



BULLETIN

THE PROTECT LAKE TRAVIS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 4

WINTER 1983/1984

BIG DECISIONS FACE PLTA

Join Your Friends and Neighbors At A Covered Dish Supper

A covered dish supper will precede an important membership meeting of the Protect Lake Travis Association, Thursday, March 1 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Ranch Road 620.

Many urgent and important issues have arisen since our last general meeting. Information will be presented and votes will be taken on possible courses of action regarding the following:

1. **The Lake Travis Lodges "Dockominiums."** These individually owned floating boatdocks are projected to extend at least halfway across Lake Travis near Hudson Bend.
2. **Villas Over Lake Travis.** Developers hold a sewage discharge permit which predates the 1983 moratorium won by PLTA.

3. **Siltation in Lake Austin.** Construction of Davenport Ranch, a housing development on Lake Austin at Loop 360, is filling Lake Austin's Windy Cove with yellow silt.

4. **Regional Planning Authority.** Should PLTA work for the formation of a Highland Lakes Planning Authority with powers to regulate lake development so as to preserve the quality of our lakes?

Members will be asked to present their input and to sign up for numerous study committees. Bring a main dish, salad or dessert with serving utensils to the meeting. Decaf coffee, forks, and plates will be provided.



WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

It is chillingly apparent now that Lake Travis and Lake Austin are severely threatened as recreational lakes by pollution from urban runoff.

Virtually all of the Lake Austin area is now platted for development, and it is accelerating rapidly around Lake Travis.

The Nationwide Urban Runoff Program Study (NURP) on Lake Austin compared runoff from a lovely, established, tree-shaded neighborhood (Rollingwood, 21% impervious cover) with a more paved area of Northwest Austin (39% impervious cover) and with natural terrain in City Park. Runoff carried 25 to 100 times as much phosphorous from an acre of Rollingwood as from a natural acre. The phosphorous load from Northwest Austin was *seven times* worse. Bacteria loadings per acre from the developed tracts were thousands of times greater than from the natural terrain.

Loading of solvents, other nutrients, pesticides, toxic metals, and suspended solids all increase considerably. Discussed elsewhere is the problem of siltation during construction. Unless many effective measures are taken to shape lake area development, the water quality could soon decline below that currently in Town Lake.

Some possibilities are:

- A. Zoning Ordinances designed to limit the quantity and quality of runoff.
 - 1. The Governor's Select Committee recommended a regional agency with zoning capability and capital for sewage plant construction. The Seattle area has an effective example of such a regional authority. It would require legislative action and perhaps a constitutional amendment.
 - 2. Counties currently have no zoning power. Bills to grant that power have regularly failed.
 - 3. The City of Austin has subdivision review power in its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (5 miles from city limits) which could be expanded.
- B. Building Permits could be made to encourage good runoff practice.

- C. Counties could be enabled to base property taxes on other features in addition to property value: a tax per square foot on impervious cover would encourage good practice both in new construction and remodeling.
- D. Farmers use contour plowing. Why not contour greenbelts? 50 to 100 feet of natural vegetation will greatly cleanse and absorb runoff. Storm water absorbed recharges the aquifers rather than adding to the flood surge.

We need your ideas, organization and support if we are to continue enjoying our lakes. The solution has many parts and will not be easy.

P.L.T.A. PROFILES

This is the first in a series of profiles of PLTA board members. The board thought that the members may want to know something about the people they have elected to direct the organization. Other members will be featured in future issues.

Joseph F. Cichowski, age 71, married very many years, father of Clare Shier, a daughter living in Golden, Colorado, and Stanley, a son and an attorney living in Springfield, Illinois.

Joseph is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati with an accounting major. He holds the degree of Certified Public Accountant granted by the University of Illinois and the States of Ohio and Texas.

His public accounting experience spanned more than thirty years, many of them as a partner and sole proprietor. He has held positions as Assistant to the Senior Vice President of a Fortune 500 Company, Controller of a medium-sized company, and Executive Vice President of a company employing over 500 employees.

Community service included executive positions and board memberships for numerous church and civic organizations. Presently, in Lago Vista, he serves on the Executive Committee of the Protect Lake Travis Association; member of the Lago Vista Men's Golf Association, Lago Vista Lions Club, Smithwick Lodge A F & A M, Austin Scottish Rite, and the Ben Hur Shrine. He also serves on the Travis County Sheriff's Advisory Council.

EDITORIAL

URBAN RUNOFF – THE TWO-HEADED MONSTER

Jay Powell, PLTA Board Member

Many people differ on the total effect of Urban Runoff, but one fact cannot be disputed. It is a Monster. The effects of Urban Runoff can cost billions of dollars for future generations, if we don't get a better understanding of the problem. Like most popular monsters it creeps up on you slowly, with little or no notice. Nobody means to do it. Nobody admits to doing it. Somehow, it gets done; and it is happening all over Central Texas. It will affect most of our lives, during this century.

The first head of this monster is the more obvious of the two. It occurs, generally, during the construction phase of any home, office, apartment, or any development that in any way disturbs the natural ground cover or terrain. It is almost impossible to build anything without making such a disturbance. If there is a positive side to this head of the monster, it would be that the problem seems to get better with enough time. The second head almost always gets worse with time.

This second head of the monster becomes more obvious long after the construction phase has been completed. It starts showing up as sewer lines get older, as streets get dirtier, and as a project or area becomes "built out." All of the areas around Austin's Town Lake are 99% built out. Town Lake is one of the most polluted bodies of water in Central Texas. People have been talking about how to clean up Town Lake for 20 years. It remains a very unhealthy lake. The second head of our monster has made a strong showing in Town Lake. He can boast of leaking gasoline tanks, cracked sewers, oil, anti-freeze, the worst of chemicals, right on down to pure garbage and even styrofoam cups. If you would like to see him personally, and don't believe in monsters, just go to the Waller Creek outlet into Town Lake. He also can be seen on a regular schedule all around the shoreline. Rumor has it that he even likes loud music and can be found at every concert on the shores of Town Lake.

Our monster's first head is usually not taken seriously. He appears more of a dream than a reality. He's a rotten character though, because he usually rides in on a bulldozer, and destroys all natural vegetation. What he can't accomplish with the bulldozer, he messes up with a fleet of trucks. He hauls in hundreds of tons

of crushed limestone, crusher fines and fill dirt filled with so much clay that nothing can grow in them. His favorite trick is to let all these foreign elements wash down creeks and slopes and deposit them on his neighbors. He can always bring in more, so he can spare a great deal of this "junk." If anyone still doesn't believe in monsters, they can see this monster and his head all up and down Loop 360, on the west side of Austin. Loop 360 is our newest "scenic" highway, yet it has been one of the main causes for the "death" of Bull Creek. After years of close observation, however, I think that I know where this monster lives. I have seen him on so many occasions that I am now sure that he lives in some of the large developments west of Austin. One of the bad parts of his staying in this area is that these developments are on Lake Austin, and you should see what he has done to Windy Cove, a part of our water supply. Mud flats and trash have replaced what was clear water just three years ago. The monster has outdone himself in this area.

Urban runoff is not as complicated and elusive as we thought. The two-headed monster is all around us. We can't forget that he is sneaky, because he is growing at an alarming rate. He could take over many other areas, just like he has Town Lake and Windy Cove, on Lake Austin. We can stop him, if anybody cares. After 15 years of studying him in great detail, I know how to stop him. The ideas and the products are available in Austin to stop the monster in his tracks. It will take some help from City and County officials, engineers, and developers. All we have to do to get started is to "care," then ask those who have watched both heads of the monster and lived with him for many years. The cost of stopping him now is but a fraction of what it will be in years to come. Austin and the Highland Lakes need to be a model of how to stop Urban Runoff and Pollution before we are a model of what not to do.

(Jay's beautiful Lake Austin area homesite on Windy Cove has been directly affected by the urban runoff problem. Jay is a leader in the efforts to get city and county officials to deal with this issue.)

The Lake Travis Parking Lot

Lake Travis Lodges on Hudson Bend has expressed plans to expand its present marina to up to twelve hundred boat slips. They are to be built in stages and sold to the public as "Dockominiums."

The full expansion would cover 38 acres of Lake surface and extend half way across Lake Travis toward Starnes Island. The first stage has already been constructed.

We are appalled at the concept:

1. By intersecting a main boating route, it could present a serious hazard to navigation.
2. That large a concentration of slips could create unacceptable pollution and congestion in the area. Also, many of the slips are designed for large houseboats.

3. Those of us who have experienced high winds on the lake or have seen their devastation can only wonder how so large a structure (several stories high) could be safely anchored. Would the individual slip owners carry adequate liability insurance to cover a 38 acre steel sail flying before the wind?

The Lower Colorado River Authority has responded to complaints of the PLTA and neighboring residents. A moratorium on new construction has been declared until June, while the LRCA re-examines their regulations for surface uses of Lake Travis.

We need your input on what we should advocate as appropriate rules for the lake. Write us or express your feelings at our February meeting.

Help keep Lake Travis clean, clear and beautiful!

HELP US HELP YOU — JOIN THE PLTA

PLTA has obtained a tax exemption from the IRS. All your contributions, past and future, are officially tax deductible. Be sure to give your first name and telephone number on the form. An extra form is included below to make it easy for you to recruit another member. 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 \$ _____

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