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# OUTLOOK

Volume 18 Issue 1 • Dripping Springs, Texas • March 2021

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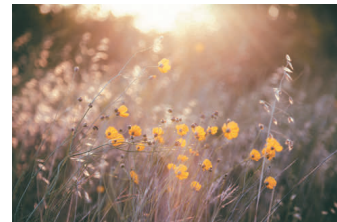
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## One moment

This month, one year has passed since the COVID-19 pandemic began affecting my life. It's interesting how we remember small, seemingly insignificant moments when such a dramatic change comes to our lives. For me, it was in my garden on a pre-spring day. I was admiring how the lavender planted in one bed had already bloomed in a large bunch. My husband walked up to me with his mobile phone in his hand. He told me he had been scrolling through the day's news stories and he was worried. I recall that he looked at me and said, "We're going to need to self-quarantine."



I had read about the virus and had seen television news reports on it, but I had no idea, until that moment, how it would alter my daily existence. Within days our social gatherings had ceased, I waited in line to enter grocery stores wearing a mask and I checked the news reports every hour.

A year later, I still wear a mask everywhere I go and my social gatherings are on Zoom. But my lavender is blooming again in the same spot. That small fact gives me enormous hope which I share with you on this month's cover.

While so much has changed, and I've adapted to a new way of living, some things have remained unchanged. I can still walk out into my garden on a glorious pre-spring day and rake my hand across the tiny blue and white flowers with bright green leaves. The scent they release reminds me of days gone by and brings me hope for the future.

And for now, that is enough.

Thank you for joining us.

*Victoria*

## DSOutlook.com



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# 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.

Contact us to find out how you  
can submit information, photos or  
promote your business directly to  
over 13,000 addresses.

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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.

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## Heart-healthy nutrients

by Lauren Meyer

Your heart is about the size of your fist, sitting behind your ribcage and in between your lungs. Its job is to pump blood throughout your entire body, carrying oxygen, fuel, hormones, and other important nutrients to your organs. It whisks away the waste products of metabolism and then cycles all over again. This extraordinary

organ will beat about 2.5 billion times in an average lifetime. You need to take care of your heart with a few important nutrients!

Omega-3-fatty acids EPA, DHA, and ALA are “essential” fatty acids, which means that they cannot be manufactured by your body and have to be acquired from your diet. They are an integral part of cell membranes throughout the body and provide the starting point for making hormones that regulate blood clotting, contraction, and relaxation of artery walls.

Omega-3-fatty acids found in fish oil promote cardiovascular health by:

- stabilizing blood flow in and around the heart
- reducing triglyceride levels
- lowering blood pressure
- preventing blood clots
- reducing inflammation

Another essential nutrient for heart health is CoQ10. CoQ10 helps generate energy in almost every cell of your body, and its natural production tends to decrease with age. It is a powerful antioxidant and it protects against damage from toxic free radicals.

Statin medications deplete your CoQ10 levels and supplementation may be necessary.

CoQ10 promotes cardiovascular health by:

- reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease
- reducing inflammation
- lowering blood pressure

At Martin’s Wellness Pharmacies, i.e. Dripping Springs Pharmacy and Lamar Plaza Drug Store, we recommend taking Mega EPA/DHA by Life Extension as your omega-3 supplement and Premier Research Lab’s CoQ10 for boosting your heart health and resilience.

Stay well. Stay healthy.

Lauren Meyer MS, CNS

*Lauren has an M.S. in Human Nutrition and is a CNS (Certified Nutrition Specialist); she serves as a Wellness Consultant at two Martin’s Wellness Pharmacies, (Dripping Springs Pharmacy in Dripping Springs and Lamar Plaza Drug Store in South Austin)*

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## Do you wonder why men’s faces look so youthful? by Breca Tracy, PhD



They shave them often, typically! I am not saying you have to shave your face, ladies, but exfoliation is key for our face and bodies. I mean, look at your legs! Definitionally speaking, exfoliation is the process of removing dead skin cells from the surface of your skin using a chemical, granular substance, or exfoliation tool. Your skin naturally sheds dead skin cells

to make room for new cells on average every thirty days. Did you know that? Sometimes, dead cells do not shed completely so help them out!

At REGENERATE, we have a variety of products that can help exfoliate those dead skin cells! We carry an amazing medical grade skin care line known as, Jan Marini Skin Research. As a scientist, I love this company and their products because 1) *they work*, but more importantly, 2) the company conducts clinical studies on all of their products to understand their active ingredients and how they interact with their other products. The products are buildable, meaning they work in conjunction with one another.

If you are interested in learning more about exfoliation, or need a good skin care routine in general, give us a call and one of our skin care experts can help you reach your skin care goals! Trust

me, I was a bar soap girl, and boy what a difference I’ve see in my skin. I’m in love.

*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.*

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# Trigger finger

by Dr. Stella Torres, PT, DPT, CHT

Trigger finger (stenosing tenosynovitis) is a common condition of the hand that results in pain, point tenderness, stiffness, popping, clicking and/or locking of the involved digit(s). Any finger may be affected, including the thumb, and may occur on more than one digit

at a time. Symptoms are typically worse in the morning and with repetitive or forceful grasping. Triggering most often occurs at the junction between the flexor tendon and the A-1 pulley located in the palm at the base of each digit. Flexor tendons are attached to muscles that bend the fingers and thumb. They pass through a tube or sheath underneath a series of tunnels called pulleys. These structures act as a pulley system to keep the tendons gliding along the bones and joints of the digits as they bend and straighten the thumb and fingers. The sheath may become irritated and inflamed resulting in the space within the pulley becoming narrow. This inflammation then leads to the previously mentioned symptoms. If the inflammation is severe, the involved digit may lock in a bent position because the muscles that bend the fingers are stronger than the ones that straighten them. Triggering often occurs as a result of repetitive gripping or blunt trauma and occurs more frequently in women than men and in persons between 40 and 60 years of age. Susceptibility for the condition is also higher in individuals with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, gout and pregnant women.

Hand therapy can be an effective management approach to

avoid surgery for this condition. The therapist would look for tenderness at the A-1 pulley, thickening of the tendon sheath/tendon at this site and triggering, popping, clicking or locking. If triggering is evident, rest is recommended by avoiding the aggravating movements and activities. This may require splinting the affected digit which a hand therapist can custom fabricate. Manual therapy techniques are typically administered to minimize the inflammation and the associated pain, point tenderness and swelling. Exercises would also likely be prescribed to address any restrictions in mobility and deficits in strength.

The specialty of hand therapy is rare and the community of Dripping Springs has a certified hand therapist on staff at Kethley Physical Therapy. If you have a concern regarding the possibility of having a trigger finger or thumb, schedule an appointment with Stella Torres, PT, DPT, CHT. She can assess your specific situation and determine if hand therapy is appropriate for you.

*The specialty of hand therapy is rare and the community of Dripping Springs has a certified hand therapist on staff at Kethley Physical Therapy. If you have a concern regarding the possibility of having a trigger finger or thumb, schedule an appointment with Stella Torres, PT, DPT, CHT. She can assess your specific situation and determine if hand therapy is appropriate for you.*

Contact Kethley Physical Therapy at 512-858-5191 or KethleyPT.com. Kethley Physical Therapy has seven physical therapists in two locations and has been in practice for 15 years. 800 W. Hwy 290, Bldg B and 14101 W. Hwy 290, Bldg 500.

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## It's not just a cleaning

by Ron S. White, DDS



Prevention should serve as a lifestyle pattern for total health, not the least of which is dental health. Prevention in dentistry leads to improved long-term oral health and reduced dental costs. It encourages a bright smile, fresh breath, and an overall good feeling or personal security.

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Fluoride is applied to your teeth to prevent decay, and root sensitivity and root cavities.

Sealants can be easily applied to the chewing surfaces of children's teeth to protect against future decay.

Dental disease is a silent invader, presenting itself in various forms such as puffy, bleeding gums, cavities, oral cancer and abscesses. Although your mouth may appear to be in good health at this time, stresses, body changes, life changes, medications, ill-

ness, and age can tax your immune system.

Maintaining regular oral hygiene appointments and follow-ups with your dentist offers you the assurance that any problems regarding your oral care will be addressed immediately. Prevention is your insurance policy toward a healthier, pain free, debt-free lifestyle.

*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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## The Piazza Center expresses gratitude for 2020

by Rocco C. Piazza, M.D

In a year filled with tremendous loss for so many people around the world, there has also been much abundance. In interacting with our clients, we know that there has been abundance of time, love, family, friendships and even financial abundance for some.

After the year came to a close, we, at The Piazza Center, suggest that you look inside to understand what abundance you may have experienced in 2020. In the practice of gratitude, we ask that you share that abundance with those who have had tremendous loss and send positive energy their way. For us, we are most grateful to have a year filled with incredible support by our community, friendships that continue to flourish in our dynamic team, and the development of lifetime relationships with our patients and colleagues in the industry.

We are grateful for the pause that occurred during the year as it gave us a renewed sense of purpose. Our belief that our passion and joy come from the interactions with our clients has been strengthened yet again by another year in practice. Please know

that we are sending much love to those who need it right now as the new year is underway.

Our deepest gratitude and appreciation for you,  
Rocco C. Piazza, MD, FACS

*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: Rethinking time

by Leslie Tourish, LPC

We're at the one year anniversary of when the pandemic got real. Last year at this time some businesses and schools shuttered their doors while struggling how to more fully go on-line. Then we were thrown into this ramped-up process of conducting more of our business on-

line right along with helping our home-bound kids learn from their computers and laptops. There were lines to get into the grocery stores because only so many people were allowed in at a time. And once in, good luck in finding paper towels, cleaning products, and hand-sanitizers. Looking back, each month we had to let go of how we did things before and work to find ways to make our evolving days half-way fly. It's been crazy hard, and so many businesses didn't make it. Worse, so many people, didn't make it.

But now we may be finally turning this chaotic tide due to vaccines and improved therapeutics. The numbers of hospitalizations and deaths are trending downward, and schools are exploring ways to increase their in-person learning. With each passing week, more and more people tell me they've received one, or both, of the vaccines doses. And each one tells me about their relief to have some protection. But also their frustration that others in their circles are uncertain as to when they'll be able to receive their shots.

I've noticed a different conversation taking place with the people recently - what they're going to do when things open up more. Also how they want to retool what wasn't working before the shut-down. It's as though these crazy times have given them this revealing mirror to re-evaluate what is really important. People have said

they don't want to get caught back up in activities that, when they look at them now, were low on the happiness and meaning scales. It's as though they've had this time to explore what is really important once pulled away from their before busyness.

So, they're using this time to ask themselves, What do I really want? The concept of time has come to the forefront - how precious it is and how quickly it passes. And sometimes we do need a shakeup to remind us it's a short dance on this blue-and-green planet called home. Change is hard, and humans tend to resist change for the comfort of the known, no matter how bland, boring, or even painful, it may be. But learning something new, trying something hard, and pushing past known comforts for a dream that just won't go away - that's part of what making living, worth living.

*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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## The benefits of spinal decompression therapy *by Dr. Chae Tracy*

If you have recently been advised to have back surgery, there may be alternative options available to you that are less invasive and could have a more favorable long-term impact!

Spinal decompression is a safe, non-surgical FDA-cleared technology that is typically used to treat disc injuries in

the lower back and neck.

How does it work? When you're born, your vertebrae come packed with water, which gives them plenty of cushion to make movement comfortable and fluid. Unfortunately, as we age, fluid leaks out from the joints and causes them to become less fluid and flexible. This process can be accelerated by sustained loading which puts excessive pressure on the spine. As the spinal disc thins out, a variety of problematic symptoms can develop, including:

- Chronic lower back pain
- Muscle atrophy and weakness
- Sciatica pain in one or more lower extremities
- Radiating nerve pain
- Tingling and numbness in the fingers, hands, toes and feet

Spinal compression that occurs during sitting and other daily activities squeeze's fluid out of the discs and causes pain and dis-

comfort. Decompressing the vertebrae by gently stretching them apart allows fluid to make its way back in. As the vertebrae are gently separated from each other, a vacuum effect is created inside the disc. It is this vacuum effect that pulls in some of the fluid that leaks out due to spinal compression.

Non-surgical spinal decompression can help relieve pain and restore more natural action. It is typically conducted on a specialized decompression table and works by gently manipulating the spinal structures into their proper positions. Spinal decompression therapy forces nutrient-rich fluids and oxygen into the discs where they can facilitate the healing process.

*Family First Chiropractic has served the Dripping, Wimberley and Driftwood communities for 15 years now. In addition to chiropractic, massage and rehab we wanted to showcase our newest edition, spinal decompression. This is a state-of-the-art machine that coupled with our multifaceted approach to healing and healthcare has literally given us the ability to offer a successful alternative treatment for disc degeneration, disc bulge and disk herniations. Call to schedule or check us out online to see if we can help avoid a life of drugs and surgeries. 512-858-9355, www.ffchiro.com*



## My new love affair with Bandcamp *by Deborah Carter Mastelotto*

'We have art in order not to die of the truth ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

I recently read an article in the Esquire on-line magazine: 'Coronavirus Might Kill The Music Industry. Maybe It Needed To Die' by William Ralston. He wasn't talking about music itself needing to die. He was

talking about the music 'Industry' or the accountants, bookkeepers and executives running the music industry right now, and their current finance system. In the last two decades, music streaming has virtually killed off physical music sales (cd's, tapes, records, paid downloads) which kept music stores and musical acts alive. Streaming companies pay only a fraction of a penny per play and most of the rest of that money (as much as 80 per cent) goes right to the big corporations. The streaming companies, however, don't create any actual product—musicians create the content the streaming companies sell to us. without that content, there would be no music industry. These companies claim they don't have to pay artists much because the simplicity of streaming makes it easier for people to find their new music, which grows live audiences for touring shows. But, there are no more touring shows. Musicians have had to depend completely on touring to make a living. Even band merchandise needs 'Merch booths' at live shows to sell it, to make the band an income and pay touring costs. The global live music industry was worth some \$30 billion every year, but The Virus changed all that. Covid-19 shut everything down at once—gigs, live shows, and festivals, small and large, all over

the world, gone. Sold out shows were cancelled, bars with stages for live music were closed so no more live audiences. That leaves people who work in the music field in various capacities like record labels, distributors, promoters, record shops, session players, music venues, and tour managers, even bartenders and wait staff—were stuck holding an empty sack in a no-tour, no-win situation. But a bright light in the worldwide musical blackout —Bandcamp.com, and it sets a new standard for paying musicians for the work they do. It's a sort of 'Etsy' for musicians. The New York Times called Bandcamp "one of the greatest underground-culture bazaars of our time." Bandcamp's stated mission is to 'create the best possible service for artists and labels to share and earn money from their music, and for fans to discover and enjoy it'. It lets artists create their own store. It gives musicians control over the promotion and sales of their own work. When you buy something from an artist on Bandcamp, whether it's digital music, vinyl album, t-shirt, ticket or cassette, 80-85% of your money goes to the artist and Bandcamp pays out daily. I never gave this whole thing much thought until I had my own music to promote. Now I see how the disparity in the industry works and I agree with Esquire—maybe the present set-up does need to die. Hopefully, if and when music rises from the ashes of being cancelled by Covid, it will have changed into something more authentic. Like we all have.

*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*



## What is collagen and why is it important in skin care? *Part one*

by Karen Laine,  
Para-Medical Aesthetician

Collagen is the most abundant protein in our bodies, making up 75% of our skin. It supports the appearance of smooth, youthful skin and provides structure and strength for our bones, muscles and tendons. It's essentially the *glue* that helps hold our bodies together.

Our body naturally produces the collagen it needs but production gradually begins to slow as we age. Women produce less collagen than men and this collagen is lost at a rate of about 1% per year. This means that a woman has naturally lost almost half of the collagen from her skin by the age of 50!

Collagen is also greatly affected by environmental stresses such as sun exposure, nutrition, skin damage and exposure to toxins such as pollutants, cigarette smoke and recreational drugs. With decreased collagen, the skin loses its natural elasticity and firmness. This is when fine lines, wrinkles and sagging appear. Maintaining the amount of collagen is the key to beautiful skin.

Increasing collagen levels can firm your skin, increase smoothness and help your skin cells renew and repair normally. Not only will your skin (full body!) benefit from collagen's strengthening powers but your hair, nails and teeth will also thank you for the extra TLC. The protein in collagen works as a building block, keeping them strong and healthy. With collagen loss, we also experience stiffness in our tendons and ligaments and swollen joints. Ingesting collagen is the equivalent of greasing a creaky door

hinge. Collagen will help your joints move more easily and reduce pain.

Supplementing collagen for your skin is best achieved in a specific form called *hydrolyzed collagen*, comprised of small amino acids, also referred to as *collagen peptides*. Unlike the gelatin form of collagen in Jello, collagen peptides are absorbed quickly by the body and stimulate the body's own natural collagen production. In clinical studies, this bio-available form of collagen has been shown to significantly reduce wrinkle volume, increase elasticity and skin hydration levels. Due to the absorption ability of hydrolyzed collagen, significant increases in fibroblasts leading to increased density of the skin. In other words, hydrolyzed collagen is the secret to youthful skin.

*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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## Digital eye strain and the effect of blue light on your eye health

by Dr. Bryan Marshall



In today's world, extended periods of computer or tablet work are common place. The average person spends more than 10 hours a day on a computer or mobile screen. *Wow!* But is it really damaging to your eyes? New studies show the answer is yes.

First, we need to consider the accommodative demand on the eyes. That is to discuss what happens to the eyes when asked to focus on some-

thing at arms length for extended periods of time. The muscle in the eye has to flex to pull the lens into shape, and like other muscles, it can get fatigued. For this, I always recommend taking breaks and looking up for one minute every fifteen minutes. This gives the lens and muscle time to recover.

The next area of concern is centered around blue light. Blue light is part of the visible spectrum that makes up white light which is emitted from the sun. It is the higher energy portion of the spectrum right next to ultra-violet light. This wavelength causes digital eye strain and can cause oxidative damage and early retinal degeneration that is non-reversible. The highest emitters of blue light are the sun, LED lights, flat screen LED TVs, computer monitors, smart phones and tablets. An NEI-funded study showed that chil-

dren's eyes absorb more blue light than adults from digital device screens.

How do we protect against it? Limit screen time, use special filters to absorb blue light and get computer glasses from your optometrist with anti-reflective coatings. At your next appointment, ask your doctor about your options to limit accommodative stress and block these damaging light waves.

*Here at Capital Eye we will listen to you and develop a good strategy for regaining good comfortable near vision that fits your lifestyle and specific needs. Dr. Bryan Marshall is the owner/optometrist of Capital Eye Vision Care and Optical. He is married and has two young children and lives in Austin Texas. If not in the office, you can find him outside either camping, hiking or on his bicycle at a local race.*



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# Tips for picking the right puppy or dog

by Diana Ozimek

You've decided to add a furry addition to the family, but how do you decide on the right one? Here are a few things you should consider before making your choice:

Puppy or dog? Do you have the time and dedication to give a puppy or is your home too busy and chaotic? Are you ready for middle of the night potty breaks, puppy biting, constant supervision and training? If you aren't committed to all of those points, a dog may be a better plan for you. They are most likely house and crate trained. If they have lived in a foster home for a while you will be able to get a lot of information about the dog.

What breed is the best for my family? Well, what is your lifestyle? Are you an avid hiker or do you prefer low-key walks around the neighborhood? Do you have children in the home or is it an adult-only home? Do you want a lap dog or a running buddy? If you aren't looking to provide hours of enrichment and exercise you don't want to get a hunting or sporting breed. If you want a Netflix buddy, go for the bulldog. It's not a good idea to pick a dog on looks if you don't know what that dog will need to be a happy, balanced pet.

Are you committed to training your new puppy or dog to be a positive part of your household and community? If you prefer to not take a lot of time to train your dog there are many sweet senior

dogs looking for a home. Many senior dogs already know how to be a good pet. They are happy with a little fresh air, an orthopedic bed, good food and a pat on the head. Personally, I look forward to adopting a senior one day!

Lastly, are you willing to invest time and probably money if your dog develops a behavioral issue? If your answer is no, consider another type of pet.

*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, 773-899-1960, training@gooddoginthemaking.com*



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# Laser therapy

by Frank Shuman, DVM

Class IV or cold laser is a treatment modality that was first recognized almost forty years ago and is now a service that Dripping Springs Animal Hospital has been offering for a few years. Laser Therapy accelerates the body's natural healing process through photo-bio-modulation. Laser therapy is effective

in treating chronic conditions, acute conditions, and post-surgical pain and inflammation. This therapy can be used for all species in a non-invasive modality.

Laser Therapy accelerates the body's natural healing process through photo-bio-modulation. Deep-penetrating photons from the laser influence cell chemistry in a variety of beneficial ways. In addition, the infrared wavelengths create a warm sensation in your pet's body at the precise location requiring treatment. Treatment time, power and laser pulse frequency are based on your pet's individual condition and body size.

If your pet is feeling pain, has inflammation, or a wound, the laser is a sterile, pain-free, surgery-free, drug-free treatment. The laser is used to treat a variety of injuries, wounds, fractures, neurological conditions, numerous dermatological problems, and pain. Whether your pet is rehabilitating from trauma or injury, healing from wounds, or simply aging, the laser has been shown to provide relief and speed healing. No known side-effects are appreciated with laser therapy.

The laser light is delivered through a non-invasive hand piece to treat the affected area. Your pet will feel a gentle and soothing warmth. As the laser is administered, many pets will relax, much like you would experience a good massage. The almost immediate relief of pain will allow your pet to be comfortable and any anxiety that your pet initially experienced will dissipate. In many instances painful cats will start to purr during treatment due to the immediate impact pain relief.

You may see relief in the first treatment or so as pain and inflammation are reduced. For some conditions, a series of treatments may be necessary before you see results due to the severity or complexity of the condition. Each pet is different, and treatments are unique for your pet's specific needs.

*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.*



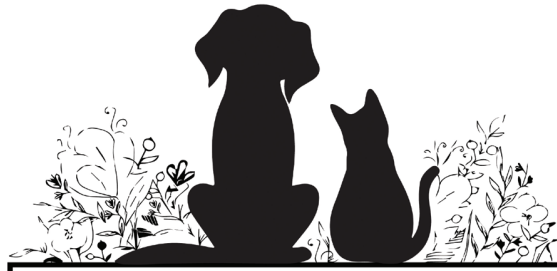
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## Real estate tales in 2021

by Steve Mallett



This year marks my nineteenth in real estate. In the past year I have seen things happen that I have never seen before.

We've had listings that received forty-two offers in less than twenty-four hours. We've had buyers offer \$100,000 *over* the list price on a \$375,000 house and still not win the

bidding battle.

One new listing had a four-hour line of buyers waiting to get in the front door. The neighbors grabbed their whistles and yellow vests to direct traffic as so many people drove by that the streets around the house got jammed.

Many of my agent friends are not working with buyers right now because there are one-hundred times as many buyers as there are homes to sell them. Agents are reported writing offers on more than twenty homes and still not winning one for their clients. That is a lot of effort for nothing.

One listing received three offers before we even put it on the market. It was like buyers were hiding out in the trees waiting for us to sink the sign in the yard.

Frustration in buyers, and their agents, is at an all time high. It's an agent's nightmare to have to call a client and tell them that, for

the nineteenth time they didn't get the home they fell in love with.

What is driving all of this craziness? Austin has topped almost every chart of great places to live in America. We have good schools, nice weather, lots to do and almost as many jobs as Mike Rowe has had. The City of Austin keeps trying to drive people away, by showing the wrong way to address an out-of-control homeless population, but people still keep moving here. We look like Shangri-La compared to some other cities and states.

This is the best time *ever* to be a seller. You can almost name your price and you'll still probably sell for over asking. Some people laugh and say they will put a sign up in their yard for \$200,000 over what their home is worth but they don't. Because they know it might sell. And they would have to move. But where would they go? There's nothing to buy.

In this crazy time good quality agents are more important than ever. Don't just hire any agent. Look for experience and savvy. You need insight and know-how to navigate through 2021 and beyond.

Thought 2020 was nuts? Watch out for 2021. It's going to be a wild ride!

*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.*

## What can investors learn from 2020?

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



Don McGraw

A long-term perspective is essential. Volatility in the financial markets is nothing new, but 2020 was one for the books. The COVID-19 outbreak was the driving force behind most of the wild price swings. Soon after the pandemic's effects were first felt, the S&P 500, a common index of U.S. large-cap stocks, fell 34% but gained 67% by the end of the year. Investors who stuck with their investment portfolios and kept their eyes on

long-term goals, rather than on shocking headlines, ended up doing well. While 2020 was an unusual year, the long-term approach will always be valuable to investors.

Investment opportunities are always available. The pandemic drove down the prices of many stocks – but it didn't necessarily harm the long-term fundamentals of these companies. They may still have had strong management, still produced desirable products and services, and still had good prospects for growth. They may still have been good investment opportunities and when their prices were depressed, they may also have been "bargains" for smart investors. This is the case with virtually any market downturn; some high-quality stocks will be available at favorable prices.

Diversification pays off. Bond prices often move in a different direction from stocks. So, during a period of volatility when

stock prices are falling, the presence of bonds in your portfolio can lessen the impact of the downturn and stabilize your overall returns. And this, is the value of maintaining a balanced and diversified portfolio. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can't guarantee profits or prevent all losses.)

The market looks ahead. The pandemic-driven market plunge may have been stunning, but it made a kind of intrinsic sense. The sudden arrival of a pandemic that threatened lives, closed businesses and cost millions of jobs doesn't sound like a positive event for the financial markets. But the strong rally that followed the initial drop and continued into 2021 has surprised many people. The pandemic's effects were felt throughout the rest of 2020, and are still being felt now, so why did stock prices rise? The answer is pretty straightforward: The financial markets always look ahead, not behind. For a variety of reasons including widespread vaccinations, anticipated economic stimulus measures from Congress and the Biden administration, and the Federal Reserve's continued steps to keep interest rates low, the markets are anticipating stronger economic growth, possibly starting in the second half of 2021.

All of us are probably glad to have 2020 behind us. Yet, the year taught us some investment lessons that we can put to work in 2021 and beyond.

*Don McGraw, Financial Advisor specializes in helping individual investors and business owners reach their financial goals. He can be reached at 512-858-2850. Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors are not estate planners and cannot provide tax or legal advice.*



## Certificate of depreciation

by Albert Gonzalez

Interest rates aren't what they used to be. In 1980, the Carter years, 3-month CDs hit a high rate at banks of +18.65%. Wow! Today a six-month CD can earn 0.60 APY, while a 5-year CD is 0.90% APY. With rates this low, using the bank as a vehicle for your extra cash ("lazy money")

may not be the right choice.

The mounting debt our U.S. Government is underwriting continues to grow as we look to address the fallout from COVID and fiscal stimulus to keep our economy growing. You don't get something for nothing, so at some point debt levels will have consequences. There is concern about the moral hazard that can come from unchecked spending.

The recent market news about GameStop has given pause to investing. You can't manage returns, but you can manage risk. Annuities may be the right vehicle to supplement your retirement income while managing risk. Social Security and corporate pensions are based on an annuity chassis.

Today's annuities come in many flavors, too numerous to name in this article outside of letting you know they're not the same investment vehicles that were on the market 15-20 years ago. There are several options to protect your principal and grow your account that were not available before. There are some guaranteed interest rate products available (the only investment product that

can use the word "guarantee") and some products that have caps on the amount of upside and downside you can be exposed to while growing tax deferred.

If you're not happy with your present state of finances, let's talk. If you're looking to change how your portfolio looks today, let's talk. Let's sit down to develop or review your goals and objectives for education, retirement, or protection. Let's build a financial plan that works for you.

We all want to picture ourselves on the beach, on a vacation trip or enjoying a second home. My clients want to retire comfortably and remain comfortably retired. Call me.

*Al Gonzalez, MBA is a Senior Vice President/Partner with JTL Wealth Partners. He's affectionally known as "the Love Doctor" to his clients, as he helps them provide security for themselves and their loved ones. Al is a Financial Advisor with JTL Wealth Partners and securities are offered through LPL Financial. Member FINRA/SIPC*

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## Safety: The number one factor of tree care

by Steven Austin

Accidents happen. Not even the most reputable or reliable tree care company can avoid them. However, the emphasis that each company puts upon safety training, enforcement of OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) regulations and use of the proper equip-

ment can vary widely. It only takes one company to ignore safety rules and put our entire profession in a bad light.

Bartlett Tree Experts places a high value on a well-earned safety record. Safety Coordinators oversee each job to ascertain the risks and advise. Extensive training is provided for all field members and OSHA regulations are strictly adhered to. Our pest management equipment is equipped with the proper materials and safety kits. Equipment operators are taught to properly maintain and use the tools of their trade. This includes ropes, chainsaws, chippers, stump grinders and trucks. Emergency procedures are well practiced.

OSHA regulations require that tree care personnel wear hardhats, gloves, suitable clothing, work boots, ear protection and safety glasses on a work site. Saddles for tree climbing are obligatory and may not be altered. Ropes must be inspected before each job. Knowledge about knot tying is a necessity and the use of different types of ropes is also an important factor for safety. The methods

that a climber uses to climb and tie into a tree are also regulated. Also the work site's proximity to electrical lines must be reviewed before work begins. There must be a CPR kit, and a first-aid kit with antihistamines available in the case of an on-site accident.

Too often, tree care companies ignore the basic rules of safety and workers pay the price in terms of injury and possibly even death. It's a dangerous business to begin with. One moment's inattention can lead to disaster. Without the OSHA guidelines and strict performance of safety procedures the job of tree care would be much more unpredictable and hazardous.

When you choose a reputable tree care company it helps protect your property and the workers who perform tree work. At Bartlett, we're proud of our safety record and of the workers who make it possible.

*A Wimberley resident, Steven Austin is a member of the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist and ISA Tree Worker/Climber Specialist. His expertise includes integrated pest management of trees and shrubs and state-of-the-art organic treatments. He holds a commercial pesticide license with the Texas Department of Agriculture and is Texas Oak Wilt Certified by the Texas Forest Service. Steven is an Arborist Representative for Bartlett Tree Experts. Call 512-392-1089 or toll-free at 800-443-8733.*





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## Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce Focus on Business:

### *Gutters offer many benefits*

by Jeff and Angie Hendricks

Our winter and spring seasons here in Central Texas can be rather wet. Those gray days coupled with heavy storms can bring about a quick onslaught of excess water. While our trees, lawns and vegetation depend on this water to survive, many of our other outside structures are not as inviting of this resource.

With all of the new home construction going on around us, gutter installation is not given much priority in the grand scheme of the project. Granted, it is not the most exciting topic when choosing a layout or spending time at the design center selecting all the finishes of a new home, but the benefits of having gutters installed around the entire perimeter of a home can be numerous.

Gutters provide water collection and channeling to direct how rain water drains. If space allows, some will elect to have the excess rain water gather in a collection tank. This water can then be used for irrigation or watering of plants and shrubs. If your property or neighborhood does not allow for tank collection, channeling the water away from your foundation is one of the many



benefits gutters provide. Moving water away from your home can help prevent foundation settling as well as soil erosion. Gutters can also prevent wood rot from the exterior of your home's trim, eaves and fascia and can help protect the life of exterior paint.

Gutters are available in many different shapes and sizes. Most homes are outfitted with several downspouts and five-inch gutter openings are common. For larger collection efforts and commercial settings, six-inch gutters are an additional option. Each gutter system is cut to custom fit the specifications of the project and many color matching options are available. While gutters do not have a prescribed life expectancy, occasional cleaning and removal of debris can help extend their functionality.

*Jeff and Angie Hendricks are owners of Color World Housepainting. Services provided are interior and exterior painting, gutter installation, drywall repair and carpentry services, along with holiday lighting. Please give us a call at 512-729-1211 or visit us online at [www.colorworldhousepainting.com](http://www.colorworldhousepainting.com)*

## Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce Focus on Business:

### *You've received multiple offers on your house.*

by Chris Pesek

### *Now, which one do you choose?*



We've heard a lot about multiple offers on houses lately, haven't we? If you end up in that situation, which offer should you choose? Does an offer \$20,000 over list price mean it's a better offer than one that is \$10,000 over your list price?

Let's look at some key things to consider if you find yourself with multiple offers. First on the list: Closing date.

Does it match up with your desired timeframe? How important is that date to you?

Next, what type of financing does the buyer have? Is it cash or financed? And, the *type* of loan needs to be taken into account based on the condition of your home. Certain loan types have stricter appraisal requirements than others. Imagine if you found yourself in a situation where you're required to make a huge repair on your home, or, the lender won't fund the loan. Is the buyer offering additional cash if the appraisal does not come in at their offered purchase price? In a hot market like this, everyone is offering over asking price, but that won't matter if you accept the

wrong offer.

How about the option period? Most buyers want an inspection on their home before moving in. But, we're in a market where I'm seeing buyers waiving option periods. If we're comparing a \$20,000 over asking offer to one \$15,000 over, but the lower one is waiving their option, that's something to consider. On the contract subject to an option period, you're open to the possibility of an inspector finding issues that you didn't know about. Then, you and the buyers may have to re-enter negotiations or worse, they could simply walk away.

These are only a few things to think about when you're reviewing multiple offers. Having an experienced realtor to help you comb through the fine print details of the contracts can help make sense of it all and put more money in your pocket at closing with strong confidence that you won't run into a ton of issues that could cost you time, money and energy later in the transaction.

*Chris is a Broker Associate with the Dripping Springs Home Team at Jackson Properties Inc. He specializes in all real estate and the Dripping Springs community. Call 512-736-1703 or visit [DrippingSpringsHomeTeam.com](http://DrippingSpringsHomeTeam.com)*





## 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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## March madness outside

by Lindley Pond

Welcome to March in Central Texas! It's been a whirlwind of a "winter" to say the least. Absolutely beautiful days then cold, then, well you've lived it, you don't need me to reiterate it.

What to do in the month of March is a crazy guess at this point. My suggestions would be a couple of things to hopefully kick off a wonderful spring.

It's a great time to aerate and feed your lawns, if you still have one. Feeding the soil, or what we call soil here, is a great start. If you've got the bug to do something different, it's a perfect time to set the wheels in motion for bigger things, things that require less water and less maintenance. Trough gardening, for those just now trying their hands at veggies and herbs, is an amazingly easy way to get started and truly takes little effort and a whole lot less watering, not to mention almost zero weeds. Planning a butterfly, bird, and bee habitat can also be very rewarding. Picking out a special place for each and imagining how it all comes together is both fun and, in the end, something to watch and be proud of for years to come. There's still time to be thinking about planting woody shrubs, trees or coming up with great ideas for an outdoor comfort space.

The sky's the limit with what you can do. Sometimes, we can't see the forest and all it has to offer, for the trees, or lack there of, standing in our way. If you need any help at all kick-starting your ideas and dreams, we are here to help. Give us a ring! For now, let's see whether Punxsutawney Phil was right! Bye now, 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: *How to stay out of court*

by Roland Brown



I've been staying out of court for almost a year now, but not voluntarily. The COVID-19 pandemic has largely shut the courthouse doors for the type of cases I try. However, that will change. On the other hand, most of you will happily stay out of court, so here are some tips to help you do so.

I once heard a doctor complain that he had been named as a defendant in a malpractice lawsuit even though he had nothing to do with the botched surgery. I asked the doctor why he didn't contact the lawyer who sent him the legally required pre-suit letter and explain that he had not been involved. His response was, "The malpractice insurance people tell us never to respond to those letters!" Bad advice. Ignoring a letter caused this gentleman unnecessary grief. Similarly, I have had people tell me they "didn't sign for the papers, so the deputy just dropped them on my porch." Ignoring those papers can result in an adverse judgment without even getting a chance to present a defense. The ostrich defense seldom works; hiding one's head in the sand is a formula for disaster in the world of litigation.

Consulting with a knowledgeable lawyer at this stage of a dispute can often lead to an early and less costly resolution. If the matter cannot be resolved, then getting legal advice early allows you to take steps which can limit the potential for an unfavorable outcome. It could help you identify resources such as insurance policies that can provide funds to pay your legal fees and perhaps cover any damages you are called upon to pay. Additionally, you could get the jump on investigating and preparing the case by preserving evidence, interviewing witnesses and taking control of the litigation from the outset. Your attorney might even make a quick call to the other attorney and convince the other side that they should not pursue a claim against you. Don't make the mistake the doctor did and miss the opportunity to avoid or minimize the impact of a potential lawsuit. This is the time to get into a lawyer's office in order to stay out of court.

*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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