.

Anything foreign to your body, such as a virus or protein, gets attacked by your own immune cells. It takes time to ramp up production to build a full attack (a few days), meanwhile the nasty COVID virus begins replicating in your body after you are exposed. Once your immune system fights off the virus, it “remembers” it with its memory cells.

The scientists found the part of the DNA code from the COVID virus and made a copy of that blueprint as mRNA (messenger RNA) version. mRNA is literally just like a set of instructions about how to make something. These mRNA instructions literally “are” the vaccine. The vaccine itself contains *no* actual part of the virus. When you get the vaccine, your body’s cells say, “sure, I will follow those instructions and make this protein.” Your immune system immediately sees this new protein being produced by your body and starts attacking it.

Your body bombs the heck out of this protein and destroys it. Now your memory cells will “remember” that protein, and exactly how to destroy it. Meanwhile, your body also breaks down the

mRNA instructions pretty quickly too, since they are no longer needed. So, the mRNA vaccine is also gone from your body permanently.

When a COVID virus enters your body, your body’s immune system has “memory” of that protein, and uses those blueprints to immediately attack the virus, *before* the protein drills into your cells! The mRNA COVID vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna are actually brilliant at a science level, more so than previously manufactured vaccines.

I hope this brief explanation helps you decide, as I have, that we all need to take this vaccine ASAP. Please refer to our website [www.martinswellness.com](http://www.martinswellness.com) for further information.

*Angela Solis, RPh is the Pharmacist in Charge at Dripping Springs Pharmacy. You may contact Angela at 512-858-7935. Dripping Springs Pharmacy is located at 100 Commons Rd. Ste. 1.*

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# Natural, non-surgical option for joint pain

by Breca Tracy, PhD



What could life look like without joint pain? How could this become your reality?

Regenerative approaches, such as utilizing quality tissue products, have the capability to become permanent solutions for joint pain. The science behind how this process works, as we understand it, is pretty phenomenal. For instance, once

a tissue product is injected directly into a joint or tendon, many things can happen. 1) The recipient can start to experience an anti-inflammatory effect, as the body responds to the injected product. Many components exist within the tissue product/s that play roles in the healing process. There are agents that signal communication to the body on how to repair itself. There are also agents that serve as scaffolding to provide a protective cushion that both supports damaged joints, cartilage, tendons, ligaments and other soft tissues.

In conjunction to the anti-inflammatory benefits, 2) the regenerative aspects also begin. Soft tissue restoration and cushioning are permanent. Regenerative Therapy is a means to introduce a new cushion, and possibly newly incorporated soft tissues into your body, which become a part of you for the rest of your life.

Alternative therapies for joint pain exist, such as steroid injections and gel injections. These methods can help with joint pain,

but are most likely temporary and can sometimes have negative long-term side effects depending on the product. For more information, please contact us and we would love to further educate you on the regenerative therapies we offer here in Dripping Springs.

*We have a very unique team of experts here in Dripping Springs. Come see us, call us, or email us! Dr. Breca Tracy currently serves as Director of Science & Operations at REGENERATE Dripping Springs. Breca has resided in Dripping since 2007 after obtaining her Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Contact us at 512-368-4548, 800 Hwy 290 W, Building F, Suite 200. [www.naturalhealingtx.com](http://www.naturalhealingtx.com).*

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# Falling

by Michelle Olson, PT

Balance difficulties can affect people of any age, however, falls in people 65 or older hold strong statistics. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four Americans over the age of 65 fall each year, every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the ER

for a fall, and every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of non-fatal trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults.

Having good balance is the ability to control and maintain your body's position, whether you are moving or remaining still. Good balance helps you walk without staggering, get up from a chair without falling, climb stairs without tripping, and bend over without losing your balance. In order to maintain good balance, you need two out of your three main systems to be intact. Vision, hearing, and proprioception (feeling of where you are in space). As we age all of these can decline. Corrections in vision and hearing can assist in maintaining these systems. Medical influences can also affect our balance. Side effects from medication, blood pressure, nutrition, strength, joint mobility, and medical history can all be a negative influence on our balance

Many people have heard of inner ear problems and dizziness. There is a high percentage of balance difficulties in the older population that are related to disturbances of the inner ear. Vertigo is

described by the feeling that you or things around you are spinning. This is a common symptom with disturbances of the inner ear. Problems with the inner ear can be helped by visiting a physical therapist.

Having a physician assess the medical influences that may be a cause to the balance difficulties is recommended. Good balance is important to help you get around, stay independent, and carry out your daily activities. Your physician can also recommend or refer you to physical therapy where a licensed physical therapist can assess your balance and work with you to maintain your independence and safety.

*Michelle is a licensed physical therapist and works full-time at Kethley Physical Therapy. She received her Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Kethley Physical Therapy has been providing physical therapy to the Dripping Springs and surrounding communities for 20 years! KPT has two convenient locations and seven licensed physical therapists to treat all your musculoskeletal needs. We are open from 7am to 6pm Monday-Friday and can be reached at 512-858-5191 or at [www.KethleyPT.com](http://www.KethleyPT.com).*

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# National Children's Dental Health Month

by Ron S. White, DDS



Every February we celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month. This provides our office the opportunity to talk to children about the importance of their oral health. Here are some tips to help you with your little ones:

## AGES 3 TO 7:

### 1) *Show, Don't Tell*

Floss once a day, and brush and rinse twice a day, every day. Share the experience with your child. When leading by example, kids are likely to imitate behavior and make oral hygiene feel less like a "kid thing."

### 2) *Make Oral Care Fun*

Turn flossing into a funny-face contest, or make brushing a "Simon says" game by calling out different parts of the mouth. Try rinsing with mouthwash as a family and see who can go the longest without laughing.

### 3) *Reward Healthy Behavior*

Offer rewards for achieving brushing, flossing, and rinsing goals. Post a calendar in the bathroom and reward kids with a gold star for each day of great oral care. At the end of each month, praise kids for a job well done.

## AGES 8 TO 10:

### 1. *Provide Proof*

Visual cues serve as powerful motivation for kids. Post pictures of great smiles of favorite role models in the bathroom. Use a children's mouthwash that attracts the particles that brushing can leave

behind, giving kids reason to believe that rinsing works—the proof is in the sink.

### 2) *Let Kids Decide*

Give kids the freedom to make decisions. Let them choose their favorite toothbrush, a cool toothpaste, and type of floss. Then keep the bathroom stocked.

### 3) *Clean to the Beat*

Brushing, flossing, and rinsing are all rhythmic activities. Play music to help kids enjoy oral care routines. On average, brushing should last two minutes and rinsing sixty seconds. Together these activities last the length of a typical song.

## AGES 11 TO 12:

### 1) *Embrace the Power of the Brush*

At this age, kids become increasingly aware and often self-conscious of appearances. Remind kids about the power of a healthy smile to build their confidence.

### 2) *Recruit Others*

Enlist older siblings and other family members to encourage proper oral hygiene. Another voice for good care can be influential and make a powerful impact on kids' behavior.

*Dr. Ron White is located at 4189 E. Hwy 290. He has served Dripping Springs Smiles for over 15 years. He and his team strive to provide comfortable, compassionate care in a calm and luxurious office. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 512-858-LOVE Your Smile (5683).*



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## Dr. Piazza voted top cosmetic surgeon by *by Rocco C. Piazza, M.D* Austin Fit magazine

Dr. Rocco Piazza of The Piazza Center in Austin, Texas has been voted one of the Best Cosmetic Surgeons by Austin Fit Magazine!

We are so excited to congratulate Dr. Piazza for this outstanding accomplishment. One of the top plastic surgeons in

Austin, Dr. Piazza is a board-certified plastic surgeon who loves to serve his community. We appreciate being voted to receive this top honor.

2020 has been a challenging year, to say the least. Despite those challenges, Dr. Piazza and The Piazza Center Team have worked so hard to evolve and grow through the changes presented in the past year continuing to find innovative ways to serve our patients and the Austin Community.

The recognition by Austin Fit Magazine and all of you is more meaningful than ever. We pledge to continue to serve you, support you and do all that we can to lead by example and help you to Live Confidently.

Thank you, Austin Fit Magazine for recognizing Dr. Piazza's talent and expertise as one of the best cosmetic surgeons in Austin! Check out the Austin Fit Best Of 2020 issue.

*Rocco C. Piazza, M.D is a Diplomate of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, as well as a national spokesperson for the ASPS. Call 512-288-8200 and visit the web site [www.thepiazzacenter.com](http://www.thepiazzacenter.com).*



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## Virus Times: *Shots in arms* *by Leslie Tourish, LPC*

Growing up I took vaccines for granted. They were this inconvenience administered in the dreaded shot form. Made worse by the fact that they were given to me by my physician father. I have memories of my father coming home after work, setting his black leather doctor's

bag on the kitchen table while in the background my mom, a nurse, cooked dinner. My parents visited while he pulled out a vaccine vial and loaded it into a syringe as I stood in the doorway, filled with dread. Then it was time for me to be jabbed in the arm with this mysterious shot because it was what needed to be done. So in the 1960's, my brother and I didn't question this lining up for vaccines, but we sure weren't big fans of this unpleasant turn of events while the smell of baked chicken filled the air.

Today I better understand the power in those small vials filled with precious liquid. Therein lies years of scientific discovery and hard work. How many of us know someone who's suffered with polio? I've known a few people. One in particular was an older caseworker with whom I worked at a small clinic. She wore a leg brace and leaned heavily on a cane as she went up and down the halls. She shared with me one afternoon that by the time the polio vaccine had come out when she was a child, she'd already been infected with a mild case of the virus a year earlier. As she told her story, the words were rote, but the regret in her voice was still raw. If she could go back in time she would have crawled over a mile of cut glass for Dr. Jonas Salk's polio vaccine, of that I had no doubt.

And now the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are finally being distributed, the scramble to obtain one is on. Normally with this column, what I write about isn't timely. However with the virus, time is everything, so when this publishes I won't know how the

distribution has gone these past weeks. Hopefully better than it is now on January 11th, as I sit here at my keyboard with snow still clumped outside. News stories of older people lined up overnight for the vaccine in Florida are shameful, especially in a country as rich as ours. The talk so many of us are having is when can we get the vaccine? Are you in the 1A or 1B category?

I was among the lucky ones and was able to receive the Moderna vaccine at our local HEB pharmacy in Dripping Springs. As I sat down in the immunization room with the pharmacist, Adam, he said he had been gone from work for scheduled time off, but came back early to support his over-worked staff once they got their first shipment of vaccines. The phones were ringing off the hook with people scouring the area in their search. After he gave me my shot, he applied a band-aid, said my arm might be sore for a few days, and to return in 28 days for the second dose. When the enemy is invisible and the weight of threat is constant, potential relief is immense. I thanked him, went to my car in the parking lot, and put my head down and cried.

*Leslie Tourish, LPC, is a Dripping Springs psychotherapist in private practice. To contact Leslie, please go to [www.leslietourish.com](http://www.leslietourish.com) or [www.latourish.com](http://www.latourish.com)*



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## Separation anxiety

by Diana Ozimek

Having a dog with separation anxiety (SA) is not fun. It can be a long road to recovery with lots of good and bad days. If your dog is destructive when you leave, breaks out of the crate or constantly tries, leaves a puddle of drool in the crate or eliminates each time you leave, you are

most likely experiencing SA. Below are a few ideas to get your dog started on the road to recovery. Using a combination of multiple exercises is the best route to start.

**Crate training:** Use the crate throughout the day, not just when it's time to leave. Feed meals in the crate. Always provide a favorite treat like a Kong with frozen peanut butter. Play crate games and teach them to hold themselves in the crate even with the door open.

**Counterconditioning:** Your dog most likely has a trigger that indicates you are leaving, like picking up your keys or putting on your shoes. Practice the same rituals as if you were leaving the house but don't leave. Go pick up your keys, put your shoes on and then go about your business in the home. Start building different associations with these actions.

**Training:** If your dog is always underfoot, teach them a place command. Have them practice self-control and holding themselves in a spot away from you. They can have an item like a bone or a favorite chew toy to learn how to self-soothe when they can't be next to you.

If you have a mild case, it can be as easy as changing the location or type of crate, giving the dog more exercise before you leave or using a different type of containment area like a pen instead of a crate. Be aware of your actions, keep your departure and arrival low key. You aren't going to talk your dog out of its anxiety.

If you have a severe case you will want to speak to your veterinarian to see if medication might be helpful while you work on the issue as well as bringing in a professional dog trainer for guidance.

*Diana Ozimek is the owner and lead trainer at Good Dog in the Making. She is excited to bring her puppy training expertise to her new community and help families raise a confident, well mannered dog. [www.gooddoginthemaking.com](http://www.gooddoginthemaking.com), 773-899-1960, [training@gooddoginthemaking.com](mailto:training@gooddoginthemaking.com)*



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## Pet dental care

by Frank Shuman, DVM

Out of all the members of one's family, the chances are it will not be difficult to guess who has the worst dental hygiene: the pets. They do not brush their teeth, nor do they floss, and this goes on for years. Without care, plaque accumulates and slowly eats away at the gums and bone around the tooth. This is called

periodontal disease. Over eighty-five percent of pets have periodontal disease by age three. Signs that it is time for a professional cleaning of your dog or cat's teeth are swollen red gums and yellowish to brown tartar buildup especially to the molars and fangs.

A "dental" for your pet includes the same care your own dentist would perform for a routine cleaning, including removal of all tartar, polishing and fluoride treatment. The notable difference is that our veterinary patients must be briefly anesthetized to get the job done well. At Dripping Springs Animal Hospital we thoroughly examine each patient before anesthesia and recommend pre-anesthetic blood tests to recognize problems before anesthesia. We use extremely safe isoflurane gas anesthesia and sophisticated monitoring during the procedure for every patient. Dental x-rays will be taken to assess the extent of dental disease and recommend extractions or other therapies when indicated. Patients receiving routine dentals will go home the same day with fresh breath and a

much healthier mouth.

The next question you make ask is, what can I do at home to prevent periodontal disease. Home dental care will significantly lengthen the time between necessary cleanings with your veterinarian. Unfortunately it won't completely replace the need for anesthetic dental cleanings. Studies in animals have shown that brushing three times a week was adequate to maintain healthy teeth and gums but daily brushing was needed to control existing gingivitis. Animal toothpastes come in pet-preferred flavors and are meant to be swallowed and are typically available through your veterinarian or pet supply store. Dental wipes and rinses can be used with some pets that won't tolerate brushing. There are also dental treats and diets that can help but brushing is the gold standard for at home dental care.

Good dental care can add up to two years to your pet's life and make them a better companion as well. If you've not considered it before, ask your veterinarian to discuss this important care for your four-legged family members.

*Frank Shuman IV is the Medical Director at Drippings Springs Animal Hospital, serving the area for over 30+ years. Located at 1520 E. HWY 290. He can be reached at 512-858-4787.*



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# I love you

by Albert Gonzalez

These are words that we all long to hear from those we genuinely care about. We carefully choose our words when we're engaged with those who mean the world to us. On Valentine's Day we scramble to get cards with meaning for those we love. Forget the chocolate, show your love with some-

thing they can really sink into - financial security.

Providing for those you care about in times of need shows them you have their utmost care in mind when you protect them from financial calamity. You go to work every day to provide for your family. Unfortunately, we all don't get to come home every day. Sudden changes to our lives are happening all around us. Look at the statistics for COVID deaths! Those more than four-hundred-thousand didn't think their lives would be any different from February 14, 2020.

Young parents with children need to have coverage for each other to support their family as they grow up. Home mortgage, car payments, credit card bills, home, auto, and health insurance - let alone saving for retirement or education - can add up quickly. How long will a million dollars last if your paycheck isn't there? After five years of readjustment, living on savings and your work life insurance of two-times your salary, can your spouse and children maintain the same healthy lifestyle and pay for college you promised at the altar?

Even empty nesters have an opportunity to show their love for the family as well. The cost of memory care here locally is over \$7,000 a month. Life insurance with a critical care rider can help defuse the expense no matter how well you think you have planned. Also, losing half of your Social Security income as a couple and becoming a single filer at tax time can play havoc with the best made plans.

This year, get the chocolates, deliver the flowers. And let me help you say "I love you" by delivering the security your family needs.

*Al Gonzalez MBA is a Senior Vice President/Partner with JTL Wealth Partners. He's affectionally known as "the Love Doctor" to his client, as he helps them provide security for themselves and their loved ones. Al is a registered independent advisor who offers securities, investment product, and services along with Life, Disability, and Long-Term Care Insurance offered through LPL Financial. Member FINRA/SIPC*



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# 2021 President's Circle Investors at the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce

by Susan Kimball

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## What does one month of real estate inventory mean to you?

by Steve Mallett

Austin real estate is in uncharted waters without a map or compass. Our market has heated up to never-before-seen fervor. Home values are racing skyward and no indicators show the brakes being applied anytime soon. Most homes under \$1,000,000 see many offers and almost all sell for over list price. One of our Keller Williams

listings received ninety-six offers in forty-eight hours and sold for \$85,000 over the list price!

Why is this phenomenon happening? Buyers are coming here from all corners of the country. They arrive daily in the hundreds drawn by our great restaurants, live music, active lifestyles and a bohemian fun lifestyle. National news is consumed with Austin. Many journalists consider Austin a tech capital and possibly the new Silicon Valley.

Greater Austin has not done a great job managing our growth in the past few years. Many cities increased the demands on developers and put up huge roadblocks to hinder growth inside and just outside their city limits. As a result, the supply of housing has not kept up with demand. Cities have come up with stifling rules and regulations, designed that not only increase the fees they can charge, but that also hindered development.

When you have high demand and low supply you end up with a sellers' market. A balanced market is six months of inventory and we have just dipped below one month of inventory citywide. That means that at the current sales rate we would run out of homes to sell to all these buyers in less than thirty days.

What does that mean for all of you lucky sellers? It means you will sell your home for more money than you ever thought possible. Your home will sell quickly, so you better have a plan for where you want to move. Your property will probably get many offers over the list price and will sell in a short period of time. Home sellers have something everyone wants and people are moving here with wads of cash looking to buy.

If you have considered selling your home, now is the time to do it. You hold more leverage in the sale than you have at any other time in history. The benefit of selling right now is the decrease in headache (for you but not for your agent) and your home will spend fewer days on the market. It's an easy time to make mistakes, so hire an experienced agent to guide you through this challenging but highly rewarding time.

*Steve Mallett has been selling real estate in Dripping Springs and Austin since 2003. His team can help with all of your real estate needs. Residential, commercial, farm and ranch. Call today 512-829-2062 or 512-627-7018.*

## Financial protection can be a great Valentine's Day gift

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor*



Reagan Smith

On Valentine's Day, you can give your spouse a traditional gift such as flowers. But once you've done that, why not think about something that can provide longer-lasting benefits for your loved one? Specifically, think about ways to provide a lifetime of financial protection. You can do this in several ways, including:

*Protection while you're alive:* As you know, it's usually necessary for

both partners or spouses to work to maintain a household – so if your income were to disappear, even temporarily, it could present a big problem. Your current employer could offer disability income insurance as an employee benefit, but it might not be enough for your needs, so you may want to consider purchasing your own policy. Keep in mind that disability coverage typically only lasts for a few years and probably won't completely replace your income. Consequently, it's a good idea to build up your financial resources in other ways, so contribute as much as you can afford to your 401(k) and IRA during your working years. If you do become disabled, it may be possible for you to tap into these funds without incurring a tax penalty, though regular taxes may still be due.

*Protection if you need care:* If you were ever to need some type of long-term care, such as an extended stay in a nursing home or the services of a home health care worker, you might find the costs

to be considerable – and possibly a severe burden on your spouse or partner. The average cost for a private room in a nursing home is about \$100,000 per year, while a home health aide costs about \$50,000 per year, according to Genworth, an insurance company. And Medicare typically pays only a small percentage of these expenses. To protect your spouse or partner – not to mention your grown children – from possibly having to deal with these costs, consider purchasing long-term care insurance. Or you could purchase a "hybrid" policy that combines long-term care benefits with those offered by a traditional life insurance policy. So, if you never needed long-term care, your policy would pay a death benefit to your spouse or partner or another beneficiary you've named.

*Protection when you're gone:* If you were to pass away, would your spouse or partner have the financial resources to continue the same lifestyle, pay the mortgage or, if you have children, provide for their education? If the answer is no, then you need to maintain adequate life insurance. How much is enough? There's no one right answer for everyone. You might hear that you need a death benefit that's worth seven or eight times your annual income, but the actual amount should be based on a variety of factors – your age, size of family, current income, spouse or partner's income, and so on. A financial professional can help you determine the appropriate amount of coverage.

*Reagan Smith, Financial Advisor specializes in helping individual investors and business owners reach their financial goals. She can be reached at 512-894-3793.*





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## Dog love

by Deborah Carter Mastelotto

In the past, I was always a cat owner. When a dog appeared in some arena of my life, it was someone else's dog, even if I was the one feeding it/him/her/they. Not being a dog owner, I never had to worry about rushing home from work to let the dog out, or replacing a clawed-up door screen because

my dog was suffering an abandonment freak-out.

I've always liked the independence and apparent apathy of cats—their casual interest in me worked better with my work-a-holic single-mom lifestyle than a dog's neediness. Dogs have always seemed to me a bit, well, co-dependent. But, things have changed in my life, and I have changed—I married a man who loves dogs. He's always had at least one and when I met him he had several, none of them small or breed specific. He loves other folk's dogs as well, and we can't pass a dog-and-owner combo on foot or in a car without my guy fussing over the dog.

This has taught me a few things about dogs and dog owners—dogs can be comforting in their neediness, and in return dog owners can be comforted and yes, more compassionate as a result of loving them. There is a real something about a dog when they look at us and our eyes lock—that gives us a feeling of love and ac-

ceptance and belonging. I recently learned what that something is: Smithsonian magazine says a dog's gaze hijacks the brain's maternal bonding system to cause both dog and human brains to secrete oxytocin, and feelings of love. Our minds and bodies use oxytocin to strengthen emotional bonds between us, mothers and children, husbands and wives, people and each other.

I recently read an article in The Guardian about a sudden surge of demand for dogs, in shelters and with breeders, noticeable beginning the first month of the coronavirus lockdown and quarantine in March. I can see why. We humans are trying to fill the voids left from losing our work environments to home offices, from isolated kids who need something to do, or no work but lots of free time, or from living alone with no way to safely socialize. Scientists say a cuddle with our dog can alleviate stress, and disperses the 'pleasure hormone' dopamine, boosting our mood. Dogs make us happier and more compassionate. No wonder the entire U.S. is experiencing a renewed need for canines, and it's exciting and hopeful that we have a dog in the White House again.

*Deborah Carter Mastelotto is a pathological entrepreneur, a minor student of quantum physics, unapologetic observer of human nature and undefatigable advice-giver. pinkchronicity.com. Salon located at 511 Old Fitzhugh Rd. 512-447-2888*



## The 411 on chemical peels

by Karen Laine,  
Para-Medical Aesthetician

If you want more flawless, youthful skin with fewer fine lines and wrinkles, you're describing results you can get with chemical peels. Here's a more in-depth look at what they are, the results you can expect, and whether this skin care treatment is suitable for your complexion.

What is a chemical peel? This treatment breaks down the uppermost dead and dehydrated layers of skin to create a firmer, more youthful appearance with fewer wrinkles and a more even skin tone. There are a variety of chemical peel options, which is why you might have seen diverse chemical peel reviews saying different things about recovery time, maintenance, and overall results.

Light chemical peel: *Many people with minor skin issues choose a light chemical peel.* It improves texture, clarity and skin tone while reducing wrinkles. It's subtle at first, but with repeated treatments, the results are more apparent. No recovery period is necessary for light chemical peels, but it's best to protect this new, undamaged skin layer with sunblock to preserve the results.

Medium chemical peel: *After a single medium chemical peel, the skin is noticeably smoother and younger looking.* Patients might need a bit of time to heal after the procedure. It's wise to avoid sun exposure for several months after the peel so the color of skin doesn't change. Use a pigment suppressive home care product pre and post peel. The use of sunblock is highly recommended.

Deep chemical peel: *Extremely dramatic results occur with deep chemical peels, however, you can expect healing time to be necessary.* Your doctor might also recommend that you keep your face protected from the sun permanently to avoid changes in skin color. Again, pre and post peel treatment with a pigment suppressive home care product will be required in addition to mandatory sunblock use.

Before you schedule any type of chemical peel, your skin should be professionally evaluated and the skin care treatment customized according to your specific needs. The goal is to determine the chemical peel that will provide maximum results with minimal down time.

*Karen Laine is a para-medical aesthetician and makeup artist with 23 years experience. Contact her at 512-847-8052. Her office is located at 120 Joe Wimberley Blvd. Suite 106, in Wimberley.*



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## Well water storage systems

by Randy Lawrence

During times of drought, there is a great deal of concern with the possibility of wells going dry in the area. Many people are forced to take action when they no longer have a constant supply of water to their home. Some have to replace well pumps, only to find that the

old pump failed due to low water conditions. Others must drill new wells in order to access a larger supply of water. In most cases, these repairs are unexpected, and time-consuming. During severe drought, many well service companies are overwhelmed with calls, causing some families to endure days without a supply of fresh water. A water storage tank would be helpful to many of these homeowners.

The benefits of a properly installed storage tank are numerous. These tanks are normally installed near the well so that the well pump sends the water directly into the storage tank. This removes much of the back pressure from your well pump so that the workload on the pump is greatly reduced. The water can be sprayed into the top of the storage tank, eliminating odors which may be present. The water is then re-pressurized by an external pump which can maintain higher pressure, and is much less costly to repair or replace than a submersible pump. Protection systems are also available for both pumps to ensure longevity.

Even on existing storage tanks, an early warning system, such as a light or alarm, can be installed to activate when the water in

the tank drops to a certain level, indicating the need to check your well for problems. This buys you the time you need to contact a professional. Should you happen to run out of water before the well is operational, there are water delivery services which can bring you a supply of water to replenish your storage tank, thereby maintaining your day-to-day routine while you await repairs. For homes in remote areas, stored water is also a valuable asset for firefighters.

Now is an ideal time to consider adding a storage tank to your well. Then you will be prepared before another Texas summer takes its toll on your well.

Randy Lawrence is the owner of ProQuality Water Systems, a full service water treatment company. He is one of only six Class III Certified Water Treatment Specialists in Hays County (LIC# WT0002693). With over 20 years of experience he has serviced Wimberley and surrounding areas for over a decade.

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## Start with a list

by Lindley Pond

Happy 2021! Hoping this finds all of you doing well. I'm writing this as we enjoy a rarity in Texas; it's snowing! Nature is an amazing thing, never as we think. Twists and turns, good and bad, it's part of what makes things in the outdoor arena so interesting. This past year has had a "slowdown," a "take a look around you" affect for

most of us.

Whether it meant massive clean out, gifting items not being used or pondering what to do with our outdoor spaces, it's been much different for all. Being safe and sheltered has given us a new appreciation for what is ours and what we call home. With a bit of planning and baby steps in implementation, folks are finding out how truly enjoyable it is to be home, spending time where you made the biggest purchase of your existence. Creating ways to grow food, planning to gather with family, or finding ways to satisfy the bird lover in you, have all become forefront to us.

Things may seem daunting as you look out over some areas that have been neglected, yet with a plan and steps, it all becomes more manageable both in your head and for your wallet. Whatever speaks to you concerning your outdoor space, we are here to help

you achieve your dreams and goals. Start with a list; some things will be necessities—drainage control, screening from neighbors—while other items may be icing on the cake. Don't scrimp on your list, go pie in the sky and then let us help make it comfortable, manageable and most importantly, *fun*. Enjoy the ride. Praying 2021 brings much better things for all, Lindley.

We're here to help fulfill your "outside dreams." Call us for a free consultation and design. Lindley Pond is owner of Lindley Pond Landscaping. We've been helping folks in Central Texas for over 15 years. Give us a call for design and installation of your new "lawn" at 512-775-1629.



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## Litigation: *Can we think critically in 2021?*

by Roland Brown



As I write this article, there are less than thirty-two hours left in 2020, and you will read these thoughts in 2021. I am thinking of things that have held my attention this year. A pandemic unprecedented in our lifetimes; a national election in which more Americans voted than ever before; we have observed civility and rationality in civic discourse

virtually disappear; occasionally, we have been fortunate to see wonderful acts of kindness, and, particularly among our front-line responders and workers, acts of selfless devotion for which we can never adequately say “thank you.”

What concerns me greatly at this moment is the extent to which facts, objective truth, and the meaning of words have lost their foundational place in America. As lawyers in the courtroom, judges and juries hold our feet to the fire so we deal in real facts, and we believe that in most instances, as each side brings forward provable facts and argues their differing conclusions from those facts, the truth emerges. Contrary to this, public discourse today is fraught with use of selective facts to reach unsupportable conclusions, and with an appalling failure to always ask, “who, what, when, where, how and why.” I cringe when, as happened earlier today, someone I consider a friend, spouts off the latest “revelation” from some news source or social media post that even a simple application of the “who, what, when...” test would reveal to be untrue or, at least, grossly misleading.

We have seen language itself devalued by the misuse of words. What does “socialism” mean? Does “capitalism” necessarily exclude “socialism” or vice versa? What does “racism” mean? Does the phrase “black lives matter” mean, ipso facto, that “blue lives (don’t) matter”? What does a young black man hear when his neighbor responds, “all lives matter”? You can think of many other such examples. This is not political; it is foundational to a functional society. We are not all lawyers, but we are all capable of critical thinking. Let us then, in 2021, think beyond our predispositions, demand proof, ask ourselves if the proof offered is logical and supports the conclusion being made, and let us require that words be used fairly and in a manner we can all understand. Otherwise, the rabbit hole awaits us.

*Roland Brown is a litigation attorney with forty-plus years experience handling civil litigation throughout Texas. For more information call 512-847-2500 or visit RolandsLaw.com.*

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