

ALAN POGUE

Documentary Photographer

1968-Present

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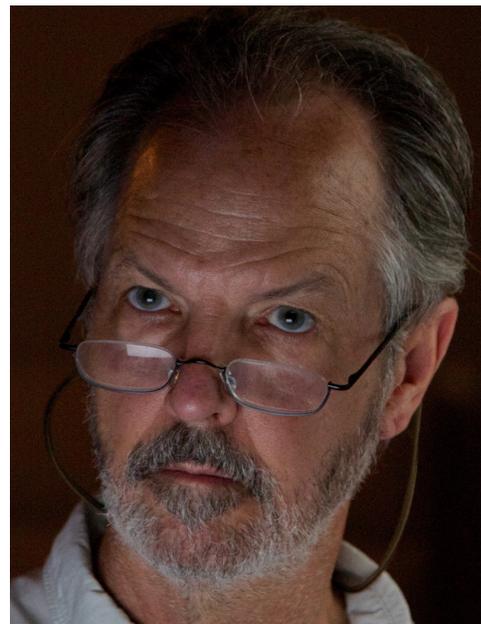
The price for our beautiful environment is eternal vigilance and passionate organization. The Save Our Springs organization gave me an outlet for my concern.”

On 29 June of 1968 my time was up and I left Vietnam and the U.S. Army. For the last five months I had been shot at every day while being a combat medic with the 198th Light Infantry. Prior to that I had been a chaplain's assistant in Vietnam. My friends in Austin, Texas introduced me to the healing Barton Springs. They invited me to chill out. At Barton Springs I would swim as long as I could stand the cold water, bake in the sun until I thawed out and then retreat into the shadow of a large tree. No one was going to shoot at me, but I scanned the tree line for odd shapes just as I had been trained to do in Vietnam. When I walked or ran on the nearby trails I unconsciously looked for the trip wires which would lead to explosives. Catching myself at this I would laugh and relax. There was no program to deal with post-traumatic stress in returning combat veterans. The psychological complexity known now as simply PTSD was not even acknowledged at the time. For me Barton Springs and my friends who took me there were my only psychological stress relief.

Slowly I became aware that the healing Springs were in danger. Chemicals used on golf courses and lawns upstream were poisoning the Colorado River and the Springs. These chemicals were also promoting algae growth. This reminded me of Agent Orange, dioxin, and the lives it had ruined and continues to ruin. I learned that the recharge zone for the aquifer that fed the Springs was being polluted by too much building over it, too much impervious cover and chemical run-off. These very Springs, which had helped me so much, were under attack. There were people concerned enough to organize to fight for the life of Barton Springs, and so I photographed the Springs and their campaign in order for them to use the photographs in their educational efforts.



The war was on again but this time it was at home and for, or against, Barton Springs. The price for our beautiful environment is eternal vigilance and passionate organization. The Save Our Springs organization gave me an outlet for my concern. My photographs appeared in The Rag, The Texas Observer, The Austin Sun, The Austin Chronicle and were available to any other groups or publications that could make use of them.



BARTON CREEK
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TIME STREAM

