

BULLETIN

THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS
ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 3

FALL 1983

PLTA BARBEQUE September 18

PLTA members and special guests will pause to celebrate and gather strength for the coming year on Sunday, September 18. The event will be a barbeque at the Strickland homestead on Cypress Creek.

The dinner will include beef and sausage, cole slaw, pinto beans, potato salad, rolls and homemade rye bread, jalepeno peppers, marinated onions, pickles, tea or coffee. The cost will be \$5.00 per person.

Reservations must be made before September 7 by sending a check for \$5.00 each to:

Ms. Janet Hagy, Treasurer
Protect Lake Travis Association
8400 MoPac, Suite 304
Austin, Texas 78759

The money must be in by September 7 so the food can be ordered.

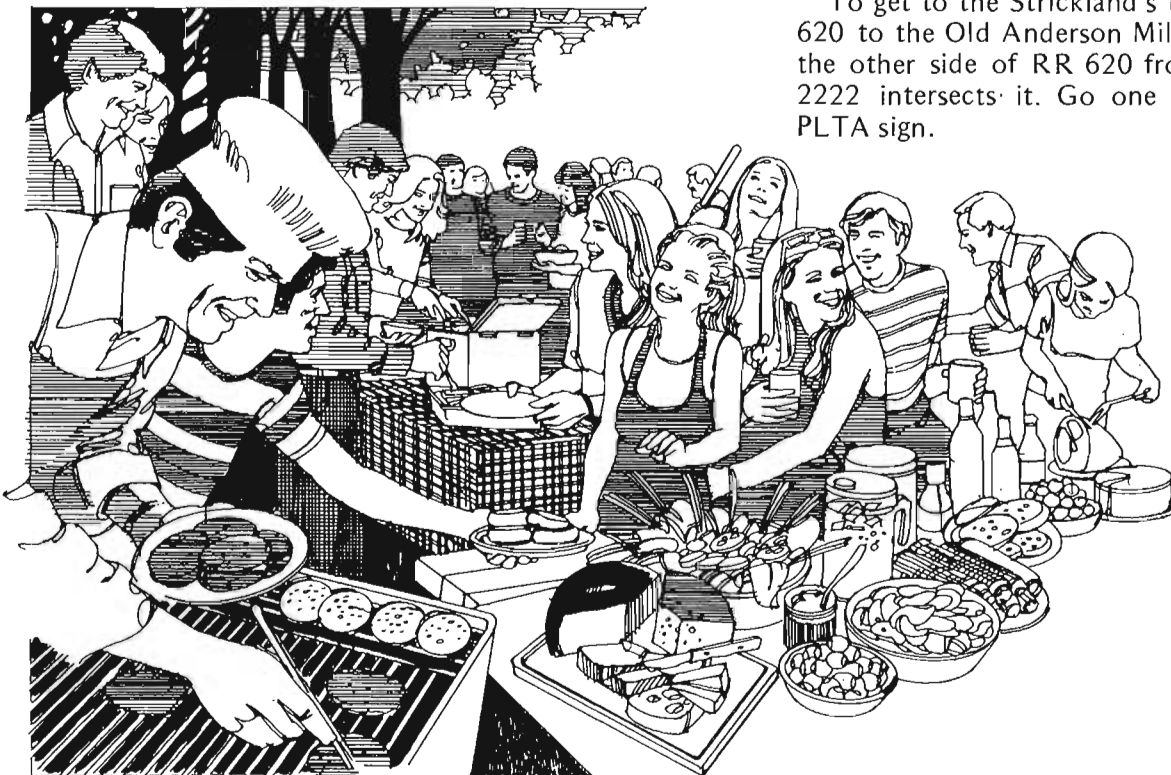
Those who do not wish to participate in the barbeque may bring their own food and drinks.

Everybody should bring a folding chair and a swim suit.

You may bring your own bottle or beer if you wish something other than tea or coffee.

Time to start is 3:00 p.m., with the barbeque to be served at 5:00 p.m.

To get to the Strickland's turn off of Ranch Road 620 to the Old Anderson Mill Road. This road is on the other side of RR 620 from the place where RR 2222 intersects it. Go one mile and look for the PLTA sign.





Water Agency Bans Discharges While Lakes Under Study

The Texas Water Development Board will fund two studies of Lakes Travis and Austin during the next two years. It has banned new waste water discharge permits while the lakes are being studied.

The University of Texas at Austin will conduct a study to quantify the pollutant loadings and their effects on the reservoirs in Texas.

The LCRA will conduct a related study of septic tanks in the watershed of both Lake Travis and Lake Austin.

The discharge moratorium was in response to the Protect Lake Travis Association petition to ban treated sewage from the lakes. After the studies are completed, the Board expects to change the rules.

Permits which have already been issued will still be allowed to be implemented unless the permittee makes an application for a greater volume of discharge.



PHOSPHORUS: HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

PLTA President Dr. L. Taylor Ollmann discussed the threat to the lakes from phosphorus at the annual meeting. Excerpts from his remarks follow:

The 1974 EPA study that identified phosphorus as the limiting factor in algal growth in Lake Travis also defined "permissible" and "dangerous" levels of phosphorus loading for the lake. "Permissible" was an annual loading of about 75,000 lbs. per year. These numbers are only very rough approximations, but they are the best we now have to go on. In 1974, the loading on Lake Travis was estimated to be about 110,000 lbs. per year, including 39,000 lbs. attributed to point sources (sewage pipes) in Lakes LBJ and Marble Falls, 6,000 lbs. from local runoff and streams and 33 lbs. from septic tanks near the shore. Even then the nutrient budget was too high for good lake health.

Obviously, all of these numbers have increased since much development has occurred in the upper Highland Lakes causing more sewage and heavier runoff, and many more houses surround the lakeshores. We may at this time already be nearing the "dangerous" levels of nutrient loading that will induce aggravated eutrophic conditions in our lakes over time.

In the future, non point source (runoff) pollution will be increasingly important. A National Urban Runoff Study recently completed on Lake Austin showed that as land developed from rural to suburban (39% impervious cover), storm runoff increased tens of times and the pollutant loadings increased hundreds of times. With over 200 miles of developable lakeshore, Lake Travis could see the 6,000 lbs. of runoff phosphorus in 1974 increase to 100,000 lbs. or 600,000 lbs. per year by 1994 or 2004 if well planned steps are not taken to severely limit impervious cover and erosion in the lake area. Nothing is easy.

Obviously, this threat from suburban runoff needs to be addressed directly, thoughtfully and soon if we wish to preserve the water quality as we know it. Reduction of more controllable pollution sources such as sewage discharge is the first step but not the only necessary step to clean future lakes. The question is not whether a particular sewage discharge or parking lot can be handled by the lakes now but what its cumulative effect on the lakes will be in the future.

PLTA, Ollmann Nominated for Environmental Awareness Awards

Travis County Commissioner John Milloy has nominated Taylor Ollmann, the President of the Protect Lake Travis Association, and the Association itself for the Environmental Awareness Awards program announced by the City of Austin. Milloy's nomination letter included the following excerpt:

The Association, under the leadership of Dr. Ollmann, is responsible for mobilizing grass-roots support for the community's opposition to the application of the Baseline Corporation for a permit to discharge treated sewage into Lake Travis. The Texas Water Commission denied the permit in 1982. Dr. Ollmann and the Association then pursued an active campaign to have the regulations of discharges into Lakes Travis and Austin strengthened and expanded to include tributaries of the lakes. Dr. Ollmann also served on the Governor's Select Committee For Water Quality Standards For Lake Travis and Lake Austin, which recommended toughening the standards. The Texas Water Development Board recently adopted an interim no-discharge policy for the Lakes and portions of their tributaries.

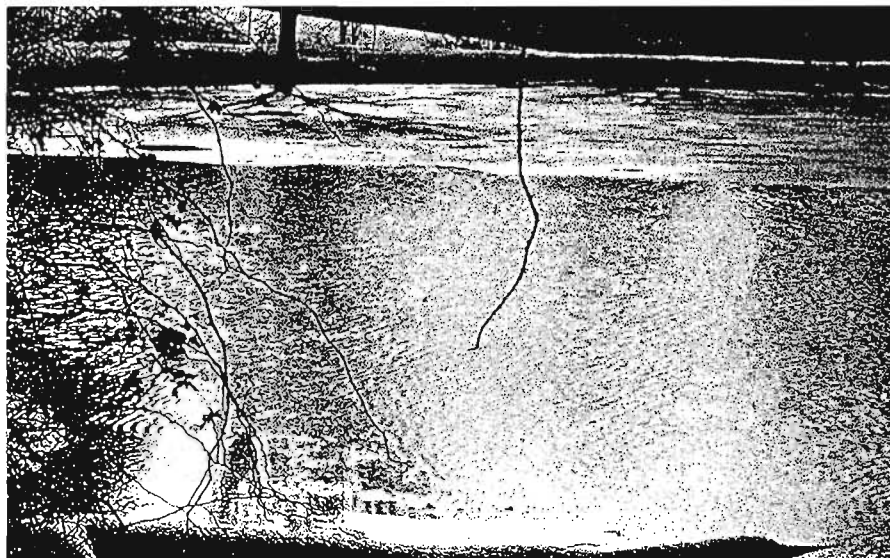
In light of the concern they displayed for the environment, and the tenacity with which they pursued their goals, the Protect Lake Travis Association and its President, Dr. Ollmann, are as deserving of this award as anyone in the Austin area. As much as any other group or person, they helped to heighten public awareness of the need to protect our lakes. I hope that you will give them serious consideration.

LAKE TRAVIS AND LAKE AUSTIN ARE “PHOSPHORUS LIMITED”

All the nutrients necessary to grow thick, healthy algae and weeds are relatively abundant in Lake Travis and Lake Austin except one: phosphorus. Algae are about 2/10 of 1% phosphorus by weight, but Lake Travis water contains only 10-40 parts per billion of the element except near the mouth of the Pedernales River. By comparison, algae contain 15 times as much nitrogen but the lake water contains 30-50 times as much available nitrogen as phosphorus. As the algae grows, it is the phosphorus that runs out first, limiting further growth.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency studied the lake in 1974 and determined that adding phosphorus alone to Lake Travis water could result in 50 times as much algae being produced. With the additional phosphorus, the water became nitrogen limited — adding nitrogen too resulted 90-180 times as much algae as grew in standard lake water. Of course sewage and storm runoff carry large amounts of nitrogen and other nutrients to the lake as well as phosphorus.

This is the reason that we are so concerned with phosphorus pollution of the lakes. The increased algae clouds the water, fouls boat bottoms and water treatment equipment, and then dies and decays robbing the lower strata of oxygen and releasing toxic anaerobic decay products. The lake fills with mats of floating vegetation; light does not penetrate; periodic fish kills occur and an occasional skier or swimmer disappears in a tangle of weeds not to appear again for several weeks. This process of lake decay is called EUTROPHICATION. Eutrophic lakes are all too common in the United States as it is. We cannot allow the beautiful Highland Lakes to be easily lost to this process.



*“We cannot allow
the beautiful
Highland Lakes
to be easily lost . . .”*

DUES DELINQUENT SEPTEMBER 1

Members who have not paid their dues before September 1 are delinquent. The fiscal year began July 1. Use the forms below – give one to a friend. Be sure to give your first name and telephone number on the form. It's up to you!

We need your contribution in any amount to join the Lake Travis Navy:

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| FRIEND | \$ 25.00 + |
| SEAMAN | \$ 50.00 + |
| MATE | \$ 100.00 + |
| CAPTAIN | \$ 250.00 + |
| ADMIRAL | \$1,000.00 + |

THANK YOU!

To join the Protect Lake Travis Association, fiscal year dues are:

| | |
|------------|---------|
| Individual | \$ 5.00 |
| Couple | \$ 9.00 |
| Over 65 | \$ 7.50 |

Fiscal Year: July 1 - June 30

Send To: Ms. Janet Hagy, Treasurer
Protect Lake Travis Association
8400 MoPac, Suite 304
Austin, Texas 78759

CONTRIBUTION AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS

Use one for your dues for the new fiscal year. Give one to a friend.

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ _____

ALSO

Here is my/our membership fee(s).

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Yes! I care about the Highland Lakes.

Here is my contribution of \$ _____

ALSO

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THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

8400 MoPac, Suite 304
Austin, Texas 78759

Bulk Rate
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