

COMFORT NEWS

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Comfort Skies by Robert Reeves

The Moon continues to lead weekend activities in Comfort

The Moon was central to many astronomy activities last weekend with the observance of International Observe the Moon Night. This weekend, Comfort continues lunar-themed fun with the local Howl at the Moon activities. The upcoming Moon madness is not science-based, but does promise some high-spirited fun on a cooler October evening. So be sure to join the crowd at the Comfort Howl at the Moon celebration and welcome in the more comfortable fall evenings.

The regional International Observe the Moon Night activities on October 1 were centered at the Scobee Planetarium on the San Antonio College campus. The planetarium's indoor exhibit hall featured dozens of science displays ranging the gamut from interactive eclipse demonstrations, astronomy for the blind in Braille, and cryogenic superconducting magnetic levitation. A dozen telescopes set up by the San Antonio Astronomical Association provided the public with continuous looks at the Moon, and later in the evening, views of the planets Saturn and Jupiter.

The event at Scobee was timed to allow both



The stunning rings of Saturn turn out to be a short-lived cosmic phenomenon. Recent studies show they will vanish in about 150 million years. Enjoy the view while you can! (Photo courtesy of NASA)

observation of the Sun in late afternoon as well the waxing crescent Moon and the bright planets at dusk. A recurring theme among many viewers was surprise that the Moon was visible in daylight. Between the crescent Moon and the waxing gibbous Moon, the Moon is very visible in daylight and arcs across the blue afternoon sky. Most folks just do not know to look up and spot Luna in a clear blue sky!

Another recurring theme was folks wanting to see Jupiter before it disappears. Disappears? Another recent

science fact from the mass media was last week's closest approach of Jupiter to the Earth for the next 50 years. One part of the context left out by the media was the fact that Jupiter was merely statistically closer to Earth than normal by mere miles and the planet will not be that close again for another half century. But Jupiter is not going anywhere. The closest approach is a statistical "bragging rights" thing and Jupiter will continue to grace our night sky for several more months. In fact,

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Deer keep rolling through District



Coach Norma Viera, the bench, and the Loud Crowd in the background react to a point during the match against Ingram. The Deer defeated both Ingram and Brady to run their record to 20-9. (Photo courtesy of Justin Tinney)

By Coach George Edwards

The only defeat the Deer Volleyball team has tasted that meant anything was Homecoming Friday as they fell by 2 points in the fifth set to Blanco. This past week the Deer hosted two more District foes as they navigate the first round of District 5-3A play. Tuesday brought the hard-hitting Ingram Lady Warriors and their irascible fan base. Then Friday was a special night as the Deer played Brady in the last event before moving into the new Multi-Purpose-Center.

It didn't take the Comfort girls long to establish dominance against Ingram. Considered a contender for the District title, the Lady Warriors struggled with serves early on. The Deer capitalized on Ingram mistakes as they

rolled to a 25-20 first set victory.

In the second set the Lady Warriors tried to attack the middle but to no avail. Meghan Davis and Hope Van Geffen were unstoppable with kills from all over the court as the Deer rolled on to a convincing 25-19 win.

Ingram's outside hitters, Emmah Schmidt and Rylan Wilt, came out swinging in the 4th set providing the Lady Warriors with the means to avoid a complete sweep. The Deer fell behind early and though they responded, it was too little, too late as Ingram took the third set 25-19.

The Comfort Girls made adjustments in the fourth set. Even without MH-Katie Haffner who was out due to an ankle injury, the rotation of Madison Gowan and Taylor

Tompkins along with Aubrey Finke and Kassie Padilla slowed the Ingram outside attack. Flummoxed, the Ingram girls were susceptible to missing their hits. Meanwhile, they continued to demonstrate a tendency to focus on offense rather than defense. Deer attacks found their mark more often in the fourth set. Hope Van Geffen was particularly effective as she finished off a double-double with 13 kills and 13 digs. She helped finish off the Lady Warriors as well in a 25-20 set four triumph.

On Friday the boys were playing football in Natalia. But much attention was being paid to the volleyball action at the soon to be "old" CHS gym. The Brady Lady

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Hill Country Alliance Leadership Summit provides information, knowledge, and a path forward

By Michael Hawkins

Last week Deborah and I attended the Hill Country Alliance's Leadership Summit in Dripping Springs. We've been following the Alliance for many years and, especially in the last ten years, have come to rely on them as the source for information about the health and well-being of the Hill Country now and into the future.

The day-long Summit did not disappoint us; on the contrary, it was much more than we had anticipated. Speakers provided updates on topics of concern for people living throughout the Hill Country. Panelists, including Kendall County Commissioner Don Durden, offered insights into issues that have become critical parts of saving, yes, that's what I said, saving the Texas Hill Country as we know it before it's too late.

A number of themes ran through the day, no matter who was talking about what.

Growth - no one could have missed the message that growth is the 800-pound gorilla we are all wrestling with. It's bringing changes at a rapid pace and promises to bring much more. We can't stop it. Together, we can possibly manage or mitigate it.

Inclusion - if we want the Hill Country as beautiful and unique in 50 years as it is today, we need to find seats at the table for anyone and everyone. This will not happen if we break into factions and squabble because someone doesn't look like me or talk like me or believe everything that I believe in. If someone is interested in preserving the Hill Country, they are a friend of mine, and I of theirs. We have common ground beneath our feet and can do more together than separately.

Collaboration - Cooperation is one thing, collaboration is

quite another, Kimble County Judge-Elect Hal Rose, one of the elected panelists, pointed out. Collaboration, like inclusion, is based on shared interests and is not a zero sum game for anyone. We all give, we all get. But we work together to do it.

Coalition building - one of my favorite segments was the elected officials panel, which Durden was part of. Questions thrown at the three panelists included how best to approach elected officials and how to stand up to the cash-laden lobbyists who wield an outsized influence in our state capital. One specific question that I think captured the essence of it all pertained to the proposed expansion of US Hwy 281 into "the next IH-35." The proposed expansion would cut right through the heart of Blanco, essentially destroying the town's historic downtown. Panelists pointed out that the proposed project involved other areas to the south and north of Blanco, and that a coalition of all who stand to be negatively impacted would stand a better chance of having an impact on the final outcome.

Durden said "You've got a big fight on your hands. Involve as many of your friends as you can to help with that." He then referenced his experience with the TxDOT proposed Hill Country Gateway which would have created a loop around Boerne with a massive footprint, destroying private lands. He spoke to the creation of a coalition in Kendall County to come up with a plan to relieve the congestion caused by Highway 46 running through Boerne.

"Understand that TxDOT has a mission and a job to do. Understand that job and articulate another way to solve the problem," he said.

Regarding the outsized role of lobbyist's money in legislative processes, State Representative Erin Zwiener cut to the heart of it.

"Well-funded big money groups do have disproportionate power in Texas," she said. "But money doesn't vote. It helps talk to people who vote. Well organized groups can vote."

Communication - we need more of it. Straight and simple, that's the message. It was on full display at this Summit. Ideas flowed across tables. You could feel the energy in the air as solutions to seemingly intractable problems came more into focus thanks to shared experiences. New coalitions and collaborations were being formed on the spot.

We're all in this together - the massive changes we in the Hill Country are in the middle of today are wrought by waves of humanity flooding the Hill Country from various parts of the state and the country. The good news is, we are not alone. That, by itself, was the greatest gift I could have received from this Summit and I did receive it.

I came away knowing that our concerns are shared, that we are not isolated, and help is all around us if only we hold still and listen. On the way home as Deborah and I were reviewing our take-aways from the event, it occurred to us that we are citizens of the Hill Country. As such our interests are much broader than what happens in one part of it versus another. It is a whole, and each part of that whole is connected to the rest.

When we begin to understand that, we are on the way to becoming united in our efforts to cope with change and form that change into something that looks more like the Hill Country we know and love than the one it could become.

Voter registration help available at Kendall County Elections Office parking lot on Tuesday

If you haven't already registered to vote in the upcoming November 8 General Election, you have until Tuesday to do so.

In order to help with that process, the Kendall County Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Texas will host a voter registration drive on Tuesday according to a recent news release from the Chapter.

"Volunteer Deputy Registrars will be outside at the Kendall County Elections

Office parking lot from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on October 11 to assist citizens with voter registration, changing personal information on their voter registration records or simply checking the status of their voter registration," said the release.

The Elections Office is located at 221 Fawn Valley Drive, Suite 100 in Boerne.

The League of Women Voters of the Hill Country Texas has forty years of work focused on registering citizens

to vote, educating citizens on candidates and issues, and encouraging citizens to vote. The League is a non-partisan and nonprofit organization and does not endorse or oppose candidates for elected office. The Hill Country Texas League serves five counties: Bandera, Blanco, Gillespie, Kendall, and Kerr. Visit the League website: lwvhillcountrytexas.org for more information or contact president@lwvhillcountrytexas.org.

