



ROY WALEY

Real Estate Agent

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Without the work of Save Barton Creek Association and Save Our Springs Alliance... it's difficult to guess how much farther the degradation would have advanced. And the work isn't over, there's still more to do. It's going to take all of us. Not just the old warriors but a new generation of activists. We must keep...Barton Springs Eternal."

Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s along the North and South San Gabriel Rivers and Brushy and Bear Creeks and others in Williamson County (still LBJ Country and a Democrat stronghold) was a paradise for me. It was a great life with abundant wildlife, dark skies filled with a million stars. All shared with my best friend, my dog, Sidekick.

However the prospect of a trip to Austin, not Georgetown or Burnet, to see my Big City cousins was sensory overload for a six-year old country boy like me. Good gosh! The population was 186,000 plus or minus in 1960. How could I ever remember all the names?

The highlight of the trip was picnicking at Zilker Park. Sure there were plenty of open spaces back home but here there were playgrounds, Little Toot the train, and the Rock Gardens with ponds teeming with goldfish! But best of all was Barton Springs Pool! The smaller pools along the bluffs of the South San Gabriel were nice, but nothing like this. This long, wide pool of crystal clear water was like a vision.

My Aunt, Abby Jo, was tested to her limits to keep us kids under control. After lunch of course we had to wait 30 minutes before swimming to ensure our stomachs wouldn't cramp or we'd all sink to the bottom. And this protocol was an established medical fact in the 1960s. So after half an hour (more or less) of squirming, fidgeting and getting fussed at, "You kids lay still on your towels or we'll just go home!" Aunt Abby Jo herded us down to the pool. Compared to the sun-warmed limestone and mossy creek beds at home, these cold waters were eye-poppingly shocking. After much squealing and splashing, taking turns pushing our faces as close to the actual Springs, we would make our way to the lower dam. Here the water was deepest. After solemn, but still snickering promises from my two cousins (I was the weakest swimmer of the three) we would again don our little scuba masks and snorkels, grab some rocks and sink to the bottom of the pool.

It seems unbelievable now, but back then the water was so clear it was possible to look the whole length of the pool and see people knifing into the pool from the high diving board. Yep, at one time there were two diving boards. I was too reluctant to use the high dive. My cousins called me "Chicken of the Sea," the advertising slogan for a brand of canned tuna.

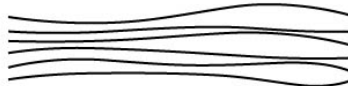
ROY WALEY CONT'D



While living away much of the 1970s, Barton Springs was still a must whenever back in town. The high dive was long gone by the late 70s, but the water was still just as shockingly cold. Just as shocking was the lack of water clarity. No chance of seeing the length of the pool from underwater by the dam. And it has only gotten murkier. The Edwards Aquifer and the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer are strained by the enormous growth of Austin and The Hill Country.

Without the work of Save Barton Creek Association and Save Our Springs Alliance, and so many others (I'd be remiss not to specifically mention Jackie Goodman), it's difficult to guess how much farther the degradation would have advanced. And the work isn't over, there's still more to do. It's going to take all of us. Not just the old warriors but a new generation of activists. We must keep...Barton Springs Eternal.

BARTON CREEK



TIME STREAM