



Friends of Lake Murray January 2007 Column

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2007 has to be a good year though current events in our city make us feel doubtful about having a great year. We can work together to improve our problems if we know about them. But if we are kept in the dark about issues, we are helpless. I think that currently most San Diegans feel helpless. I just finished reading Washington journalist Helen Thomas' book, "Watchdogs of Democracy?" Ms. Thomas works for United Press International and has been a journalist covering the activities of nine presidents. Each president and each party has tried to manage the information that the public receives. And so, media tends to acquiesce rather than look un-American. Helen Thomas blames the media for some of the problems that we now face.

Why aren't hard questions asked? Why weren't columns written about problems that loomed? Journalists are told that divulging information will jeopardize the public's safety. In reality, secrecy gives a free hand to those who make decisions on our behalf. We have learned of concealment of facts and lack of communication in our city, state, and country. Citizens are not aware of changes until they are made. Helen Thomas blames poor media coverage. She reasons that singly or collectively we can't fix what we don't know about. I think that we can apply her assumptions to our little corner of the country.

Whistle blowers, politicians and reporters are ostracized and held up for ridicule for coming forward with damning information. However, that is exactly why some unlikely people are becoming heroes...adhering to their ethics, morals and doing the right thing. Politicians are lumped together with the media for doing a poor job when things go wrong. This is true even if they have the wherewithal to ignore the ridicule and step forward to try to make things better. It takes confidence and daring to do what is right, especially when others don't agree with you. It is hoped that there will be more fearless media owners and political leaders this year.

Rumors are rife. We have heard that the San Diego Park and Recreation department is taking control of the city lakes recreation program from the Water Department. The cost seems prohibitive and duplication of duties seems unreasonable. Why is this being done? We don't know. There are rumors that they may outsource the job, or that the county might take over the job at the city owned county lakes.

To run the program, Park and Rec. might have to charge to enter the lake areas or there may be parking fees. No one seems to know what is going to happen but it will be happening soon. There is supposed to be a public forum in January but we don't know when. There will be an opportunity to voice our concerns at a city council meeting but we don't know when that will happen. We don't know much of anything yet. We have hope.

I wrote about anesthesiologist and lake runner, John Walker a couple of years ago when he was preparing for a marathon in Africa. John's goal was to run a marathon in each of the seven continents. His seventh marathon was in Australia and this year he ran a marathon in New Zealand. Marathons are 26.2 miles long and I always say that it's the .2 that is a killer. Congratulations John. We see John running at Lake Murray most mornings after a night of work.

Speaking of marathons, the very cute couple, Dr. Eric and Dina Gilbertson will have run the Phoenix Marathon when you read this. Their friend, Craig Kishaba, was going to run with them but pulled a hamstring and will run the half marathon. I hate to say this (no I don't) but it may be hard for those guys to keep up with Dina. She's pretty good. I'll give results next month.

Lake walker Lisa DeJesus' aunt is an artist and has a showing at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor Center. Bella Hollinworth has done some wonderful work that includes some scenes of Lake Murray. Lisa says that Bella's art will be on display along with art by Louise M. Hall and Mary Ellen Clapp. As it happens, Mary Ellen's husband Dr. John Clapp and their daughter Betsy run at Lake Murray regularly. The Artists' artwork is hanging at the Visitor Center until January 25th and it is for sale.

Maybe you have read about John Opsal. He wants his skiing club to water ski at Lake Murray. My first reaction was that the lake is too small. John says that it is not. I said that the neighbors wouldn't care for the noise. John says that there wouldn't be much noise as his boat goes 32-34 miles per hour to pull a skier. I said that it would be bad for wildlife and fisherpersons wouldn't be happy. John said that at San Vicente where they have skied they were compatible with wildlife and other water activities including fishing. The reason John is looking for an alternative lake to ski is that San Vicente Reservoir will be under extensive construction for a couple of years and water sports will have to go to other lakes temporarily.

I have a request from our duck lady, Prudence Jackson. She has noticed that parents don't stop and sometimes even encourage their children to throw rocks at the ducks. This has been a longtime problem for lake staff. Birds have been injured and killed by rocks. The ducks think that people are throwing bread to them and they rush forward. This practice is not only dangerous for our wildlife but for other children as well. Please don't throw rocks at our waterfowl and animals. Thanks.

Our Friends of Lake Murray February meeting will be on February 19, at 5 pm. We meet at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church on the corner of Wandermere Dr. and Park Ridge Blvd. Our speaker Jerry Schad, professor of Physical Science and Astronomy, at Mesa

College will present: Hidden Mexico Revealed. Corrugated landscapes of Baja California and interior Chihuahua conceal many surprises... "Palm canyons" with waterfalls, hot springs, and thousands of native palm trees. There is uninhabited wilderness with jagged peaks nearly two miles high and canyon recesses adorned with pictograph galleries perhaps thousands of years old. There is a system of gorges, inhabited by some 50,000 indigenous residents that are four times as spacious as (and slightly deeper than) the Grand Canyon.

To find out the identities of these places and more, along with notes on their natural and human history, please attend Jerry Schad's talk at the Friends of Lake Murray meeting. Schad an author of 14 books, written primarily on outdoor-recreation topics. He has traveled to obscure locations in Mexico for the past 30 years.

Note: The Friends meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month. Because of conflicting usages at St. Dunstan's we will meet on the second Thursday in March and May. For more information about Friends of Lake Murray, call Barbara Cleves at (619) 463-9706 or send an email to MurraMurraymayo@aol.com.