

Courtyard Homeowners Association, Inc.

February 2008

Volume 7, Number 2

Greetings Members

If you missed the annual meeting in January, you can still volunteer some of your time to the Courtyard community by signing up to work on one (or more) of our standing committees. Some committees have work all through the year, others concentrate their efforts on more specific neighborhood events – such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Spring Neighborhood Garage Sale, Park clean-ups, and the Fourth of July celebration. Please contact the chairperson if you think you might be interested in helping out and wish to learn more about a committee's work. Any time you can give is welcome.

Finally, just a note of thanks to everyone for continuing their efforts to keep their speed down while driving through our neighborhood streets. Be especially careful this time of the year when it is still fairly dark in the early morning and early evening -- when children are still out playing and many people are out walking.

Your Courtyard Homeowner's Association Board of Directors

KEEP DRIVING SLOWLY IN THE COURTYARD!

Now's Our Chance . . . to Clean-Up !!

As some of you may be aware, Lake Austin's level was lowered beginning the first part of January and is scheduled to begin to fill up again on February 8. Lakes are expected to return to normal by February 13. In the meantime, and if the weather cooperates, this is a very good time for neighbors to go down and help clean up cans, bottles, tires and other debris from the dry areas of the creek bed. You would be amazed at what some of our residents have found in the exposed creek bed in past years! Take some time, a couple of friends, the family dog, your oldest walking shoes, and some big trashbags and head for Park. Have a good time exploring and, at the same time, performing a valuable service for our environment and our community.

Book Club Special Guest – Resident Author !

The Book Club will meet for lunch on Tuesday, February 12, at 1:00 p.m at the Courtyard Tennis Club. February's featured review will cover "The Gathering" by Anne Enright. In addition, we are proud to note that Carol Conway, one of our Courtyard neighbors, has recently completed and published her book, "Born Into The Enemy Camp." Congratulations Carol ! Carol has graciously agreed to

come to the February meeting to talk with us about the challenging experiences that lead to this achievement.

Looking ahead, March's selection is "One Thousand White Women" - The Journals of May Dodd by Jim Fergus. Based on an actual historical event, but told through fictional diaries, this is the story of a young woman who travels west in 1875, has a brief, but passionate romance with a young army officer, and marries the chief of the Cheyenne nation, Little Wolf.





Don't want to wait for the mail? View the current issue of the Courtyard Homeowners Association Newsletter on the 1st day of the month at www.PEELinc.com

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make it possible for all residents to receive a newsletter at no charge. No homeowners association funds are used to produce or

mail the newsletters. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales Office, 512-989-8905 or <u>advertising@PEELinc.com</u> for ad information and pricing.

Advertising Information Please support the businesses that advertise in the Courtyard Neighborhood Association Newsletter. Their advertising dollars



Austin Telco will pay all standard closing costs on Home Equity loans below \$100,000. Additional non-standard fees will be the responsibility of the member. Credit qualifications apply. "Annual Percentage Rate. All rates expressed are "as low as". ""Rate applies to 1st lien commercial real estate loans with a loan to value of 80% or less; construction/development loan rates and terms may be different. No pre-payment penalty. Credit qualifications apply. Please call x7000 for details. """Annual Percentage Vield. Penalties for early withdrawal may apply.

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Jeffrey L. Tucker, P.E., a registered professional engineer in Texas, has been involved in structural design, inspection and repair of houses and apartments since 1965. He is uniquely qualified to perform structural analyses of wood frame structures and slab foundations; to inspect and offer assurance of structural integrity and/or repair recommendations and details.

New Solar Equipment Installation Guidelines

With the increasing consideration being given by homeowners to the use of alternative energy sources for their homes, it became clear that guidelines were needed to address the various architectural and construction questions posed when incorporating these new technologies into our community's homes. Please note the following new building and construction guidelines for solar equipment installation approved by the Board of Directors at the December 18, 2007 meeting. If you have further questions, please contact any member of the Board's Environmental Control Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Courtyard's architectural, landscaping and construction guidelines, or any Board member.

III. Building and Construction Standards

N. Solar System/ Solar Collector Installation Guidelines (12-18-07) Solar System Panels /Solar Collector and/ or equipment are permitted provided they meet the following requirements:

- 1. Solar System panels/Solar Collector and/ or equipment are not permitted anywhere on a house or outbuilding where they will be visible from the front view of the house.
- 2. Solar system panels/Solar Collector and/or equipment mounted on a ground structure (panels mounted on poles or metal frame) are not permitted if they are visible from a street or by neighbors.
- 3. The panels/ collectors must have a flat profile, and not extend above the roof ridge.
- 4. Panel/collector frames, support brackets and any exposed piping must be painted to match or be compatible with the roofing color.
- 5. An installation plan with drawings must be submitted to the ECC for written approval prior to beginning the project.

Security

Test your home alarm system with your alarm company – ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR HOME PHONE PROVIDER. New phone providers don't test your alarm system after completing your new connection. They CAN connect your new service incorrectly such that your alarm will no longer dial out to report alarms. Contact your alarm company and tell them you want to perform a test and make sure it works. They can walk you through the process.

We have a new caution sign installed

at the entrance to the neighborhood reminding everyone to DRIVE SLOWLY, be cautious and obey speed limits. Jim Lloyd – Security Committee

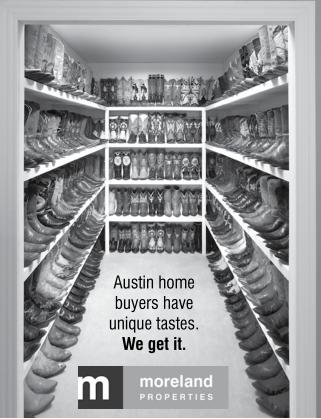


A kickin' closet is a must.



Jo Carol Snowden

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Lowering Lake Austin is a six-decade tradition LCRA first lowered the lake in 1945 to control nuisance plants

By JOHN WILLIAMS Special to Peel Inc. Newsletters



LCRA has often lowered Lake Austin at the City of Austin's request to deal with noxious aquatic weeds that plague lake users. This photo was taken during the lake lowering in 1949. (Photo courtesy LCRA Corporate Archives)

AUSTIN – Once again, LCRA plans to lower Lake Austin this winter at the request of the City of Austin to control the growth of hydrilla and other nuisance plants in the lakebed.

The lake lowering, which occurs every year or two, has become a tradition that has its beginnings in the closing days of World War II to control the growth of moss and a nuisance aquatic plant known as "duckweed."

That first lowering occurred early Monday morning, Aug. 6, 1945 – the same day that, half a world away, the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima in hopes of hastening an end to the war.

The City of Austin had requested the lowering on behalf of fishers and boaters whose equipment was becoming entangled in the weedy mess. LCRA obliged by dropping the lake 12 feet in hopes that the summer heat and lack of water would kill off the plants.

The lake lowering apparently was a unique approach to the problem, because news

stories by the Austin American (predecessor to today's Austin American-Statesman) repeatedly referred to the lowering as an "experiment." Lake Austin was created by the reconstruction by LCRA of Tom Miller Dam, which was completed in 1940.

LCRA lowered the lake through floodgate releases

In contrast to today's gradual lowering over a period of several days, LCRA lowered the lake in a single day through floodgate releases, at one point with as many as five of Tom Miller's nine floodgates open.

LCRA accomplished the lowering within 14 hours, and the floodgate releases resulted in significant downstream rises on the Colorado River. The rises ranged from 12 feet immediately below the dam to eight feet downstream of Austin.

By lowering the lake through floodgate operations, LCRA lost the benefit of using the water to generate electricity – a major consideration, because at the time LCRA obtained most of its electric power from the hydroelectric power stations at Tom Miller, Mansfield, Inks and Buchanan dams. (LCRA had not yet built Wirtz and Starcke dams upstream of Lake Austin, and Austin had not yet built Longhorn Dam, which forms Town Lake, downstream.)

But Austin and LCRA may have intended the volume and force of the floodgate releases to scour the riverbed downstream of aquatic weeds, according to the American. LCRA also took advantage of the floodgate operations to repaint the dam's floodgates. **Duckweed – a conservation effort gone**

Duckweed – a conservation effort gone horribly wrong

The reason for lowering Lake Austin was the proliferation of aquatic weeds, primarily Eurasian watermilfoil, which federal conservation officials had planted in the lakebed in 1939 to prevent soil erosion as LCRA completed reconstruction of Tom Miller Dam. (A massive buildup of silt had contributed to the destruction of one of Tom Miller's predecessor dams in 1900.) By the mid-1940s, the fast-growing, stringy plants had proliferated to the point that they had become a nuisance to people who boated, fished or swam in the lake.

There are two stories on why the milfoil was introduced into the lake. One version is that conservation officials had intended to plant duckweed – a beneficial plant – along with other beneficial vegetation, but the seed had become contaminated with milfoil. The other version is that officials planted the milfoil in the mistaken belief that the plant would attract ducks. In any event, the milfoil came be to be known to local residents as "duckweed."

City contemplated using flamethrowers to eradicate weeds

Following the lake lowering, and about a week to allow the lakebed to dry, the city attempted to clear the Lake Austin lakebed, with limited success.

The Austin American reported that City Manager Walter E. Seaholm planned to request local U.S. Army officials to loan flamethrowers to burn out the weed mass, in part to "prevent its rotting and causing a disagreeable taste to the water later."

(Continued on page 8)

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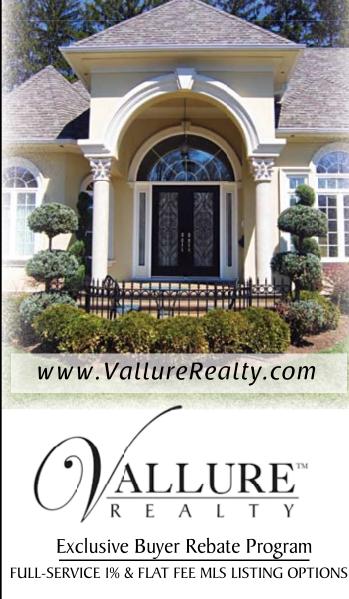


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Wery pleased. You were very prompt and courteous at all times, and gave a great service that a lot of people want - if they only knew you existed!))

- C&TWalsh, Lakeway, TX



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Lowering Lake Austin- (Continued from page 6)

Apparently that request went nowhere. A week later, a city crew and three bulldozers cleared some weed growth, along with some rocks and tree stumps, out of shallower areas of the lakebed. Seaholm blamed the war for the lack of equipment to do more work.

The lake stayed down for 20 days. In contrast to the 14-hour drawdown, LCRA refilled the lake in three days, "to protect boats in the lake and prevent the trapping of livestock," according to the newspaper. City officials declared the lowering a success. But LCRA and Austin repeated the lowering the following year.

Nuisance plants persist, even with regular lowerings

Lowering Lake Austin has become a six-decade tradition, as one of the measures by LCRA, Austin, other organizations and lakeside residents as they continued to battle the pesky plants.

The City of Austin at one time used a harvester to "mow" the weeds and carry them away. A 1980 story in an LCRA newsletter noted that lakeside residents "have been known to attack the weeds with shovels, rakes, blowtorches and rock salt…No luck – like an unwanted hound dog, the weeds always come back."

In 1999 the Eurasian watermilfoil was joined by another noxious weed – hydrilla, a fast-growing plant that, left unchecked, can block intake pipes, interfere with LCRA's flood-management operations and harm the lake's water quality.

To battle the plant, LCRA and other organizations used an integrated plan that includes introducing sterile carp into the lake to feed on the hydrilla – and lowering the lake every year or two, at the request of the City of Austin.

In contrast to the first lowering in 1945, LCRA typically releases the water through the hydroelectric power station at Tom Miller Dam, generating electricity. LCRA also schedules the lowering in January and February in hopes of exposing the nuisance vegetation to a hard freeze, rather than a heat wave.

The lowerings kill off or hinder some plant growth. But LCRA aquatic scientists say that the nuisance plants will continue to be a part of Lake Austin.

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Healthy Lifestyle Can Add 14 Years to Your Life

Submitted by Alica Harrison

So what can you do to modify your lifestyle?

- If you smoke, stop.
- If you drink, do so in moderation. In this study, participants drank 1-14 drinks per week.

• Eat fruits and vegetables. Five servings a day was the threshold for this study and is very achievable.

• Finally, get up and move. Physical activity of any kind on a daily basis is key to a healthy lifestyle.

And if you can't do all of these things, then do some of them. After allowing for other factors that might have affected their likelihood of dying, people with a health behavior score of 0 were four times as likely to have died as those with a score of 4. People with a score of 2 were twice as likely to have died. So doing something is better than doing nothing.

In a major study conducted by the University of Cambridge in the UK, researchers found that individuals engaging in a healthy lifestyle added an average of 14 years to their lives. Not a few months or even a few years -14 years! And the benefits stemmed from relatively simple and easily achievable methods.

"We didn't ask these people to do anything exceptional," said researcher Kay-Tee Khaw. "We measured normal behaviors that were entirely feasible within people's normal, everyday lives."

In a study of 20,000 individuals aged 45-79, researcher Kay-Tee Khaw of UC and colleagues calculated that individuals that adopted these four healthy habits lived an average of 14 years longer than those that did not. What are these miracle cures?

- · Not smoking
- Moderate alcohol intake
- Eating your fruits and vegetables
- Physical activity

"This research is an important piece of work which emphasizes how modifying just a few risk factors can ad years to your life," said Dr. Tim Armstrong, a physical activity expert at the World Health Organization.



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EndorFun Sports Announces Longhorn Ironman 70.3 Austin Official Contest Serves As Final Qualifier for 2009 World Championship

AUSTIN, TX-EndorFun Sports and the Austin Sports Commission announce the newest addition to the Ironman 70.3 World Championship Triathlon Series, the Longhorn Ironman 70.3 Austin, which takes place on Oct. 5, 2008.

With the success of last year's Longhorn Triathlon Festival, the city has received official designation to qualify competitors for the 2009 Ironman 70.3 World Championship. 50 qualifiers from this event will go on to participate in the sport's definitive contest on Nov. 14, 2009 in Clearwater, Florida. The course demands a grueling 1.2-mile swim, 56 mile bike and 13.1-mile run through and around Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park. Athletes from across the nation and around the globe will visit Austin to compete for the \$25,000 prize and world championship qualification.

With 2,000 competitors expected to register and an additional 7,000 likely to line the course, the race is slated to bring some 9,000 visitors to Austin, booking 7,000 hotel rooms and generating an economic impact of \$5.3 million.



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February 2008 Austin Newcomers Club Luncheon

Time: 11:00 AM Social; 12:00 Noon Luncheon

Date: February 20, 2008 (Reservations by Thursday, February 14th)

Program: Pickle-d or Pepper-d; Boomer-d and Bummed: The Social Security Quagmire

Join us at the February Luncheon for a special insight into the realm of Social Security. Austinite, John Fibiger, an articulate and attention-grabbing speaker, has a long and experienced career in both the Insurance Industry and Social Security. As Former Chairman of the Transamerica Life Companies and former President of New England Mutual Life, he has been intimately involved with statistical and actuarial aspects of making numbers work to benefit a bulging social program created "way back when".

As he guides us through, be ready with questions, such as:

- 1. Can it work today as well as tomorrow?
- 2. What can you expect, if anything, for your children and grandchildren?
- 3. Who other than contributing workers receive Social Security benefits?
- 4. How does SS relate to Medicare?
- 5. When a couple is age-qualified to receive benefits, what happens when the spouse dies? (are 2 checks reduced to 1?)
- 6. Will the qualifying age keep going up?

Don't miss this opportunity to find out how your future is tied to an already stretched (archaic?) system. And......find out about pickles and peppers!

Location: Green Pastures Restaurant

811 W. Live Oak Street, Austin, 78704

Public contact phone number and/or website: 512-314-5100 or www. austinnewcomers.com

Space is limited; all reservations must be received by February 14th.

Classified Ads

Personal classifieds (one time sell items, such as a used bike...) run at no charge to Courtyard residents, limit 30 words, please e-mail *LouBetty@aol.com.*

Business classifieds (offering a service or product line for profit) are \$50, limit 40 words, please contact Peel, Inc. Sales at 512-989-8905 or *advertising@PEELinc.com.*

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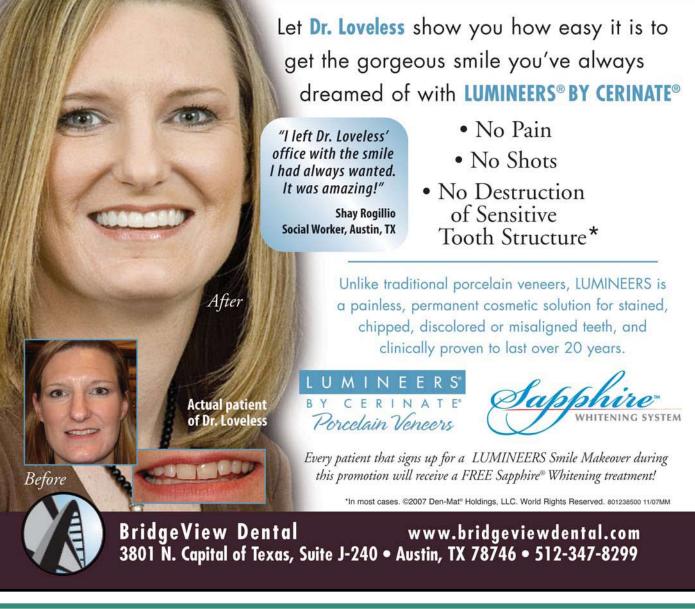
Austin leash laws require all dogs to be on a leash when off the owner's premises.



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