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During the warm summer months mosquitoes lay their eggs in any available pool of stagnant outdoor water. In addition to causing bothersome bites, mosquitoes can carry deadly viruses such as the West Nile encephalitis virus.

The safest and most effective insect repellent available is the chemical called *DEET*. It can be found in a variety of products such as *Off!*, *Cutter*, and *Repel*. A concentration of 10-30% is suggested for adults. Do not exceed 10% DEET on children (higher concentrations have been linked with central nervous system effects). Another potential problem is that DEET can reduce the effectiveness of some sunscreens. Products containing DEET also can damage plastics, synthetic fabrics, leather, and painted surfaces. Soybean oil (*Bite Blocker* or *Blocker*) and citronella oil (*Buzz Away*, *Bug Guard*) are effective repellents as well but must be reapplied often.To treat mosquito bites, clean the area with soap and water. Apply an over-the-counter *hydrocortisone cream* to reduce itching and swelling. Topical *diphenhydramine* (Benadryl) does not work for bites, but taking the drug by mouth does. Avoid topical anesthetics such as *benzocaine* because they may cause allergic skin reactions.**Rural Texas hospitals receive \$2.2 million**

In 1999, the Texas Legislature set aside \$50 million dollars from the state's tobacco settlement, creating the Rural Health Facility Capital Improvement Program. The interest on the endowment provides a permanent \$2.2 million annual grant, a unique result of the foresight of the Texas Legislature.

Thirty-two rural Texas hospitals, including Rice Medical Center (RMC) have been awarded the first \$2.2 million to help with capital improvements needs such as: improvements to existing facilities, construction of new health facilities, or purchase of capital equipment, including information systems hardware and software.

RMC will receive \$49,042.07 to remodel its Scan Room.

Ninety-seven applications, totaling \$9.5 million, were received by the Center for Rural Health Initiatives, the State Office of Rural Health, the agency responsible for administering the program.

Dave Pearson, the program's administrator at the Center, said he was moved by the wide variety of projects for which facilities requested funding. "These funds are available to rural Texas hospitals in the form of grants and zero interest loans," Pearson explained. "This type of funding is extremely useful to rural facilities that are strapped for cash and in need of improvements."

Robt. J. "Sam" Tessen, Executive Director of the Center, agreed with Pearson, "This program is an exceptional opportunity for rural hospitals

to access much needed funds to deal with vexing building issues and equipment needs."

The implementation of the program is a direct result of collaborative efforts of rural hospitals, providers and the center, who have partnered to make up the advisory committee

which oversees the administration of the program.

The final award decisions were based upon eligibility requirements set by the legislature and review criteria established by the advisory committee.

The Center, located in Austin,

provides leadership in encouraging innovative responses to rural health care needs. It advocates and administers a number of programs and services designed to help rural health providers and communities proactively address the health care needs of rural Texans.

Outdoor Expo is July 28-29 in La Grange

If snakes are your passion or your horror, you will enjoy the Snakes Alive seminar and demonstration Friday, July 28, at the Colorado Valley Outdoor Expo in La Grange.

Rocky Ulrich of Brenham, snake hunter and handler, will have a variety of Western Diamondback Rattlesnakes on display at the two-day event at the Fayette County Fairgrounds July 28-29.

Ulrich's presentation will include how to handle snakes, hunt snakes and will demonstrate how to "milk" a rattlesnake. He will also explain medical procedures if bitten by a rattler, and what to do if you hear a rattler.

Ulrich and his partner Don Steller will provide an entertaining show for audiences of all ages. The snake show begins at 7 p.m. in the yellow "seminar" building at the fairgrounds.

Other activities at the Expo will include Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) biologist Chris Lena providing Tacklecrafting Techniques at the TPW booth in the exhibit hall. Visitors to the booth will learn how to tie basic flies for fishing, dress-up jigs and

make some in-line spinners.

"Whatever someone makes at the booth, they will be able to take with them at no cost," Lena explained. "This is a fun way to learn about fishing, tackle, flies and spinners."

Lena has worked with TPW for 14 years as a coastal fisheries biologist and was a wildlife management area (WMA) specialist for six WMAs in east Texas. He currently is in education, teaching people how to fish and fish better.

He graduated from Stephen F. Austin University in 1982 with degrees in biology/wildlife science and agriculture/agri-business. He has extensive knowledge in both fresh and saltwater fishing, from catching sunfish with a cane pole to fly fishing for redfish and speckled trout to deep-sea fishing. He lists hunting, fishing, trapping, gardening and wildlife habitat management as his hobbies.

Other activities at the Expo will include rock climbing, KidFish, TPW laser shooting booth, Texas zoo, mountain bicycling, bow and arrow hunting, Dutch oven cooking, a stagecoach for rides and live entertainment.

Seminars will be held on the hour beginning at 1 p.m. Friday and will feature such topics as flyfishing Texas rivers, canoeing the Colorado River, saltwater and fresh water fishing, last chance forever birds of prey, game

calling, introduction to muzzle loading, hummingbird habitats, white-tailed deer habitats, WMA, backyard and wildscaping bird dog demonstrations, outdoor first aid and gun safety.

Exhibitors include Wildlife Enterprises from Kerrville, Holub's Taxidermy of West Point, Art's Feed and Supply of La Grange, K Holsters from Schulenburg, Lone Star Building Concepts of Houston, Naturally Curious Book Store from Cedar Creek, Willie Joe's Processing of Schulenburg, Bastrop Marine, Break-Away Auto Glass of La Grange, Santa Anna Hunting Area, Traditional Hunting Blynds of La Grange, LCRA, TPW and others.

Two live entertainment shows will be on stage, performed by Austin & King Country Caravan of Stars Show. One show will be from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday; the other from 4 to 6 Saturday.

The show will include performances by singer Beka Hendry, comedian Goopus P. Hardrock, Jerry Cramer and well-known stars Mark Austin and Michael King.

Admission to the Expo is \$5 for adults for one day and \$7 for both days. Children under 12 will be admitted free.

For more information, contact the La Grange Chamber of Commerce at 979-968-5756, 1-800-LAGRANGE, or e-mail chamber@lagrangetex.org.

First Baptist Church Bible School is July 24-28

Parents, are your children looking for fun and adventure? Do they need a break from the boredom of summer? What would they think about a week of underwater adventure... diving to the depths, discovering buried treasure, exploring the reefs?

First Baptist Church, will be conducting The Fantastic Good News Ocean Odyssey™-Diving into the Depths of God's Faithfulness, July 24 through July 28 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. and we would love for your children to join us!

We'll plunge into an underwater

adventure filled with Bible stories, crafts, missions, music and snacks.

We are happy to offer this "once-in-a-lifetime" voyage to you and your family. We have trained a fine catch of dive instructors (teachers, that is!) for this incredible plunge into The Fantastic Good News Ocean Odyssey™.

The divers (ages three through sixth grade) will enjoy various reefs as we scuba dive through The Fantastic Good News Ocean Odyssey™. Our focus will be "Diving into the Depths of God's Faithfulness."

The Fantastic Good News Ocean Odyssey™ will be an adventure too good to miss. So mark your calendars and don't let your kids miss this opportunity to submerge themselves in Bible study and underwater fun!

For more information, call the church office at 234-2571; Director Lynn Ellis, 234-7582; or Co-Director Shelly Wied, 234-5704.

409 deadline approaching

GTE Wireless customers who have not yet had their wireless phones re-programmed with the new 979 area code should visit a GTE Wireless location immediately.

Wireless customers must have their phones re-programmed as soon as possible to avoid interruption of service. Wireless phones not re-programmed by Aug. 5 will not be capable of placing or receiving calls.

GTE Wireless customers should bring their phones with the battery charged to the nearest GTE Wireless retailer.

The re-programming process takes just a few minutes to complete. Only the area code will change, while the remaining seven digits of the phone number will stay the same, in most cases.

The GTE Wireless Agent in Eagle Lake is the Radio Shack dealership inside Eagle Lake Drugstore, 702 S. McCarty.

For more information regarding a GTE Wireless retailer near you or details on the area code change, call *123 free of charge from your GTE Wireless phone Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Or call 1-888-864-3652 during the same hours.

CCA schedules town meetings

Combined Community Action Inc. (CCA) will be holding town meetings to develop a community action plan for the CCA service area of Austin, Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette and Lee Counties.

The community action plan will identify community needs as established in the assessment.

The results from the community needs assessment will be used to develop a document reflecting the service area's plan. The needs assessment will cover the entire service area.

Needs assessments will also be received from elected officials, community based organizations, human service providers, etc.

In order for CCA to be successful in assisting persons and families to become self-sufficient, the citizens of the service area must support its efforts.

Please plan to attend one of the following town meetings:

Monday, July 24: NBC Bank, Community Room, Giddings, 12 noon-1 p.m.**Tuesday, July 25:** Bastrop Community Commissioners Court, 804 Pecan St., Bastrop, 12 noon-1 p.m.**Wednesday, July 26:** Eagle Lake City Hall, Council Chambers, 100 E. Main, Eagle Lake, 12 noon-1 p.m.; Hill Community Center, 1000 MainSt., Sealy, 12 noon-1 p.m.
Thursday, July 27: CCA Center, 275 Ellinger Rd., La Grange, 6-7 p.m.**NPSOT to meet Aug. 3**

The Columbus Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will host a slide lecture by Kathy Adams Clark at its Aug. meeting in Columbus at the Nesbitt Memorial Library, 529 Washington, at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 3.

Clark is a professional nature photographer and writer. Her work has appeared in numerous magazines including, *Texas Highway*, and *Texas Parks and Wildlife* and is seen weekly in the *Houston Chronicle*, in Friday's "Wonder of Nature" column.

"Photographers Flowers" will focus on improving the photography of the audience. Depth-of-field, backgrounds, metering, color harmony, film and flash will be prime topics. Camera types, gadgets and image steadiness will also be discussed.

If you're interested in the region's native plants or outdoor nature photography, please join us. For more information, call Kathy Burris at 979-732-6188.

Ladies conference set for Aug. 3 in Industry

The Ladies Ministry of the West End Baptist Church is hosting a regional Ladies Conference, "It's Your Choice" on Aug. 3 in Industry.

Acclaimed guest speakers include: Marge Caldwell, noted author and marriage counselor. Ms. Caldwell's topic will be "God's Women in 2000"; Uldine Bisagno, popular speaker and 30 years as a pastor's wife (First Baptist Church of Houston) asking, "When Did I Become Like My Mother?"; and Linda Sensat, psychologist and Christian counselor, speaker and pastor's wife. Ms. Sensat's talk will be "Running The Race: Feelings or Faith?"

Gifted guest musicians include

Terry Ross, harpist; Nancy Richardson, organist and keyboard artist; T.J. Schultz, accomplished pianist; and Debbie Watkins, vocal soloist and pianist. The visiting Praise and Worship leader will be Marsha Miller, the awesome Director of Music at the First Baptist Church of Columbus.

This regional Ladies Conference is designed to give everyone the opportunity to develop meaningful friendships, receive support and encouragement and grow in the knowledge of God.

The program starts promptly at 9 a.m. and concludes at 4 p.m. Lunch will be served.

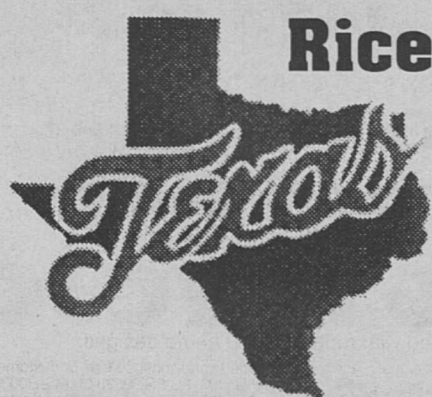
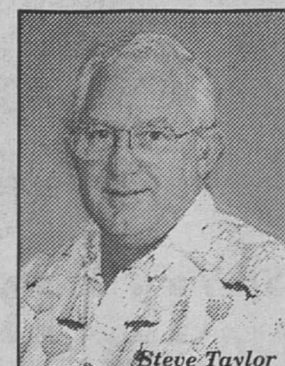
A nursery will be provided for babies and children up to and including three year olds, and a "day camp" for children up to and including the fifth grade.

Total cost for attendance, including lunch, is \$7 per person. This is an area-wide event and everyone is welcome.

Pre-registration and payment is due prior to July 21. Seating is limited to the first 150 registrants.

West End Baptist Church is located on FM 109, just south of State Hwy. 159, and is mid-way between Houston and Austin in the town of Industry; 15 miles west of Bellville and 15 miles south of Brenham.

For more information and/or registration for this conference, please contact Pat Marek at 979-357-2670 or Dorothy Ward, 357-2957.

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