



The *Merry Christmas* Edition
County Line BBQ
 Wednesday, December 15th 7 PM
Christmas Banquet - Silent Auction
 See page 3 for important party details.
Deadline to RSVP: Dec. 9th!

LEED PEAKING INTEREST RAINWATER HARVESTING

A perusal of the literature and a survey of world civilizations show that rainwater harvesting has been used extensively as a low-tech solution to human water needs for millennia. My own relationship to rainwater harvesting has been a long and varied one, although I admit to giving it little thought over the last decade or so as I switched my professional attention to the issues of urban water management in the United States and global metropolises, and away from the day-to-day issues affecting developing nations where I began my career. However, with our fears of global warming effects on climate, a growing urban population, and a broader movement to promote sustainable development, I have begun to turn my attention back to the humble topic of using onsite generation and storage of rainwater as a water supply and efficiency measure.

Increasingly, I have noted in my studies that rainwater harvesting is beginning to appear as a serious option for consideration as a potential supplementary water source



and conservation measure for new and existing constructions, even here in the San Francisco Bay Area where I am based (SFPUC 2010a), and is being integrated across the United States into green building guidelines and codes such as the US Green Building Council's LEED program. Installation of rainwater harvesting currently accounts for one point in the LEED-new-construction scoring system and potentially could help the building qualify for other points through achieving above-code water savings, stormwater reduction, reduction in sewage discharge generation, and achievement of water efficient irrigation (USGBC 2010). State plumbing codes around the nation are slowly being modified to permit the installation of rainwater harvesting systems for use as part of irrigation systems and/or non-potable water supplies for selected interior water use (often classified as graywater systems, although I believe a clearer distinction should be made between graywater and rainwater). A recent example is the 2009 amendments to the 2006 Georgia plumbing code that pertains to rainwater recycling systems (State of Georgia 2009).

Continued on page 4



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2011 Meeting Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| February 16 | April 20 |
| June 15 | August 17 |
| October 19 | TBA for Christmas Party |

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every other month



Don't Forget To RSVP
Christmas Banquet - Silent Auction
RSVP Cost \$30 per person - \$35 at the door
County Line BBQ
Wednesday, December 15th 7 PM
Deadline to RSVP: Dec. 9th!

RSVP Deadline: Dec. 9th
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or contact Mark Watson at:
Ph: (512) 405-0405 or
Raynmakr219@aol.com

Date: Dec. 15, 2010
Time: 7:00 pm
Place: County Line on the Hill
6500 Bee Cave Rd
(just past 360)
Austin, TX 78746
(512) 327-1742



Letter from the Editor:

Here are some Irish toasts to use during the holidays:



May the flower of love never be nipped by the frost of disappointment, nor shadow of grief fall among your family and friends.

May you be poor in misfortune, rich in blessings, slow to make enemies and quick to make friends.

May your home always be too small to hold all your friends.

May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live.

May your heart be light and happy,
May your smile be big and wide,
And may your pockets always have a coin or two inside!

Always remember to forget
The troubles that passed away.
But never forget to remember
The blessings that come each day.

May you have the hindsight to know where you've been,
The foresight to know where you are going,
And the insight to know when you have gone too far!

May misfortune follow you the rest of your life, and never catch up.

May the Christmas Season bring you peace, joy and happiness.

Happy Holidays!!
Cyndi Reno

HEARING SET FOR NEW LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION ORDINANCE

Austin City Council members will hold a public hearing and consider an ordinance regarding new landscaping irrigation requirements for site plans on **Thursday, December 16, 2010 at 4:00 p.m**

The City of Austin requires landscaping of commercial sites for aesthetics, buffering, screening, and urban heat island abatement. This landscaping is traditionally curbed off from surrounding pavement and relies heavily on potable water irrigation to survive. Meanwhile, rainfall running off parking lots and rooftops is directed to storm drains and structural controls, bypassing the landscaping completely. There is an opportunity to bridge this divide by using rainwater on-site to conserve potable water, enhance water quality, and sustain the health of these urban landscapes.

In recognition of this opportunity, Council passed a resolution in August 2009 asking staff to develop an ordinance that would require commercial stormwater runoff to be directed to landscaped areas while providing flexibility through

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The President's Ponderings:

Dear Fellow Irrigators,

Thanks to everyone who attended the October meeting at Catfish Parlor. Well it had to happen one day, after 4 years of many trials & tribulation I am going to finally step down as president. It will be nice to be a participant in the meetings. I appreciate Chris Lupton stepping up to be our new president and wish him all the best.

Many new laws and regulations have been past during the last 4 years by cities and the TCEQ. I feel ALSA did have some impact in the shaping of the new regulations. One expense Austinites don't have to worry about is the expense of installing the electronic water meters with LED read-out in the garage so the client can see the volume of water used each cycle.

I think the new challenges facing the ALSA will be the economic side. Vendors & supply houses have to continually slash their budgets as well as irrigators cutting back on expenses like joining ALSA. We could try and go back to receiving CEU hours in our meetings; we had better membership participation but this stopped when stricter guidelines came into effect. The lecturer must be preapproved by the TCEQ, speak for at least 1 1/2 hours on agenda related to our industry and no alcohol could be served in the meeting. These hours are hard to obtain and difficult to compete with the city of Austin's 8 hr. CEU class offered for \$50.00. Last years attendance was around 150 people.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped me out over the last 4 years. Special thanks to David Brannan. Hope to see everyone at the Christmas party on December 15th at 7 pm at the County Line on the Hill. We'll have lots of silent auction items to bid on and proceeds will be going to fighting cancer.

Thanks again,
Bill

PEAKING INTEREST *Continued from page 1*

As an academic, as well as a home gardener interested in the practical application of water conservation technologies like rainwater harvesting, I have looked at this backyard rainwater project as both a planning and a research exercise. In my classes on water management and sustainability, I find myself frequently pointing out to my students that one of the reasons we are so wasteful of our water in the United States is because, in many locations—especially California—a) we have historically had abundant supplies relative to demands and, consequently, b) have priced water much lower than its actual and future costs (in part, due to our failure to recognize external costs that have resulted from system development—for example, in California, the impacts on the San Francisco Bay-Delta and the salmon industry, among other factors).

In other parts of the world, where a) supplies have been more limited, and/or b) authorities have been more forward-looking, and/or c) the need for conservation and the future costs of failing to do so are both higher and more imminent, water is far more expensive and government assistance to consumers wishing to partner in substantive conservation are more readily available—for example, in Victoria, Australia. So I decided not only to evaluate the financial viability of a potential rainwater harvesting system for this backyard in Oakland, but to model how its performance and cost-effectiveness would

Continued on page 5



LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION ORDINANCE *Continued from page 3*

alternative methods and exceptions for unique site conditions. In response to this charge, City staff met with various stakeholders, including making a presentation to RECA's City of Austin Policy Issues Committee in January 2010.

The proposed [ordinance](#) will require commercial sites to direct stormwater to at least 50 percent of the required landscaping. There are a number of ways to comply, ranging from simpler solutions like overland flow and disconnected downspouts to more sophisticated designs like rain gardens and rainwater harvesting. Undisturbed natural areas and existing trees can also be counted toward the 50 percent requirement as long as no potable irrigation is installed. Under existing code, permanent

irrigation is required for all landscaping. The ordinance will now give sites the option to not permanently irrigate perimeter landscapes. However, temporary irrigation will be required for two growing seasons to allow for establishment. Permanent irrigation will still be required for all new trees as well as medians, islands, and peninsulas.

Administrative variances will be allowed for sites unable to fully comply due to unique site conditions such as topography, the location of existing development, or the potential for highly contaminated runoff. The ordinance also directs staff to report back to Council after two years on the effectiveness of the new requirements, including recommendations for potential improvements or amendments.

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Law of Probability - The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

PEAKING INTEREST Continued from page 4

differ if it were to be installed in a climatically and institutionally different setting, specifically Melbourne, where such water harvesting systems, so rare to date in my water provider's service territory, are already commonplace.

Through a relatively simple analysis, I have sought both to satisfy my curiosity and provide myself with greater insight, as someone interested in water resources sustainability and how we might achieve it, into how a) the climatic regimen (i.e., monthly distribution of rainfall) and irrigation requirement seasonality, b) the addition of domestic non-potable water use, and c) tank sizing might affect the performance and hence the cost-effectiveness of a potential system in two different locations and for two distinct tariff and rebate scenarios.

As a postscript, if I do decide to go ahead with my rainwater harvesting project, I need to remember one more thing from my childhood home. One of the drawbacks of those rustic rain barrels my family used was that they weren't very sophisticated and didn't have a first-flush system that diverts the initial runoff following a rainless period. Thus, the runoff water periodically included washed-off organic material (leaf litter), and it frequently looked and smelled awful. Similarly, they were not effectively sealed to the outside environment, allowing both sunlight and insects to enter. If I were allowed to

install such a poorly designed rainwater system in Oakland, it would clearly represent a potential health and nuisance hazard, in particular, due to its ability to become a breeding environment for potential disease vectors—for example in California of the West Nile Virus and Canine Heartworm parasite among other pathogens. Several breeds of mosquitoes, particularly of the genus *Aedes* and *Culex*, like to breed in the clear freshwater stored in rainwater tanks and even a small access hole the size of a pencil will be sufficient to permit ingress of adults and the egress of hatched larvae. Other types of mosquito can also be attracted to rainwater systems if the stored water contains leaf debris and algal growth. This is a major concern to our public agencies and is one of the main reasons why rainwater harvesting systems are regulated and must be designed and installed using approved methods and standards, and be adequately maintained by homeowners once in place. My design will need to have both an effective first-flush and a sealed containment system that excludes all insects. After all, the last thing I want to do after completing my project is to set on the deck and swat mosquitoes all evening!

Excerpt from article - A Tale of Two Cities by Michael D. Lee courtesy of Water Efficiency Magazine - November/December 2010. To read full article, go to www.waterefficiency.net.

In going through my numerous collection of magazines and newsletters pertaining to our industry and the varying related and crossover industries, I came across some old newsletters. I must say that I really miss Lee Webb and his enchanting way of turning out a good story. Here's one from January 21, 2004. Enjoy! ~Cyndi

Gupta the Indian, or the Ancient Irrigator's 143rd Dream

By Lee Webb

Back when I started building sprinkler systems, I had a helper named Gupta. I thought he was a Mexican when I picked him out of the crowd on Cesar Chavez Street, but he turned out to be a Hindu, from India. A wiry little guy, but he looked strong.

Anyway, our first three jobs were builder homes, right next door to each other in Pflugerville. It took us three days to build the first one, front and back, with Gupta digging and me doing the rest. He said to me, "Boss, if we can do the next one my way, I'll do it as a contract for \$150." That was what I'd paid him for the last three days work, so I said OK.

I was more than a little skeptical when, early the next morning, he insisted that we build the entire sprinkler system on top of the ground. But what the heck, he seemed confident he could get it buried, and we did have a contract. We had to dig a little to make the tap and set the backflow, but we just tapered the trench up to ground level and built the whole system, pipe, heads, valves, wires and all, right on top of the ground. It went really fast that way, especially with Gupta helping build the lateral lines and we were done by a little after lunchtime.

He told me to go find us another job and he'd have this system in the ground by quitting time. As it happened, I had a job to bid on in Lakeway, so I went on, still skeptical. When I got back a few hours later, I was totally surprised to find the entire sprinkler system buried in the ground, with heads straight and level and about 1/2" above grade for sod, just like we did the first one. I gladly gave Gupta his \$150. I begged him to tell me how he'd done it, but he refused. "Family secret," he said.

So the next morning we built the third system on top of the ground like we had the day before. Once it was ready to bury, he again told me, essentially, to get lost. I didn't have another job to go look at, and I was really curious anyway, so I got some lunch and came back about 45 minutes later. I stopped down the block and I could see Gupta walking down the sprinkler lines shaking something in his hand. He had what looked like an old towel wrapped around his head, and a red dot painted in the middle of his forehead. When I walked closer, I could see the object in his hand was a rattle, giving off a soft, almost hissing sound as he shook it. His eyes were closed and he was sort of humming or chanting, I couldn't tell which. Ahead of his feet as he walked, the pipes, wires and heads were just sinking into the ground. Amazing! I watched him "sink" one head just a little too far. He altered the way he was shaking the rattle, the pitch of his hum/chant changed, and the head rose up to precisely 1/2" out of grade.

Just then he gave a jerk, like he was waking up, and saw me. "Go on," he said, "I can't do this with you watching." So I went on and came back at quitting time, and sure enough, the entire system was in the ground. This time I insisted he explain how he did it. He finally agreed when I said I was thinking of checking with the INS to see if he was a real person or a hallucination. He said his uncle in India was a yogi, or maybe he said swami, and he had taught him the trick of "meditating" objects into the ground. He said the sound of the rattle was mostly to help him concentrate, but what was inside the rattle was critical. "It's badger claws," he said. "Badgers are known to be good diggers."

Well you can't argue with success, and it was Friday anyway, so I gave him his \$150 and took him home. Over the weekend I called the folks with the job in Lakeway and knocked \$200 off my bid. I'd originally figured on hiring more guys as it looked like hard digging, but that was before I knew what Gupta could do.

Continued on Page 8

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They told me I could start on Monday, so we did. We built the system on the ground and I made myself scarce. When I came back, the system was perfectly buried, just like the last two times. But when I went to give Gupta his \$150, he wanted \$200. "I need an extra \$50 for the rock claws," he said.

And then, as the cliché goes, I woke up.

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ALSA Meeting Minutes for October 20, 2010



October meeting was called to order at 7:15 by President Bill Knight. Bill apologized on behalf of our sponsor, Al Probst with Hydro-Rain, he had a conflict and was not able to make our meeting – however he was still covering our dinner. Thank you Al, from all those who thoroughly enjoyed the catfish!

Motion to accept the August Minutes printed In the October newsletter were approved by Dale Johnson and seconded by Mike Littner.

Treasurers Report was read by Valerie True:

ABC Bank	\$1,993.89
Pay Pal	\$ <u>94.11</u>
Total	\$2,088.00
AR Balance	\$ 980.00
AP Balance	\$1,865.40



Motion to accept Treasurer Report was made by Dale Johnson and Mike Littner seconded.

Discussion held for the Christmas party. Funds are low again this year and discussion was held on whether we should even have a party. The few that attended the meeting, all agreed that they would still like to see a party, even if we have to pay. Committee was nominated to organize and promote the party; members are Bill Knight, Valerie True, Ernie Dunbar and Mike Littner. Stacy has the list of all the companies that have donated for the silent auction.



Bill Knight discussed the inspection kaos at the City of Austin and that he was working with Tony Hernandez in the Inspection Department on procedures and trying to work thru all the issues. If the irrigator does not meet the inspectors, there seems to be a pattern that you will fail. The inspectors won't let you know when they will be there and it causes you have to wait on them sometimes all day. Most contractors can't afford to have someone sit at a jobsite all day. There are also some issues with the wye strainer installations. The City is trying to educate the inspectors. Bill said they have been provided with literature that actually shows detail that some wye strainers can be installed at a angle.



Bill also brought to our attention that the permits you pull at the City of Austin expire 6 months after you purchase. If you wait until the last day of the permit to get your inspection and you fail, you will have to pull a new permit. No exceptions.



Dale Johnson distributed a flyer for a recommended charity to support for the Christmas Party. It was the Texas 4000 for Cancer and is a non-profit organization made up of 50 University of Texas students dedicated to fighting cancer. In summer of 2011, they will ride

bicycles from Austin to Anchorage Alasaka in effort to raise money for cancer research. The Christmas Party will work with the Board on deciding what organization we will donate our Silent Auction proceeds.

Advertising is down in the newsletter and membership is down. We are considering only sending out the newsletter thru email and saving on production costs and postage. Cyndi Reno is going to research the cost changes to the advertisers for next year and make a recommendation.



Discussion was held on how to get our membership back up and participation. The ALSA can't compete with the City of Austin Waterwise CEU class they hold every year. Gene Regan recommended we visit some of the very successful associations and see what they are doing right to keep their memberships involved. Discussed the possibilities of the Association hosting an EXPO next year for CEU's. Tabled for the 2011 Board.

Nominations for 2011 Officers are open. We have the following that have volunteered:



Chris Lupton – President
Mark Watson – Vice President
Valerie True – Treasurer
Secretary - ???

Anyone interested in any position, especially the Secretary, please contact one of the current Officers.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 by Mike Littner and seconded by Scott Long.

Valerie True
Substituting for
Scott Stewart





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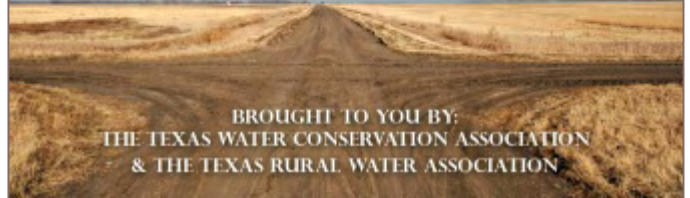
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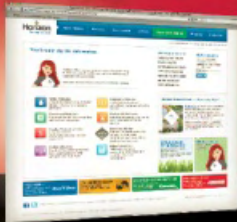
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