



A Living Legacy

Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present and Creating Our Future

Austin Parks and Recreation Department
1928-2003



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75th Anniversary of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department



Greetings

As we prepared to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, we were presented with an excellent opportunity to research the proud history of the department. It was a task that I assigned to Gloria Mata Pennington and this booklet is the result of her research. As the information was compiled it allowed us to reflect on the facilities that were built, the programs that were created, the land that was acquired and some of the key staff who worked in the development of a department that would achieve national recognition.

No attempt was made to write a narrative, instead the verbage used is what was written in the actual reports. Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this chronology from 1928 until 1970 was taken from actual Monthly Reports. Some of the information selected also includes segments from the reports that are a reflection of the times and of the community's thinking and experiences. Apparently, after 1970, Annual Reports replaced the Monthly Reports. With the exception of 1985 to 1995 when reports were not written, the information from 1971 to the present was taken from actual Annual Reports as noted.

Reminisce with us and share our pride in the accomplishments of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department during its 75 years of service to the community.

Jesus M. Olivares, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

June 1928: The first Monthly Report submitted by James A. Garrison, Superintendent of Recreation to City Manager Adam R. Johnson.

"Instrumental in bringing about the establishment of the Recreation Department was a committee from the Austin Lions Club. The five members were: Horace Barnhart, A.W. Griffith, John Tobin, Gillespie Stacy, and Harris Brush. This committee worked from 1926 until the department was established by the City Council in 1928. (Austin Statesman). The Recreation Division was created during the spring of 1928, and was financed by a special appropriation out of the General Fund of the City in the amount of \$2,500, which took care of the salary of the superintendent of this department. The work necessarily, on account of lack of funds, has been carried on in a limited way, but through the cooperation of outside agencies splendid results have been accomplished. Thirty-six volunteer Playground leaders were secured from the Physical Education Department of the University of Texas, and through the courtesy of the Superintendent of Public Schools, the Austin High School Athletic Field was secured for the Junior Baseball League, and the Junior High School Gym for the women's Basketball League. Other organizations and clubs have shown quite an interest and rendered splendid assistance. The department recently became a member of the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation and sent teams to the State Meet for swimming, tennis and baseball. Several of the civic organizations furnished baseball suits for the different Junior Baseball teams, and several of the merchants, suits to the Women's Basketball teams."

"The parks system started with: Woolridge Park, acquired by the City in 1840; Pease Park, donated by Governor E. M. Pease in 1875; House Park donated by

E.M. House in 1903; Barton Springs purchased in 1918; Rosewood Park purchased in 1929; the Austin Athletic Club donated in 1931 by W. T. Caswell; 350 acres donated in 1932 by A.J. Zilker; Deep Eddy Pool purchased in 1935 and the Municipal Golf Course donated in 1937 by the Austin Lions Club." (Office file, neither author nor research material identified).

1928: "Austin's first year of an organized **softball league** for men and **Junior**

hardball league for boys 12-17, is organized by James Garrison, superintendent of Recreation."



Woolridge Park

July 1928: "Negotiations are underway to purchase the fourteen acre **Huppertz** homestead on **Rosewood** avenue just beyond the city limits in East Austin for a Negro park. Currently, the Negroes of East Austin are using **Emancipation Park**, a privately owned resort."

March 1929: "Nine acres of land on **Waller Creek**, known as **Eastwoods** is purchased for \$20,000 to be used as park and playground."

1929: "Two **athletic fields** will be completed during the winter months for next year's operation. The fields will furnish ample facilities for all the major city-wide contests. A **woman's softball league** is also organized."

1930: "Soon after the \$750,000 bonds were voted for Parks, Playgrounds, and Boulevards, an ordinance was passed creating a **Parks and Playgrounds Commission** to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council and the City Manager in the acquiring, developing, equipping and improving of all parks, playgrounds and boulevards owned and controlled by the City of Austin. Over 100 acres of land have been acquired, quite a substantial amount of which has been improved and beautified; nine playgrounds built and equipped and land for part of the Waller Creek Boulevard acquired and a portion of same is graded preparatory to paving. The boulevarding and beautifying of Shoal Creek is well under way – however, this project has been delayed on account of being unable to purchase some of the land but this the commission hopes to secure at an early date" (1930 City of Austin Annual Report).



Juneteenth celebration at Rosewood Park

June 1930: "First Juneteenth celebration is held at **Rosewood Park.**"

August 1930: "Playgrounds: **Pease Park, Hyde Park, Mexican, East Woods, South Austin, East Avenue, West Austin, Rosewood.**"

November 1930: "**Rosewood Park**, this is the first time that any attempt has been made to offer recreation to the colored people during the fall and winter months. A room upstairs has been turned into a game room. The room is opened in the afternoons and early evenings. Table and chairs have been provided."

1931: "The area known as **Zilker Park** has 355 acres that includes the original portion known as Zilker Springs, in which is located the largest swimming center operated by the City." (1948 Annual Report).

April 1931: "**Girls Athletic Club** is organized. "Membership is limited to girls that have participated in the City Industrial Leagues sponsored by the Recreation Department. The purpose of the club is to offer the business girls of Austin not only athletic activities but social activities as well."

July 1, 1931: "The **Austin Athletic Club** opens with 20 paid members. Membership fee is \$1."



Austin Athletic Club (Austin Recreation Center)

July 1931: "Five **Mexican hard ball baseball teams** are organized in the City under the care of the Recreation Department. Games are played at **Zaragoza Park** and on an average are better attended than any other baseball in the City. A four team colored hard ball baseball league was organized this year with each team playing twice a week at the hard ball diamond of the colored playground."

August 1931: "**KUT radio** gives the department one hour of air time each Tuesday night from 7:45 PM to 8:45 PM to promote programs and athletic events. Members of the various playgrounds and the industrial leagues host the programs."

1932: "This department is now operating under splendidly trained supervision, **9 well-equipped playgrounds, 5 athletic fields, 2 swimming pools**, the **Austin Athletic Club**, and **Rosewood Community House** for colored. **Rosewood Park** for colored, containing approximately 12 acres, and **Zaragoza Park** for the Mexican people, containing 9.52 acres, are given the same care and attention as the other parks and playgrounds and are both well attended." (1932 City of Austin Report).

May 1932: "**Cinco de Mayo Celebration** is held at Zaragoza Park. This celebration was made possible through the work and assistance of the following Mexican citizens: Francisco Estrada, Amador Candelas, Joe H. Rodriguez, Jose W. Lopez, Juan Carillo, Frank P. Goodman, Francisco Prado and Manuel Benavides."

June 1932: "Free swim lessons are given at **Barton Springs**, four mornings a week, taught by two male and one female instructor."

June 1932: "The recreation department's radio program is now broadcast on **KNOW radio.**"

July 1932: "Floodlights are installed at five **Playgrounds** so activities can be expanded to evening hours."

July 1932: "The annual 4th. of **July Swim Meet** is postponed to July 9th. due to a rise in the Colorado River which flooded **Barton Springs**. State **TAAF** meet held as part of the program and two state record times were broken in the meet."



September 14, 15, 16, 17, 1932: "A Mexican committee is organized to handle the four day celebration of the **Independence of Mexico** for the Mexican Colony of the City of Austin."

October 10, 1932: "The **formal opening** of the **Austin Athletic Club** is held. Palms and wild flowers, brought from the various City parks, predominated in the decorations. Paintings by a well known artist adorned the walls of the recreation room. A general reception was held in the lobby and clubrooms from eight until ten, and a dance was held on the main floor of the gymnasium from ten to twelve."



Zilker Park

1933: "Zilker Park was voted in December 1932, but its final acquisition was not approved until 1933." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "Through the City Government, **Palm** and **Metz Playgrounds** were added to the Recreation areas by bond purchases in 1933." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "**Station KNOW** proved to be one of the best supporters of Recreation in Austin, when the station officials donated a full hour each week to playground programs and information." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "Several traditions have grown up in the Recreation Department and have become annual events. The biggest of these pageants is the annual **Playground Pageant**, presented as the climax to the summer's work on the playgrounds." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "The Recreation Department operated the following **swimming pools** in Austin during the year of 1933: **Barton Springs, Westenfield, Palm, Zaragosa, and Rosewood**. In addition, **wading pools** were open at **Hyde Park, East Woods, Metz, South Austin, West Austin,, and Pease Park Playgrounds**." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "One of the biggest events of the spring program is the annual **Kite Contest** conducted by the Recreation Department and the Exchange Club. The Filtration Plant Park was the scene of the 1933 contest." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "The **Palm School playground** was completed and opened to the public under supervision during the summer months of 1933." (1933 Annual Report).

1933: "A new **playground, Metz**, was built on a portion of the land located around the Sewer Disposal Plant. This ground was opened to the public under supervision for the first time during 1933, and led all of the other grounds in attendance." (1933 Annual Report),

January 1933: "An indoor colored basketball league is played at **Royal Auditorium**. This auditorium is the only available indoor gym for colored play, and although it is better than outdoor play, conditions are far from ideal."

April 1933: "The first official scheduled games of the **Playground Baseball Leagues** for men and women start in early April. Although the men play three games a night and the women only one, the crowds attending the women's games will equal those of the men's league. With crowds ranging from two to five hundred for each game."

May 1933: The Monthly Report is submitted to **George G. Grant, Acting City Manager**.

May 1933: "**Mayor Tom Miller** addresses a crowd of three thousand at the Cinco de Mayo celebration at **Zaragosa Park**. The celebration is planned by a citizen's committee from the neighborhood, who solicit funds to pay for the event. In addition, they are required to give back to the City 10% of the profits from the concession booths."

May 1933: "A swim meet was held to open the **new swimming pool at Zaragosa Park**. The technique of the swimmers was very poor, but the races were as close as possible and just as exciting as if world records were being broken. It was the first Mexican swimming meet ever held in Austin."

June 1933: "Mayor Tom Miller declares "**Roosevelt Day**" and the Recreation Department is placed in charge of organizing the various parts of the celebration. "Roosevelt Day started out with a pouring rain and it seemed as if the events might have to be called, but the sun came out about five o'clock and all of the activities were run on schedule. Several thousand people came to **Barton Springs** to watch members of the University of Texas Turtle Club, Rosner's Swimming Team, and the Austin Athletic Club put on an exhibition of water stunts and diving by star divers of the various clubs. The band concert started at 7:30 PM at **Woolridge Park**, with one of the largest crowds in history present. After the concert the band led a parade to the Fire Drill Tower, where the Austin firemen put on an exhibition of firefighting. Then, from ten o'clock until one o'clock, two orchestras played for a street dance."

July 1933: The Monthly Report is submitted to **Guiton Morgan, City Manager**.

January 1934: "For the first time in the history of **Austin Playgrounds**, activities will start in January. We hope to convince everyone of the necessity and importance of having the playgrounds open the year round and that the Recreation Project submitted to the C.W.A. Board was a very worth while proposition. At present, we have 47 people employed on the playground project. Others are to be added to this group soon."



O'Henry Home (later O'Henry Museum)

March 1, 1934: "Winter **Playgrounds** will be closed until further notice after an announcement that all C.W. A. projects would terminate by April 1."

May 15, 1934: "The new **Shipe Park swimming pool opens** to the public."

June 2, 1934: "The **O'Henry Home**, which is located in Brush Park and opened to the public on June 2, 1934, had 163 visitors during January." (1942 Monthly Reports).

March 1935: "March 8 and 9, the **Men's State Basketball Tournament** was held in Galveston with the **Magnolia Flyers** of Austin winning the title. (1935 Annual Report).

July 1935: "**Barton Springs pool** is closed from June 11 to July 4 due to flooding in Barton Creek and back waters from the Colorado River, leaving a deposit of 1 ½ ft. of leaf-mold, mud, silt, and debris on the grounds and in the swimming pool."



Flooded Barton Springs Pool

July 1935: "The **Reptile Institution** at **Zilker Park** closes after approximately one year of operation."



Boys playing checkers in park in 1938

August 9 & 10, 1935: Fourteen teams entered the **State Women's T.A.A.F. Softball Meet** held here, August 9 and 10. **Austin Ice** of Austin won the state title. (1935 Annual Report).

September 1, 1935: "Five **playgrounds**, for children and adults, are opened for the first time for **Fall activities**. The playgrounds are open Monday-Friday from 5 PM to 10 PM. and on

Saturday from 3 PM to 6 PM, and each has one paid leader. The programs includes touch football leagues for boys, community nights, women's and girls' volleyball leagues, basketball, tennis, dramatics, washers, handball, library, tumbling, handcrafts, soccer, horseshoes, quiet games, speedball, and boxing."

February 1936: "Austin Athletic Club class instruction and activities are suspended along with suspension of Public Schools due to epidemic of respiratory diseases."

March 1936: "This is the first year that **Life Guard Training** becomes a requirement for employment."



Deep Eddy Pool

April 19, 1936: "Elton Rutledge and Billy Disch, Jr. open the **Zilker Canoe Club**. At present, eight canoes are available at a nominal cost with two people being admitted for each canoe."

July 8, 1936: "The **Deep Eddy Pool and Bathhouse** opens. City Manager Guiton Morgan introduced Mayor Tom Miller, who spoke about the cost for construction of the pool and the bathhouse. The project was jointly sponsored by the Works Progress Administration and the City Recreation Department with the WPA expenditure at \$16,900.19."

July 16, 1936: "On the morning of the 16th. the highest rise since the June flood of 1935, came down **Barton**. At 4 a.m. an approximate 20 foot rise came down **Barton Creek**. The swimming pool remained closed until July 23rd. when it again was opened to the public."

July 1936: "The Band Stand-Comfort Station at **Barton Springs** is completed at a total cost of \$2,710.75. The band stand is an open air platform on the second floor with comfort station being housed on the ground floor. This building replaced the old band stand which was washed way in June 1935."

August 17, 1936: "August 17th, the **new playground** on 32nd and Wabash Avenue was opened. The people in this community have been waiting eagerly for the opening of this playground. The first community night program was held Friday, August 21st. The program included a band concert, a welcome speech by the Mayor of Austin, and several musical numbers were presented by the children from various playgrounds. The playground was named in memory of one of Austin's distinguished citizens, **Lyman J. Bailey**."

1937: "**Bee Creek Park**, 137 acres, across from Tom Miller Dam on Bee Creek, the land is undeveloped and in its natural state." (1948 Annual Report).

April 1, 1937: "The City obtains title to **Municipal Golf Course** from the Lions Club and immediately starts construction of an underground sprinkling system, top dressing of several fairways, and removal of trees and new locations made for several greens."

June 1937: "A new activity of band concerts and sing-song, lead by Rev. Dan Grieder, are held each Thursday night at **Barton Springs**. The concerts are carried live as a public service on **KNOW** radio from 8:15 to 8:45 PM."

June 1937: "The **Austin Statesman** carries a weekly page of playground news and photographs. In addition, the **Austin American** and the **Sunday American** carry additional news from the department and scores from the softball games. The department has no financial liability for these services."

August 1937: "Moving pictures were made of **Barton Springs, Deep Eddy, the Golf Course**, and of the playgrounds and their activities. These pictures will be used for educational purposes and will also serve as a permanent record of the department's facilities and activities."

October 1937: "**Austin Athletic Club**. The total number of individuals that have paid their membership fees is 523. This year the fees at the Club were raised from one to two dollars for general membership for the year. There is also a special **tennis membership** fee of \$20 for the year, which entitles the holder to have the privilege of reserving the courts. The old fee of 10 cents an hour for the use of a court is still used, but the members that pay by the hour are not eligible to reserve a court."

October 1937: "Eight **WPA (Work Projects Administration)** workers are assigned to work as recreation staff."

June 27, 1938: "A stage is constructed at the pavilion at **Barton Springs**, upon which plays of the **Barton Springs Summer Theater** will be given. The first play performed is "Penny Wise"."

December 20, 1938: "First public concert of **Austin's civic symphony orchestra**, under the direction of Henrik Buytendorp, is held at Hogg Memorial auditorium. The formation of the orchestra is credited in large part to the organizational skills of James Garrison, a member of the board of directors and superintendent of Recreation."

1939: "The **Metz Community Center**, which used a school building for its base, serves the people who live in what is known as the Metz School District. It was the first year that the Recreation Department used a Public School building for a center of community activities." (1939 Annual Report).

April 1939: **James A. Garrison** is elected president of the **Texas Recreation Association**.

September 29, 1939: The **Women's Public Links Golf Association** was formed with 26 women becoming members of the club." (1939 Annual Report).

December 1939: "Plans are finalized for Austin's second metropolitan park, **Lake Austin**, with miles of shore line, a bathing beach and boat docks and 1,008 acres of land."



City Park on Lake Austin (Emma Long Metropolitan Park)

August 2-3, 1940: "Tom Attra and Johnny Perales win state championships at the **State T.A.A.F. Boxing Tournament** in San Angelo."

September 20, 1940: City Manager **Guiton Morgan** is called to active duty and **James A. Garrison**, director of Recreation is sworn in as acting city manager. V. A. Kormeier is named Acting Superintendent of the Austin Recreation Department.

December 1940: **Beverly S. Sheffield**, named **Acting Director**.

January 1941: "Construction of a shelter house at the **Zaragoza Playground** was begun during the month, which will include dressing and toilet facilities for adults and children. A chain-linked fence will be placed around the pool and connected to the bathhouse to make the pool and bathhouse one complete unit. Materials for this project furnished by the city and the labor by the National Youth Administration."

March 1941: **Guiton Morgan** returns as City Manager and **James A. Garrison** is assigned as a three-state director for the national defense commission.

May 1941: "During the month of May, 96 members of the newly organized **Archery Club** took part in the weekly practices on the football field at **House Park**."

August 28, 1941: "The **204th Field Artillery, Anti-Aircraft Division from Louisiana** composed of 600 men were entertained with a program and dance at **Barton Springs**. The department assisted in the entertainment by making arrangements for 300 girls who were invited to the dance and staged the floor shows, and conducted games on a lighted area directly in back of the pavilion."

September 4, 1941: "Mayor Tom Miller appoints a committee of 19 persons to form the **Austin Defense Recreation Council**. The purpose of this council is to organize the resources of the city for the welfare of the service men during their leisure time visits to the city."

October 1941: "In cooperation with the **Austin Defense Recreation Council** the department offers recreational activities to service men while they are in Austin. The men are also permitted to take showers and are furnished with soap and towels at the **Austin Athletic Club**."

November 1941: "Through the assistance of W.P.A., the department directed a program at the Federal Housing Project at **Chalmers Courts**."

1942: **Assistant Director, Alvin Eggeling**, becomes Acting Director while **Director, James A. Garrison** serves on Defense Commission and **Assistant Director Beverly Sheffield** joins the armed services". (1942 Annual Report).

1942: During the year of 1942, the Recreation Department accepted the responsibility of coordinating all available resources of the community to promote a recreation program for service men visiting in Austin. All service men have free swims at Deep Eddy and Barton Springs and to play golf without a charge at the Municipal Golf Course. A **War Recreation Council** is created and Mr. A. T. Knies is appointed chairman." (1942 Annual Report).



Barton Springs Riding Stable

1942: "The **Barton Springs Riding Stable**, located in **Zilker Park** and leased to an operator on a percentage basis, made it possible for citizens of Austin to have a convenient place to board their own horses or rent horses for riding." (1942 Annual Report).

1942: "Two new pools were opened, one at the **East Avenue Playground** and the other at **Ramsey**

Playground. Both pools are of the re-circulating type with a complete change of water every ten hours." (1942 Annual Report).

1942: "During the past year, the **Austin Symphony Orchestra** presented four concerts featuring noted guest artists: namely, Eugen List, pianist; Helen Jepson, Metropolitan soprano; Anatol Kaminsky, violinist; and Moissaye Bouglawski, pianist." (1942 Annual Report). (1942 Annual Report).

January 1, 1942: "The **Elisabet Ney Museum**, which had been deeded to the City of Austin in September of the previous year, was placed under the administration of the Recreation Department." (1942 Annual Report).



Elisabet Ney Museum,

January 1942: "The **O. Henry Memorial** was also placed under the supervision of the Recreation Department in January 1942. (1942 Annual Report).

March 21, 1942: "The 106th. Sep. Coast Artillery, which consisted of 600 men from Camp Hulen, bivouacked two nights in **Zilker Park.**"

May 1942: "During the month of May, the **playgrounds** were visited by more adults than usual, which is attributed largely to the tire rationing program being enforced by the government."

June 1942: "The **Latin-American Center**, which is under the auspices of the Federated Latin American Clubs and directed by the Austin Recreation Department opens. A special appropriation was made the later part of May by the City Council to employ a part-time director for the center."

August 1942: "The month of August saw a slight decrease in attendance at the **Latin-American Center**, which was attributed to the many persons going to the cotton patch."

September 1942: "The Mexican September 16th. Celebration was again held at **Zaragosa.** A special program was planned for each night, with the principle address being given on September 16th. by **Mayor Tom Miller.**"

December 1942: "Individual **Mothers' Clubs** of the different playgrounds have been doing war work for the past month, with many of the clubs doing sewing for the American Red Cross."

1943: "The **Service Men's Headquarters** which is operated in the Driskill Hotel with city funds and under direction of the Recreation Department has a record of which any city could be proud." (1943 Annual Report).

1943: "The Recreation Department was the recipient of two gifts in 1943. The **Sunshine Camp**, built in 1934 by the Travis County Tuberculosis Association and operated for nine years by the Y.M.B.L. as a summer camp for underprivileged children, was deeded to the City as a recreational facility. As an added attraction to **Zilker Springs**, an **Aviary** given to the department by a well-known citizen, Mrs. Goodall Wooten, was placed near the pool area in May." (1943 Annual Report).

1943: "Dr. E. H. Givens, serves as **Chairman of the Negro War Recreation Council.**" (1943 Annual Report).

January 1943: Monthly Report prepared by **Alvin R. Eggeling, Acting Superintendent of Recreation** and submitted to **Walter Seaholm, Acting City Manager.**

January 1943: "During the past months, the **playgrounds** have had no direct leadership but were constantly in use as a place for free play activities. It was noticed that many parents took their smaller children in the grounds and observed their play activities. This was probably due, in part, to the program of tire and gasoline conservation."

February 3, 1943: "A group of Austin singers, interested in organizing a **mixed choral group**, met at the symphony hall. The function of this newly organized choral group will be to stimulate interest in fine choral music, to give Austin singers an opportunity to sing together and to provide opportunities of stage presentation of choral concerts to Austin audiences."

April 15, 1943: "The **Austin Junior Symphony Orchestra** is organized."

June 1943: "The attendance at the nine **playground pools** showed a slight decline over the month of June. This decrease is attributed largely to the polio scare."

June 1943: "Negro Playgrounds at **Anderson High** and **Blackshear Elementary School** are opened to supplement the programs at Rosewood. The Blackshear program was instituted for the purpose of providing a recreation program for small children who do not live within walking distance of **Rosewood.**"

November 1943: "Department assigns recreation leader to conduct three hours of recreational activities each week for the nurses at the **Brackenridge Nurses Home.**"

March 1944: "The joint conference of the **Texas Recreation Association**, the **Southwest District of the National Recreation Association**, and the **Texas Beach and Pool Association** was held in Austin on March 2, 3, and 4th. Speakers stressed the need for post-war development of municipal recreation."

April 10, 1944: "A new gymnasium-auditorium costing approximately \$40,000 was dedicated to the recreational use and interest of the Negro Community in the city, with the dedicatory address being made by Dr. Carl Downs, President of the Samuel Huston College. The center was dedicated to the memory of and named for **Dorie Miller**, a young Negro seaman who distinguished himself by personal bravery at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941." (1944 Annual Report).



Doris Miller Auditorium under construction

May 1, 1944: "The **Rosewood Swimming Pool**, which is operated for the Colored people, was officially opened on Monday, May 1, with a large crowd on hand throughout the day."



Rosewood Swimming Pool

May 14, 1944: "**Barton Springs**, an approximated crowd of six thousand spectators viewed a water safety exhibition with soldiers of Bergstrom Field conducting the proceedings. The exhibition was followed by two troop transports circling Zilker Park, from which two paratroopers parachuted out and landed in the designated spot."

June 1-11, 1944: "The Hard Baseball season ushered in with a baseball clinic at House Park. Instructors were **Hank Severied**, former Major Leaguer; **Uncle Billy Disch** and **Blair Cherry**, University of Texas; and **Tony Burger**, Austin High School Coach." (1944 Annual Report).



1945 American Legion Jr. Baseball School

December 1944: "The department cooperated in staging a state-wide **Governor's Recreation Conference**. The meetings were held in the House of Representatives of the Capitol, with over 150 people attending from all parts of the state. A bill to create a state recreation department was prepared and will be presented to the legislature in January."

1945: "After completing his military duties, **James A. Garrison** returns as director of Public Safety and Recreation."

1945: "The inevitable problems of war-time asserted themselves more vigorously than in any previous year of the war. Shortage of necessary recreational equipment an turnover of

personnel were particularly difficult to recreation departments not only in Austin, but over the entire nation." (1945 Annual Report).

1945: "Through an increased consciousness in the minds of the Austin School Officials and the public in general that the use of public school facilities should be extended to all people in the community, the recreation department was able to capitalize on such opinion and start programs at Baker and Fulmore Schools. (1945 Annual Report).



Red Bud Isle

1945: "Red Bud Isle was formed in the middle of the Colorado River in 1900 when the 7-year old McDonald Dam collapsed in a major flood. The large granite and limestone boulders from the dam were buried in flood debris and later revegetated. The land was deeded to the City by the State of Texas in 1945". (2000-2001 Annual Report).

February 1945: "The Victory Hostess Corps, sponsored by the Austin Negro War Recreation Council is merged with the U.S.O. Hostess Group and located at **Rosewood Park.**"

March 20, 1945: "The **Austin Symphony Orchestra** played before the largest audience of its history, when, on March 20, it was presented, with **Marian Anderson** as guest soloist, by the University Cultural Committee in Gregory Gymnasium. A crowd of approximately 6,000 heard the orchestra as it accompanied the famous guest contralto and also played a regular concert."



USO dance at Rosewood Park

May 1945: "The annual **Cinco de Mayo** Celebration was staged at **Zaragosa** by the Austin Mexican Patriotic Committee with crowds approximating 3,500 attending the celebration. Principal speakers for the occasion were **Mayor Tom Miller** and **Dr. Albert Garcia.**"

June 1945: "Another "first" in the department is the **Boys' Camping** program which began the second week in June. This program is open to boys 12-16 years of age. The location of the camp is directly across the lake from the boat docks above the **Tom Miller Dam.**"

1946: "Land was purchased in two sections of the city for future development into neighborhood playgrounds, namely, **Govalle** and **Westenfield.** (1946 Annual Report)".

March 1946: "Services formerly provided by the War Recreation Council are transferred to the USO and the gradual **closing of the Service Men's Center** begins."

April 1946: "The **Austin Boxing Club** opens at City Market. "an average of fifty boys of Mexican decent gather at the market daily to be instructed by **Tom Attra.**"

April 8, 1946: "The **Senior and Junior Softball** season opens, games are played at **Pease Park.** The **Negro division** teams play at **Rosewood Park.**"

April 1946: "Hollywood Water Follies held at **Deep Eddy pool** under the auspices of the American Legion."

April 26, 1946: "**Latin American Center** has formal opening of building located at 3rd and Comal. The renovated building has flood lights for night activities. An award of \$25 was presented to winner of the contest to name the center. The winning name, chosen by the executive committee of the community, was **Pan-American Recreation Center.**"



Mr. Guerrero at Pan American Recreation Center

July 1946: "**Baseball League** play starts, games are played at **House Park.**"

September 1946: "The Department cooperates with the Austin Trades Council in a **Labor Day Celebration at Zilker Springs.**"

October 3, 1946: "**Fulmore School Recreation Center** opens, followed on October 7th. with the opening of the **Baker School Recreation Center.** Department coordinates with the school district to provide activities at these part-time centers."

November 1946: "Department plans long range community recreation in East Austin, around activities at **Metz School** and **Perry Club.** The Perry Club building became available for use by the department on October 28th. "

1947: The **Perry Club**, located in the Metz community, is jointly operated by the Recreation Department and the Perry Club Board, a Red Feather Agency. The activity program conducted at this community center enhances the Summer program conducted on the playground.

March 1947: "**Rosewood Community Center** building, which has been operated by the USO for service to military personnel was returned to the City. Formal opening of center held March 30th."

March 23, 1947: "Official dedication of the **Zilker Springs Bathhouse** is held. **Mayor Tom Miller** made the dedication address."

April 13, 1947: "The Exchange club and the department combine forces to conduct the **nineteenth Annual Kite Tournament** held in Zilker Park."

May 1947: "The Mexican Patriotic Committee organizes and conducts the annual **Cinco de Mayo Celebration**."

May 1947: "Full time operation starts at the **Pan Am Recreation Center** ."

May 1947: "Part-time operation continues at **Chalmers Court** and starts at **Santa Rita Courts**."

June 1947: "Church softball leagues organized."

July 1947: "Annual 4th. of **July** celebration in collaboration with the American Legion held at **Zilker Springs**. The two day celebration included a Beauty Contest, a sing-song, variety show, square dance teams, bicycle races and a small fry parade in front of the bathhouse."

November 1947: "**Beverly S. Sheffield**, named **Director** of the Department."



Beverly S. Sheffield

December 22, 1947: "The **24th annual Christmas Pageant** is held in Gregory Gym in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Austin Public Schools. The theme of the program was based upon the story of the Nativity with a cast of 25, a children's choir of 700, and a string ensemble ."

June 1948: "First year for **Westenfield Park** area playground."

October 1948: "The Caswell Tennis Center was completed October 1948. It was one of the major construction jobs of the year. The project was jointly developed by Mr. W.T. Caswell and the City of Austin. The facilities at the center include a battery of six tennis concrete courts and a club house with a small grandstand on the side of the building." (1948 Annual Report).



Caswell Tennis Center

March 1949: "Part-time programming at **Zavala Community Center** is split with daytime activities taking place at Santa Rita Federal Housing Center and evening activities at the Zavala School gym."

March 9, 1949: "**Dedication** of the new **City Coliseum**. The first event held in the Coliseum was the Travis County Junior Live Stock Exhibition."

March 1949: "**Austin Symphony Orchestra** completes its 11th. season with guest artist **Marian Anderson**."

April 1949: "Gang activity at **Metz** Community Center requires Department to station a policeman at the park."

April 1949: "Due to an unusual siege of rain and flood water, the **Zilker Springs Pool** was closed thirteen days during the month of April."

April 10, 1949: "The **dedicatory services** of **Downs field** is held. The new lighted baseball field for Negroes, located at the end of East 12th and Springdale Road, has an area of 572' x 480', is enclosed and has a permanent seating capacity of 600. The field is named for the late President of Samuel Huston College."

July 1949: "The **Austin Men's Chorus** requests the sponsorship of the Recreation Department. The chorus is directed by Conrad Fath."

July 1949: "**Austin Country Club** officially turns over operation of their Golf Course to the **City of Austin**, it is called the **North Side Municipal Golf Course**."

September 2-5, 1949: "The first championship golf tournament at **Northside Municipal Course** is held."

October 1949: East Side Activities: (the report reads in part) "Also, a year ago, friction and racial prejudice still existed at **Chalmers** and **Metz**. In October, there were no signs whatever at Chalmers and Metz and no interference from the public because both Latin-American and Anglo groups participated in community night and girls' program. The only prejudice at Metz was indicated when the Metz boys still refused to pay football versus Latin-

American teams, and ten girls withdrew from the girls' program because of racial prejudice."



Hancock Recreation Center

January 1950: "City purchases the **Old Austin Country Club** and opens the **Hancock Park Golf Course**."

February 24, 1950: "**Hancock Recreation Center** opens for participation. An open house was staged at the center by civic organizations in North Austin and the department with over a thousand people in attendance. The center was named in honor of Mr. Lewis Hancock, who was formerly Mayor of the City of Austin and founder of the Austin Country Club."

June 1950: **Walter Seaholm** now listed as City Manager in Monthly Reports.

September 11, 1950: "**Dedication of new Butler softball stadium**, built jointly by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Recreation Department bond funds. The grandstands have a seating capacity of approximately 3,500 and cost in the neighborhood of \$20,000. During dedication week, the ASA World Softball Tournament was played on Butler #1 and #2 and had 25,000 spectators. The Clearwater Bombers from Florida won the World Championship."



Butler softball stadium

October 18, 1950: "**Hancock Recreation Center** begins programming a **Senior Program** for adults fifty years of age or more. Every Wednesday night is set aside for this group."

June 1951: "The City Council appointed advisory **Parks and Recreation Board** which met this month, was a reactivation of a board which had been recognized by City Ordinance but had not been appointed since 1940." (1951 Annual Report)

June 26, 1951: "First city-wide inter-playground swimming meet is held at **Ramsey Pool** with 150 participating. Westenfield won the meet with Ramsey second, Stacy third, and East Avenue fourth."

July 1951: "**Servicemen's Recreation** - The Department will prepare an information sheet of recreational events and commercial entertainment for servicemen at Bergstrom Air Force Base, San Marcos Air force Base and Fort Hood."

August 31, 1951: "**Dedication of the new shelter house at Ramsey Playground**. The unit was one of four new shelter houses being constructed at Westenfield, Gillis, Govalle and Ramsey at a cost of \$4,333.00 each. The dedication program was attended by the Mayor W.S. Drake, members of the city council, members of the Parks and Recreation Board and members of the Ramsey family."

September 3, 1951: "North Austin Civic Club meets at **Hancock Recreation Center**, in an attempt to get some action from the City Council for the dedication of the land at Hancock as a public park and playground. Principal speaker was **Councilwoman Emma Long**."

October 3, 1951: "Citizenship Classes get under way at **Pan Am Recreation Center**, classes sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee to teach English as a second language and to prepare students for citizenship test."

November 1951: "Newly organized **Austin Women's Chorus** sets meeting date at **Hancock Recreation Center**."

1952: Acquisition of new park land: **Hancock Park**, 50 acres lying to the West of Red River Street; **Patterson Park**, 10.33 acres of approximately a 21 acre tract to the West of Airport Boulevard and south of Wilshire Boulevard; **Brentwood Playground**, about 6.5 acres adjacent to Brentwood School area." (1952 Annual Report).

1952: Several tracts of land acquired by the City in 1952 by purchase: **Pan American Recreation Center**, about ½ acre West of this center was purchased; 5.5 acres were bought next to a site for a future elementary school located on **Manchaca Road and Allred Lane**; and new land for a **golf course** was placed under contract to buy. This 100 acre tract lie to the northeast of the airport, and

the plan calls for the use of some of the airport land for golf purposes." (1952 Annual Report).

February 1952: "A special part-time leader is hired at **Rosewood Park** to coordinate **USO** Programs for Servicemen's Recreation."

May 1952: "**Brentwood Playground** dedicated by the City Council as a Park and Playground."

May 1952: "The Austin School District turns over ownership of the **Pan Am Recreation Center building** to the department as a gift "lock-stock-and-barrel".

May 14, 1952: "A fire completely destroys the **bathhouse at the Lake Austin Metropolitan Park**. The bathhouse, a wooden structure, was completed in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps."

June 24, 1952: "**Sandcraft exhibit** held, judges for the contest included Mr. Reece Brandt, Mrs. Fagan Dickson, and Mr. **Ben White**. First place won by Metz, "Elf on a Toadstool House".



Sandcraft

September 1952: "The department is now co-sponsoring programs with the **Travis Audubon Society**."

1953: With the adoption of a **new city charter** in 1953, a change was made in the city's **fiscal year** which changed it from January to December to October through September." (1953 Annual Report).

1953: "Through the generosity of **Mrs. Fagan Dickson**, member of the Austin Parks and Recreation Board, the city acquired **6 Casis School area** acres for park and playground purposes. The park is located in the Taylor Slough area at the north end of dead end Pecos Street, which includes the West Austin landmark known as the "Old Lime Kiln". (1953 Annual Report).

January 1953: "Workers hold **poll tax selling contest**, resulting in the sale of 758 and the winning of a television set for **Pan-Am** as first prize."

February 2, 1953: "A **USO Certificate of Merit** was received by the Director in behalf of the department for the work at **Rosewood**."



25th Anniversary of the Austin Recreation Department

April 10, 1953: "The 31st Annual Conference of the Southwest District of the National Recreation Association and the annual meeting of the Texas Beach and Pool Association was held in Austin, April 9, 10, and 11, 1953, at the Driskill Hotel. In connection with the conference was the banquet held April 10, 1953, **celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Austin Recreation Department**."

April 27, 1953: "Thirteen playgrounds were opened for the Spring program. Each has a man leader on the grounds from 5 to 9 p.m. The playgrounds which were opened are **Bailey, East Avenue, East Woods, Gillis, Govalle, Met, Palm, Ramsey, Shipe, Stacy, West Austin, Westenfield and Zaragosa**."

May 1953: "The annual spring programs of the **Austin Athletic Club and Hancock Recreation Center** were given this year in recognition of the **25th Anniversary** of the

Austin Recreation Department and in keeping with the plan of a special event each month of the anniversary year."

August 1953: "The swimming load at **Westenfield, Shipe, and Ramsey** is extremely heavy and the Department feels that there should be a large municipal pool built in **Northwest Austin**. It is possible that this pool might be built with Revenue Bonds."

August 3, 1953: "Met with Dr. D. K. Brace, vice chairman of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and a sub committee of the Planning Commission to discuss the Master Plan. It was pointed out that two vital pieces of property that should be acquired had been omitted. Namely, the **Rabb property over looking Barton Springs** and the land along the **river front adjacent to Butler Park East**. Both of these are a must and will effect the two most natural resources."

August 25, 1953: "Worked with Austin Rifle Club toward planning a proposed rifle range at **Lake Austin Park**."

1953: "Two additional tracts of land were acquired by the City in 1953, by purchase, **Montopolis** at Estrada and Vargas Streets with 5.39 acres and **Anderson Lane** with 2.40 acres. (1928 to 1953, 25th. Annual Report)."

1953: "**Dr. E. H. Givens**, is President of the **Negro Community Recreation Council**."

1954: " History - The number of **pools** continued to grow with **Gillis, Brentwood, Govalle and Patterson** opening in 1954 alone." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

March 1954: "We are always reporting on the programs, but the unsung heroes behind the scenes who set up the equipment and keep it in repair, build new things, and perform a large variety of odd jobs to keep Austin's recreation program functioning smoothly have not been given due credit for their work. Those duties are carried out by the **Deep Eddy Maintenance Crew** which consists of a supervisor, foreman, carpenter, carpenter's helper, painter, and six laborers."

April 1954:
"Fourteen white **playgrounds** and three colored playgrounds were opened for the Spring season, with supervised activities from 5 to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday. This is the first year the colored playgrounds have been included in the Spring Program." (1954-55 Annual Report).



1954-55 East Woods Playground

April 1954: "The recreation department is aided in its administration of **Pan-Am** by the Pan-American Center Board. The board each year holds a fund raising campaign which adds about \$1,500 to Pan-Am's budget making it possible for them to have many things which their original budget would not allow."

April 25, 1954: "The formal opening of Austin's first **Audubon Nature Trail and Sanctuary** is held. The one mile trail is located in **Bee Creek Park** and was officially opened by Mayor C. A. McAden."

June 1954: "Activity has increased on several of the playground areas this summer due to the addition of important facilities. The most important of these is the addition of four **new junior pools**, one each to **Gillis, Patterson, Govalle, and Brentwood Playgrounds.**"

June 1954: "The Austin Recreation Department has grown in its **26 year history** from five playgrounds to **57 recreational areas** including **3 large parks, 1 reservation, 22 playgrounds (including 14 swimming pools), 4 community centers, 7 athletic fields, and 12 other parks.**"

October 1954: "A plan for **Reed Park** has been completed and efforts will be made to complete the park development during the winter months." "Park land for Reed Park donated by Mrs. Fagan Dickson". (1960-1961 Annual Report).

February 25, 1955: "The Austin Recreation Department officially began development of the **Zilker Playground**, by planting around seventy elm and sycamore trees. Members of the recreation department staff, city council, parks and recreation board, Zilker PTA and around 600 children witnessed the event."

February 1955: "Construction on the expansion of **Rosewood pool** is proceeding as scheduled, and it is expected that the pool will open in the middle of May."

February 1955: "Plans for the **East Austin Community Center** are proceeding on schedule, and it is hoped that the contract will be let early in June."

April 1955: "A **sunrise pageant** on Palm Sunday was held in **Rosewood Park**. This pageant, "A Pilgrimage to the Cross" presented the story of Christ's last week on earth and His resurrection. Huston-Tillotson Choir and Anderson High School Choir presented choral music. Local ministers portrayed the twelve disciples."

April 1955: "A **playground** adjacent to **Allison School** has been planned for this summer. Playground apparatus, including slide, swings, merry-go-round, jungle gym and see saw, has already been installed. Part time leadership will be provided. The recreation club at **Joslin School** has set up committees to plan arrangements for the Joslin playground this summer. Leadership will be provided 20 hours per week."

May 1955: "Papers concerning **O. Henry** are being preserved and photostated by Mr. Harry Jander."

May 20, 1955: "The **Recreation Department** moved into their **new offices at 1624 Barton Springs Road**. It is felt that this is the best office ever been provided the department. There are around 2500 square feet of floor space in the building."

June 19, 1955: "The **Rosewood Pool** opened the first time Juneteenth, has been remodeled to 70 by 125 feet. A wading pool 20 by 40 feet has been added. Nine underwater lights were installed in the deep end. Total cost is around \$66,000."

June 1955: "A **proposed large garden center in Zilker Park** may be a reality within a few years. Representatives of Austin garden clubs have been meeting with Austin Recreation Department officials to plan for this center, which is tentatively planned to be developed between the Colorado River and Bee Caves road in Zilker Park."

October 1955: The City officially took possession of the **Rabb** property adjoining Barton Springs, thus gaining control of **Barton Creek** for nearly 4,000 feet and providing a buffer zone around the springs proper to protect them from any development that would endanger the water supply to **Barton Springs**. This tract of 29 acres was purchased at a cost of \$59,000, but it was deemed necessary to buy it to protect one of Austin's most prized and valuable existing recreational facilities. The Rabb Home, 88-year old stone and frame structure overlooking the swimming pool, that was acquired along with the acreage, was burned to the ground by a fire of unknown origin less than a year later, on September 8, 1956." (1955-56 Annual Report).

February 13, 1956: A spring class for women interested in painting and sketching was started with 17 members registered. This class will meet in the clubroom of the **Municipal Golf Course**.

April 12, 1956: "The City Council passed a resolution raising fees and charges for departmental activities and facilities. Golfers at both **Hancock** and **Municipal** courses started paying \$1.00 for 18 holes instead of the former 85 cents. Tennis players at **Caswell** are now charged 50 cents an hour instead of 30 cents, if they do not hold annual memberships. At **municipal swimming pools**, a 20 cent pay bracket was set up for junior and senior high students and adult rates were raised to 30 cents. Children 6-12 pay 5 cents and pre-school children swim free." (1955-56 Annual Report).

April 1956: "After a series of meetings of interested individuals and representatives of the Recreation Department, plans were organized for Sunday afternoon baseball games at **Zaragosa Park**. Members of the **Century Club** assisted with ground improvements and fence barricades."

April 15, 1956: "With the cooperation of the South Austin Exchange Club, the Austin Recreation Department staged a **Small Fry Fish Rodeo** at **Barton Creek**. The Texas Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission cooperated by stocking the creek with brim and the Federal Hatchery assisted by storing the fish until they were dumped into the creek. A news photographer from Humble's TV show "Texas in Review" was on hand to film the 1,700 youngsters who lined the banks of the creek from the dam at the swimming pool all the way down to the bridge, on both sides of the creek."

April 17, 1956: "The official dedication of "**Old 786**" was held on April 17, with about 75 participants and 300 spectators at the public ceremony. This is a **steam locomotive** that has been retired from active service by the Southern Pacific Lines, and through the efforts of the Austin Rotary Club it was donated to the City of Austin as a public monument. It has been placed in **Brush Park**, adjacent to the Central Fire Station on Trinity Street."

April – June, 1956: The regular spring playground season opened April 29 for 23 playgrounds including **Bailey, Brentwood, Comal Center, East Avenue, East Woods, Gillis, Govalle, Joslin, Metz, Palm, Ramsey, Shipe, Stacy, West Austin, Westenfield, Zaragosa, Zilker, and Patterson**, as well as **Blackshear, Brackenridge, Campbell, Clarksville, and Lott** in the Rosewood District. The summer schedule went into effect June 10, with an additional eight areas opening to make a total of 31 playgrounds and play centers. These areas were **Civitan, Meadowbrook, Pease, Ridgetop, Reilly, Wooten, Perry, and Sims** in the Rosewood District.

June 1956: "Sing Songs are held at **Zilker Hillside Theatre** led by Dr. Don E. Grieder."

June 1956: "The Civitan Club has undertaken the active sponsorship of the neighborhood playground formerly known as **Allison playground**, located in the **Montopolis** Area; and the City Council recognizing the importance and the help of this organization agreed that this area would be called "**Civitan Playground**"."

1956: Reed Pool opens, this pool is 40' x 60' and ranges in depth from 2'10" to 4'10". The addition of this pool gives West Austin two neighborhood pools for Learn to Swim Classes." (1955-56 Annual Report).

July 28-29, 1956: "Austin newest municipal swimming pool in **Northwest Park** was initiated the week-end of July 28-29 with the South Texas Amateur Athletic Union Swimming and Diving Championships."



Northwest Park Swimming Pool

"Built at a cost of \$192,000.00, this pool was designed to meet requirements for olympic swimming and diving competition." (1955-56 Annual Report).

September 7, 1956: "**Pan-American Recreation Center** was spotlighted this month, as Austin citizens were invited to take part in the **formal opening and dedication** of this newest addition to the city's recreation facilities." "The building adjoins Zavala School and was built at a cost of \$155,261 with an additional \$35,000 to be spent on equipment, outdoor lighting, and site development." (1955-56 Annual Report).

April 1957: “**Barton Springs** closed due to flooding from Barton Creek and backwater from the Colorado River.”

May 1957: “This department had a part in one of the most outstanding sporting events ever produced in Austin when it joined with the Austin Civitan Club in sponsoring the Waterama. This outdoor water and sports show as staged at **Lake Austin City Park** on May 10, 11, and 12 and attracted about 25,000 individuals to the park during this three day festivity. The show featured nationally known skiers and boat racers, as well as other sports attractions and exhibits.”

July 1957: “**Zilker Hillside Theater**, the vine-covered backdrop for the outdoor theater was replaced this month by a plywood shell, painted in a soft blue multi-color paint, that will serve as a permanent improvement in looks and acoustics for this setting.”

September 1957: “**Caswell remodeling completed**, 6 existing and 2 new hardsurfaced courts (hard LayKold covering and light poles).

September 1957: “**Zilker Hillside Theater** was “washed out” for the season when the rains came Labor Day night and sent participants and spectators scurrying for shelter in the midst of the **talent show** final contest. The postponed contest was rescheduled on Uncle Jay’s TV program. Viewers voted for their choice in each division by mailing in postal cards.”

November 1957: “A new **Judo Center** was opened November 18, when the abandoned fire station on Guadalupe street was adapted for judo activities.”

December 1957: “City Council and Parks Board met at the recently enlarged **Caswell Tennis Center**, special guest was Will T. Caswell.”

April 12 – 13, 1958: “Benefit (flower show at City Coliseum) held for building fund of the **Austin Area Garden Center**. **Governor Price Daniel** and **Mayor Tom Miller** will open the garden gate on Austin’s first major Flower Show in the City Coliseum.”

June 1958: “The department made an all-out effort to center activities this past month of June around the observance of **National Recreation Month**, emphasizing the theme “It’s Your Leisure – Make the Most of It”. **Two awards for outstanding service in community recreation** highlighted the month. The **Austin Lions Club** was cited as a group for their persistent efforts in the 1920s that resulted in the founding of the recreation department in 1928, and for their continued interest in and work towards more and better municipal facilities and programs, with special emphasis placed on their gift of the Lions Club Golf Course to the city in 1937. **W. T. Caswell** was recognized as the outstanding layman in the field of community recreation for this first public award. To him goes credit for Austin’s first community recreation center, the Austin Athletic Club,

which he had built (in 1923) as a private club and (in 1931) made available to the city at a nominal cost. He had a big share in building Caswell Tennis Courts, which were named in his honor, and he has given unlimited hours of his time in volunteer work on the Parks and Recreation Board ever since its formation. Another prominent Austin family was honored this month with the dedication of the new playground in Northeast Austin and its formal christening as **Bartholomew Playground**. This honors the families of Eugene C. Bartholomew, president of the Austin National Bank, who was a member of the Austin City Council from October 3, 1940 to May 2, 1949, his father, the late C.M. Bartholomew who was councilman from May 1, 1933 until his death September 25, 1940, and Eugene’s grandfather, the late E. C. Bartholomew who as councilman from April 19, 1909 to April 30, 1919.”



Pan Am Hillside Theater

June 25, 1958: “Highlight at **Pan-American Recreation Center** was the opening of the **Hillside Theater**.”

July 1958: “It has been through the generosity of the **Austin Jaycees** that citizens of Austin have enjoyed the **4th of July fireworks displays** at both **Zilker Park** and **Rosewood Park** for the past several years. The Jaycees not only buy the fireworks, which this year cost them approximately \$400.00 but they also furnish the manpower to put on the show.”

October 1958: “Beginning October 1, the **Coliseum** began its operation as a part of the newly created **department of Auditorium-Coliseum**, and the attendance for this building and its activities are therefore no longer included in the above statistics.”

January 1959: “The city built an indoor **small-arms range** in the **Coliseum Annex**, and it furnishes a paid rifle specialist to work with the administrative details, but the actual instruction and supervision of boys and girls learning safe care and handling of firearms is dependent upon the volunteer work of a dozen or so men from the **Rifle Club**.”

February 1959: “As **Pan-Am** is the only Center with a **boxing** ring and workout room these facilities attract Anglos, Latins, and Negroes. This is a particularly popular spot preceding the Golden Gloves tournament.”

March 1959: (reference to the purchase in 1931 of the Austin Athletic Club) “At the time of its acquisition the population of the City was about 54,000 and the **Athletic Club** was in a central location to serve the whole city. The City has since expanded to a present day population of 197,000. What used to be an ideal

"central" location now finds the Club wedged between commercial establishments and Austin's largest high school, and the resulting traffic problems usually find patrons of the Club coming out on the little end."

June 1959: "Two awards from the National Recreation Association spotlighted **Mayor Tom Miller and the Austin Jaycees**. Mayor Miller was honored in appreciation for his outstanding contribution to the recreation movement in America. His leadership in the acquisition of the following recreational facilities was cited: **Zilker Park; Butler Tract** which now hosts **City Coliseum, softball and hardball diamonds, Municipal Auditorium**, and the **new recreation department offices, Lake Austin Park, Hancock Golf Course, and Community Center, Deep Eddy and Eilers Park, New East District Park, Doris Miller Auditorium at Rosewood Park, Municipal Golf course, Caswell Tennis Center, Northwest Park**, and numerous neighborhood playgrounds and their development. The Jaycees received the same award of recognition for the following physical facilities they have helped develop by financial support or by publicly backing: **Jaycee softball field, Jaycee stadium at Butler Park, Disch Field, Skyline Terrace at Zilker Clubhouse**, special construction of the **City Coliseum** so part of the building can be used for events other than livestock, and the support of the city administration in the construction of the **Municipal Auditorium**."

June 22, 1959: "New **playground** opens at St. Elmo School."

July 3, 1959: "The new **East District Pool** was opened on July 3."

July 30, 1959: "A special testimonial celebration was held **at Pan-American Recreation Center for Mrs. Adelfa Guerrero, mother of Supervisor Roy Guerrero**, on Thursday, July 30. She was honored for her work at Pan-American Center, at the church, and with the Golden Agers."

July 1959: "On the last payroll there were 277 persons listed under the Recreation Department. This includes **74 full time employees**, 30 of which are staff members, the remaining 44 are maintenance men, caretakers, janitors, clerks, skilled laborers, etc., working at various places."

August 3, 1959: "The first day of operation in the **new office building** for the Recreation Department was Monday, August 3. Every inch of the 3,868 square feet of the office is being enjoyed and used by the staff to increase the efficiency of the Department's operation. The department has been "at home" in six varied environments prior to the recent move into this "home for keeps". In the late 1920s, when the Department was first established, it was lodged in the City Hall. From there, it finally migrated to 1500 W. Riverside Drive via the Library, the Municipal Building, the Dahlich Building, the Library again, and 1624 Barton Springs Road."



Zilker Hillside Theater

September 1, 1959: "Musical comedy, "Seventeen" opens at the **Zilker Hillside Theater**."

June 1960: "**Pan-Am Athletics**. Adult softball interest, which started at a high level, has increased steadily. Six teams are playing the second half. An all-star team from this league participated in Pan-Am's Invitational Softball Tournament and finished second behind the **Pan-Am Aces**. Eight teams from Corpus Christi, San Antonio, and Houston finished behind the two Pan-Am teams."

June 17, 1960: "A formal dedication ceremony for the **east district park and swimming pool** which the Austin City Council officially named "**Oak Springs Park**" was held on Friday, June 17, with approximately 2,300 people in attendance."

August 1960: "The concessions building at **Barton Springs** was completed and put in operation."

August 1960: "The department enjoyed a very good working agreement with the **Austin Public Schools** this summer in use of school facilities for summer recreation programs. There were 7 schools in use where the city and schools have **joint ownership of land** and 8 additional areas operating on school property."

September 1960: "For many years now the **Austin Public Schools** and the Austin Recreation Department have been cooperating in presenting the annual **Community Christmas Program** and this year they will have a new associate as the **Austin Ballet Society** accepted an invitation this month to participate in the program. These three cooperating agencies are planning a special treat for this year's audience – members of the ballet ensemble will present excerpts from "**The Nutcracker Suite**".

October 1960: "The **Junior Nature Center** opened at **Deep Eddy** with three part-time leaders. Over three hundred students were recommended for participation in these special classes by the principals of 18 elementary schools."

October 1960: "The **Senior Citizens** program has gone forward during the month with our close cooperation with the **Adult Services Council**. Early in the month definite action was taken to reactivate the **Rosewood Senior Citizens Drop-In Center** in this eastside housing project."

November 1960: "Contracts for a new pool and bathhouse at **Bartholomew Park**, in Northeast Austin, were let during November, and construction is scheduled to be completed and the pool ready for use around June 1. Contracts for the pool and bathhouse, totaled \$189,000. The 11,970 square foot pool will meet NCAA standards, with an eight-lane 50-yard course suitable for competitive swimming."

December 2, 1960: "Lester Palmer, Mayor Pro-Tem, officially accepted a generous \$10,000 contribution from Fred Adams, Sr., on behalf of the Adams Foundation for improvements to **Adams Park**, just off West 30th. and University."

January 9, 1961: "On December 1, 1960, the **City Council**, and on January 9, 1961, the **Austin School Board** respectively passed a joint agreement which will allow the city to operate **playgrounds** at elementary schools during summer months. Basically, the agreement means the city will share the cost of land and site work on a 25%/75% division with the school authority."

February 1961: "Flood Alert" is heard up and down **Barton Creek from Wiley Johnson's Trading Post to Buster Robinson's** little ol' park known around here as Zilker. Because of the Trading Post people and all the other good folks above Barton Springs, Robinson can get his crews busy saving, pool equipment while big rises are still little ones, way up where the Little Barton fork joins big Barton just above the bridge on Fredericksburg highway about two miles east of the Trading Post. "Gulley-washer coming" has saved the city many thousands of dollars by Robinson's friends up-creek."

February 1961: "From a successful "trial run" by the Recreation Department (under supervision of Mrs. **Dorothy Nan Ponton**), **Austin Nature Center** is now a permanent part of the Austin scene as a hobby study group in the natural sciences."

March 1961: "Austin **Nature Center** gained state-wide attention through an article appearing in the March issue of **Texas Game and Fish Magazine**."

April 22, 1961: "A memorable event on the April Calendar was the first "who whooooooeee" whistle of the **Zilker Eagle** on April 22. 5,350 men, women, and children whizzed around the track during its first week of operation."



Zilker Eagle

May 1961: "The **Junior League of Austin** received the **National Recreation Association's award** for the greatest contribution by a group. For probably the first time in the history of these awards in this area, a citation was given for the merit of cultural contribution in the field of music, art, and drama. The other recipient was **Phil Sanders** who as an individual was cited for his unique efforts in extending recreation facilities into areas most needed, and bringing together residents in a mixed population area for enjoyable leisure time games. Phil did much to lessen tensions in an area where others had striven for years toward the same goal."

July 1961: "Northwest Pool fulfilled one of its civic purposes July 21-22 when the **Texas AAU Open Swim Meet** was hosted by the **Austin Aquatic Club**."



Swim Meet

July 1961: "The **Nature Center's** (soon to be called the **Natural Science Center**) sessions ended the last week in July. Students spent many enjoyable hours on field trips to a cave, to **Pilot's Nob** (an extinct volcano just a few miles south of town), to a prehistoric camp site, to **Walnut Creek**, and to the **Bee Creek Nature Trail**."

August 1961: (report reads in part) "highlighting the memorable August events such as the **90th birthday party for the American Statesman at Zilker Hillside**."

September 18, 1961: "The Parks and Recreation Board inspects and approves a **Hike and Bike Trail** along Shoal Creek built with funds contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Russell Fish. Originating at **Pease Park**, the trail follows the creek to the sharp bend just beyond 24th. Street Bridge, with plans for extension of the trail to 34th along the most rugged banks of **Shoal Creek**."

September 1961: "Donations provide for purchase of **Elisabet Ney portrait**. When Mrs. Rutland saw the Ney portrait by Adrian Lamb at the public library some time ago, she evidently made up her mind - and Mr. Lamb's - that the **Elisabet Ney Museum** should have that portrait. A price tag of \$3,700 was a bit prohibitive, but much persuasive talk and letter writing (with Mrs. Lamb's chiming in for benefit of her native state) finally brought down Lamb's price to \$1,500 with payments spread over several years."

September 1961: "Mrs. Mary Lee Ingram, assistant supervisor and crafts instructor at **Austin Athletic Club** during the school year, is "Supply Sergeant" to summer recreation leaders. As the indomitable little lady puts it: "Nothing is thrown away unless it falls apart". Many a tax dollar is saved by Mrs. Ingram."

September 1961: "The department's long memory of **Carla** is of the refugee centers at **Municipal Auditorium** and **Coliseum**. All supervisors reported early Monday to organize recreation for the cost evacuees. **Howard Norris** was alerted to have **Rosewood** and **Doris Miller Auditorium** ready, and he and his staff stood by during the four-day duration but did not have to open either building."

November 1961: "George Hannon takes over **Tom Penick's** pro duties at **Municipal Golf Course**. Hannon, who started in golf under Penick's tutelage in 1942, while a pharmacy student at UT, comes from Dallas Athletic Club where he was assistant to veteran Graham Ross. **Pennick retired after 34 years at Municipal**, 10 as manager of the Lions course and 24 more after Lions Club turned the course over to the City."

December 1961: "Community Christmas Program Perfect - Matched by the beauty of children's voices at **Municipal Auditorium** was the Rosewood program at **Doris Miller Auditorium**. Particularly delightful was the song, "Children, Go". **Mrs. Catherine Lamkin**, assistant director of Rosewood, and **Mrs. Betty Kennon**, the department's drama supervisor, acted as program coordinators.

December 1961: "Muny Pro Shop gets complete "Face Lifting". From a new west entrance, the entire lobby will have a new look for golfers entering Municipal in 1962.



Tiny Tot program

January 1962: "Hardest hit by the record lows (for Central Texas) was **Hancock** which had to call off all three of its Tiny Tot performances slated at **Austin Athletic Club**. The Monday night temperature of 14 degrees with sleet was too cold for the wee folk."

January 1962: "Pan American Fight Night, drawing 28 boxers and 400 spectators, was a preview of the Golden Gloves tournament at Waco. Pan Am's contingent of fighters, trained by popular **Oswaldo Cantu**, showed up well."

February 1962: "New golf course plans completed, golf architect Leon Howard of Corpus Christi put the finishing touches on drawing board plans for the **new course near Municipal Airport** and they do look good.

March 1962: "New to the staff - **Warren G. Leddick**, assistant director in charge of programs, arrived March 25 from Greenbelt, Maryland."

March 1962: "The **Pan Am Golf Association** is meeting regularly at Pan American Center to plan special events for the Labor Day tournament (Pan American State) here in Austin."

April 1962: "Beginning April 1, a car charge of 50 cents per vehicle was made at **Lake Austin** park each Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. until dark."

May 1962: "For maintenance crews, big events were installation of lights and water system at **Little Downs Field** and construction of a pond at **Northwest Park** (a beautification project not yet completed)."

June 1962: "Deep Eddy, where well water keeps the water almost as cool as that of Barton Springs, is still one of our most beautiful picnic areas and closest to downtown Austin, but does not enjoy the popularity it once knew."

June 1962: "A new Little League field, named for **George Mabson**, Rosewood's long time supervisor, was dedicated in June, the new diamond is adjacent to **Downs Field** on East 12th."

July 5, 1962: "National Recreation Awards for 1962 go to **Century Club** and **Frank Quinn**. Frank Quinn, is an individual whose name means much to both municipal and state parks. The Century Club's noteworthy contributions to Pan American district's youth are unique and numerous."

August 1962: "The department took part in **Austin's first Aqua Festival Days**, the Land Parade, Tiny Tot Coronation and Small Fry Fish Derby, with cooperation given by staff members and specialized groups of the department throughout the festival."

September 1962: "Two major decisions affecting the department were made by the **City Council** during September, namely, the "go ahead" for **construction of a golf course** to be located on airport property south of Manor Road (across from the airport) and **approval of a garden center** building in **Zilker Park**. The center will be located in a proposed municipal garden area."



Morris Williams Golf Course

September 1962: "Major planning included, conversion of a portion of the **Deep Eddy Bathhouse** into a year-round facility for the **Natural Science Center** and the covering of **Ramsey swimming pool** to create the city's first year-round pool operation."

October 1962: "Eight employees have been **with the department 20 years or more**. October marks the 20th. year for **Mrs. Catherine Lamkin** with the Austin Recreation Department. Mrs. Lamkin started work at **Rosewood park** with George Mabson and has helped the center grow into a real community service for all ages. In addition to Mrs. Lamkin, seven others have watched our growing pains for twenty years or more. Leading in longevity records is **Mrs. Josephine Bailey, Administrative Secretary**, who observed her 30th. year with the department in April. Next is the **boss** himself, and **assistant boss-man**. **Beverly Sheffield** and **Joe Prowse** both started in 1934. Others in the 20 years or more category are **Roy D. Kizer, Municipal Golf Course** foreman and **Manuel Hernandez, Munny groundskeeper**, both of whom started in 1937. **Felix George, Hancock Pro**, started in 1938, and **Mrs. Willie Rutland** became curator of **Elisabet Ney Museum** in 1941. **Cecilio Valasquez, Deep Eddy** gardener, just missed this listing, starting work in 1943."

October 1962: "**Golf course number 3** is taking shape – Bulldozers chew away at old pastures to build fairways, greens, and a pond for the long-awaited 18 hole course. Agronomist Leon Howard, course architect, says the soil has supported a very heavy stand of bermuda and will provide excellent top soil material for the new course on Manor Road."

October 1962: "**Laguna Gloria** gets city support – an agreement signed between the **City of Austin** and Laguna Gloria Art Museum, provides the museum with \$12,000 for 1962-63. Terms of the agreement make Laguna Gloria grounds available to the public at all times and the museum at stipulated hours each day, without charge."

October 1962: "Senior Citizens tallied 924 in October at 7 church centers and Chalmers Court. **Mrs. Charlie Matlock**, SC coordinator, put in double time to help get special fall activities underway at all centers."

November 1962: "City Council's approval of plans affecting Austin's recreation include: **Construction of a garden center in Zilker Park**, a long-dreamed-of project of the Austin Area Garden Center which raised money for the building and landscaping the annual Flower Show in Municipal Auditorium. Expenditure: \$80,000 - \$50,000 AAGC funds and \$30,000 from the City. Revision and expansion of **Deep Eddy Bathhouse** to provide year-round facility for **Natural Science Center**. Expenditure: \$24,000 (\$4,000 of which is allocated by the Natural Science Association). The Council also approved of the **name change** of east Austin's 45-acre park **from Oak Springs to Everett H. Givens Park**. The name was bestowed on the beautiful park very quickly after the dentist's death as

a memoriam to our town's greatest champion of recreation improvements for Negro families.

December 1962: "The first community-wide salute for all graduates of citizenship classes at **Pan-American** center was a truly outstanding event. **Lalo Campos** emceed the program presenting **Senator Homer Thornberry** and speaker **John C. Phillips**, judge of the Court of Civil Appeals. Judge Phillips spoke entirely in Spanish which obviously please the 94 new citizens, most of whom were elderly."

December 1962: "The **39th annual Community Christmas Program** at **Municipal Auditorium**, December 10 and the 21st annual Community Christmas Program at **Doris Miller Auditorium**, December 14, presented choirs of 1400 children at Municipal and 500 children at Doris Miller."

December 1962: "**Road Runners** held an open four-mile race in **Zilker Park**, December 8, with 20 entered and 17 finishing. With interest increasing in running through the southwest, additional meets are planned several times a year during 1963."

January 1963: "Believe it or not, 35 swimmers braved the cold air to enjoy **Barton Spring's** "warm" waters, a comfortable 69 degrees during a month that registered a minimum average of 25 degrees – an unusually chilly month for us Central Texans."

January 1963: "The Adrain Lamb portrait of **Elisabet Ney** is now the property of the City of Austin, the final payment on the \$1,500 purchase was made in January."

March 1963: "The Southwest District Recreation Conference drew 301 delegates from five states with nearly 400 attending the banquet which honored the **35th. Anniversary of the Austin Recreation Department.**"

March 1963: "**The Jokers**, a **Pan-Am** men's team, brought back the coveted Sportsmanship trophy from the State Latin-American Basketball Tournament in Houston March 16 and 17."

April 1963: "**New Golf Course** water system complete...named **Morris Williams** Golf Course recently by the City Council in honor of Austin American-Statesman golf reporter Morris Williams and his golfing son (both deceased), the course is scheduled for a grand opening on Labor Day according to architect Leon Howard."

May 1963: "**Elisabet Ney Museum** was recipient of a small bronze plaque from Mrs. Klein McGee of Houston whose mother was subject of the art piece made by Elisabet Ney in Galveston in 1887."

September 1963: "September 8 marked reality for Garden Center dream, this date ended a ten-year dream for a Violet Crown Garden Club committee which instigated the community-wide drive for an **Austin Garden Center**. At 5 p.m. Sunday, September 8, 1963, the first shovel turned the earth atop a Zilker Park knoll and dissolved this dream into reality – to be an accomplished fact early in 1964."

November 1963: "**Caswell Tennis Center** took on a new look during month with addition of a new pro shop and concession area."

November 1963: "At **Hancock**, the over 21 Club opens its special event each month to the public for dancing to the music of the **Lee Kohlenberg orchestra**. Usual club attendance is about 40, with Orchestra Night dances attended by 120 to 140.

December 1963: "**A change in department name** and operation to incorporate park maintenance functions, presently handled by Public Works Department. A gradual transfer of park personnel and work has been planned with the City Manager and Director of Public Works. The initial step will be transfer of three park keepers at Zilker, placing all work at this large park under one supervisor. The proposed name change would be **from Recreation Department to "Parks and Recreation Department"**, and budget and organizational planning is going forward with counsel and approval from the Parks and Recreation Board which initially proposed the transfer at a meeting of the City Council."

January 1964: "**Staff Reorganization** major business of January – **Warren G. Leddick, Assistant Director; Roy Guerrero, Superintendent of Recreation; C. O. Smith, Jr., Superintendent of Parks; and Joe O. Prowse, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Parks.** Mrs. **Dorothy Nan McLean** is the only general supervisor at present, working primarily with **Senior Citizens program, Natural Science Center, Municipal Art, Ceramics, and Performing Arts.**"

January 1964: "Major planning of future events, **Nature Safari** is planned for April 12, the first money-raising affair for the **Natural Science Center**.

January 1964: "Interested visitors to **Elisabet Ney Museum** included **Zachary Scott**, his wife and two sisters."

February 1964: "**Rosewood's Apostle Players** are now rehearsing for the Palm Sunday presentation of "Pilgrimage to the Cross, **city policeman Louie White** again plays the part of Christ. The first play was held in 1955"

February 1964: "**Manuel Navarro**, is now the National Golden Gloves Bantamweight Champion, the 16 year old Johnston High student took the tile in

his first year of eligibility. All **Pan-Am** celebrated with Manuel who trained in the center's gym under watchful eyes of A.B. Cantu and Manuel's brother Carlos who won several state titles but never made it to the national tournament.

April 1964: "**Safari** was a big success drawing Austin families and visitors to the city. So many organizations and individuals contributed to the success of the event that it will no doubt become an annual affair."

April 18, 1964: "**Morris Williams Golf course** opened officially on the 18th. to give the city a second 18-hole course as fine as can be found anywhere."

June 1964: "National Recreation Association Awards were presented to **Ed Knebel** (Austin's "Mr. Baseball") and to the **Young Men's Business League** which operates the **Sunshine Camp** in Zilker Park for children of low income families. The award presentations were made by **Mayor Lester Palmer**."

June 1964: "The **deluge of June 15 – 16 totaling 6.41 inches** was badly needed, and although much damage resulted from the heavy rains in some areas, the soaking rains actually got the summer off to a cool start for the department in general."

July 1964: "The **first Summer Musical Festival** – a long-time dream of impresario **Rod Kennedy** was staged at Zilker Hillside Theater July 13-18 and drew a total spectator count of 15,518."

October 25, 1964: "Although the new **Gardens Center** building was completed in mid-September, the clearing and landscaping of surrounding grounds was a herculean task requiring the full resources of the department. The concentration of efforts paid off, however, when October 25 dawned light and clear. The 2 p.m. dedication was held on the entrance walk with the audience seated in the parking areas, a most pleasant occasion it was. The host group was headed by **Mrs. Cecil Cabaniss**, Austin Area Garden Center president, immediate past president **Douglas Blachly** and **Mrs. Alden Davis**, first AAGC president and chairman of the building committee.

November 1964: "A daily social center for retired people becomes a reality at St. Martin's Lutheran Church at Nueces and 15th. The **Nueces Activity Center** will be jointly operated by a Board of Trustees and this department. The agreement stipulated that the Board shall include representatives (two each) from Adult Services Council, St. Martin's Lutheran Church, the Activity Center's membership and from the general citizenship of Austin. The Parks and Recreation Department director or his appointed agent shall be an ex-officio member of the board."

December 1964: "**Natural Science Center** gains a symbol, the road runner, created by Mary (Mrs. Robert) Feik."

January 18, 1965: "Open House was held at the new **Nueces Activity Center**. Members of the city council, officials of the City, representatives from the

Governor's Committee on Aging, Parks and Recreation Board and many other leading citizens were present for the official opening ceremony scheduled for 2 p.m. In the first two weeks, 116 members had signed up and it appears that this new senior social center will be in good use throughout its first year. Director is **Mrs. Lee (Charlie) Matlock**, who has served as coordinator for all our senior social centers during the past few years. Supervisor of this program (and of the department's other special activities) is **Dorothy Nan McLean**. Other senior groups will continue to meet at their usual sites, recreation rooms at two housing project, six church social rooms, the County Agent's office at 1309 East 12th. and Hancock Recreation Center, where the only evening group meets."

January 1965: "Willie Nunn, Ney's custodian-without-par (and also its unofficial art critic), got the "freshen-up fever" and tried his hand at floor and pedestal work."

January 25, 1965: "Department helps to organize the **Austin Municipal Choir**. Ralph Kies is volunteering his time to direct this program which is open to all Austin area residents who like to sing."

February 1965: "Weather, weather, weather — Heavy, cold rain, snow, sleet and ice, golf and strong winds are memories of February."

May 16, 1965: "The vicious storm of May 16 toppled over the 100 year old pecan tree in front of the office building and hundreds of other trees throughout the city."

July 1965: "Inauguration by **Mrs. John Connally** of the Katie Brill director's award, in honor of her mother gave new impetus to the inter-playground drama competition. An interesting sidenote on the Katie Brill trophy comes from playground records from 1933; "Katie Brill was leader at **West Austin Playground** that summer and directed a play whose leading lady, Ida Nell Brill (now Mrs. Connally) was named Best Girl Actor on the playgrounds."

July 1965: "Pan Am's **Jokers** softball team won first place title in both the Latin-American Tournament at Port Arthur and the District 19 Amateur Softball Association Tournament at Georgetown."

August 1965: "Oklahoma" was by all measures the greatest success in the seven year history of the PARD **Summer Musical**. "Cast Shines in Rousing Start" read the



headline of amusement critic John Bustin's review, with special mention of lead soprano Sharon Melcher and baritone Norman Eaton."

August 1965: "PARD took large and varied roles in Austin's four-year-old **Aqua Festival** shindig, and contributed significantly to the overall success of the two-week promotion."

September 1965: "Two thousand spectators saw the Mexico All Stars meet the Texas All Stars in the International Swim Meet held at **Northwest Pool**."

October 16, 1965: "The fire at **Hancock Recreation Center** interrupted fall classes and club meetings. Store rooms were burned completely, as well as the upper and lower floor at the rear of the building. Smoke and water damage was extensive throughout."

October 1965: "The **Austin Civic Chorus** gained a new director in October. The director is Gene Galbraith, a UT graduate student in music and director of the Tarrytown Methodist Church choir.

December 19-23, 1965: "PARD began a **new Austin tradition** this Christmas with a four-night "**Spirits of Christmas**" display in **Zilker Gardens**. Attractions included a live Nativity scene enacted by Travis High School drama students, a donkey, and a sheep; two outdoor giant Christmas trees, one live and one electrical; four choirs of carolers; and a seven-foot pasteboard Santa Claus. The real star of the presentation, however, was the jolly red-suited gentleman who waved and chuckled from the lighted rooftop of the Swedish Pioneer Cabin. His authentic appearance as he prepared to go down the chimney left no doubt among spectators that this, at last with the real St. Nick – and even PARD personnel had trouble recognizing the convincing Santa as **Parks Superintendent C. O. Smith**."

December 1965: "Construction will begin within the month on Phase I of the extensive **Hamilton Gardens** development, named for the late Mrs. Katherine Parr Hamilton, which is to include a pond and the beginnings of a network of streams, flagstone walks, retaining walls, lighting, sprinkler systems, planting of azaleas and other appropriate plant materials and the addition of proper soil to create optimum growing conditions for this area of the **Zilker Gardens**."

December 1965: "**Elisabet Ney Museum** received an important addition to its collection of Miss Ney's original sculptures last month. The new piece is a medallion of the young child Seiner Burleson, commissioned by the child's father, Postmaster General A. S. Burleson. The medallion remained in the family home until the death of Mrs. Burleson, when it was inherited by her daughter, Mrs. Richard Negley of San Antonio. It was Mrs. Negley who presented the medallion to the Museum."

December 14, 1965: "PARD's 42nd annual **Community Christmas Program** filled the house at Municipal Auditorium for a holiday performance of the "Nutcracker Ballet" by the **Austin Ballet Society.**"

January 1966: "January was a landmark in the accomplishment of PARD's long range plans for future Austin recreational areas. The City's application was completed and sent to Washington requesting funds to be used in acquiring **Decker Lake** acreage and land parcels on **Town Lake**. New applications were begun during the month for federal matching funds for the acquisition of additional Town Lake parcels and initial payment was made on a 15 acre park area adjacent to Kealing School in the Kealing Urban Renewal tract, where a complete park and playground facility is to be located."

February 22, 1966: "The big **snow** created some curious situations throughout the Austin area, but the 6-inch blanket of white was especially incongruous with PARD preparations for spring. The two day snow brought to a halt the planting of new trees at **Auditorium Beach** and the shaping up of neighborhood playgrounds for summer."

June 1966: "Dignitaries on hand for the colorful dedication of the old **Swedish log cabin** to its new home at **Zilker Gardens** included **Mayor Lester Palmer** and the Swedish Consul General.



Fountain on Auditorium Shores

October 18, 1966: "On October 18, the **Lions Club** of Austin celebrated its 50th year of civic concern and action by dedicating **five lighted, spraying fountains** "to the citizens of Austin, and to all who pause here to enjoy the peaceful waters of the Colorado River."

October 29, 1966: " Recreation Superintendent, **Roy Guerrero**, takes over as state President of the **Texas Recreation and Parks Society.**

December 1966: "The **first annual Yule Fest** in **Zilker Park** is held." This gala four-night event centered around the ancient tradition of the burning Yule Log, was an instant success with the Austin public and promised to become an enduring tradition on its own. Decorative lighting displays, throughout the park,

free refreshments at the Garden Center Open house, a real Santa talking with children from his rooftop station on the rustic Pioneer Cabin, a Nativity Scene enacted beneath a lofty star with live characters and real animals, all were destined to meet with enthusiastic public approval. But what really fired the imaginations of the Christmas spirited crowds was the giant Yule Log, kindled by American Statesman publisher Richard Brown in opening night ceremonies (December 20) and crackling through the conclusion of Yule Fest on December 23.

February 1967: "Plans are underway for the May 2 **opening of the new Lakeside Senior Center** to be located in the Lakeside Housing Project. And the **Rosewood** public housing project, where PARD will operate another multi-purpose center with part-time director **Catherine Lamkin**, who will retain her half-time duties as assistant supervisor at the Rosewood Recreation Center, is being readied for opening April 2."

April 2, 1967: "Austin's **second senior activity center** opened with a gala reception the new facility at **Rosewood Housing for the Elderly.**

May 2, 1967: "The month began with Senior Recognition Week in Austin and the opening of PARD'S **third community activity center for senior citizens** with the official opening of **Lakeside Activity Center** at the new Lakeside Highrise Apartments."

Each of the three modern facilities used as senior activity centers has been "loaned". **Nueces Center** operates in its own quarters on the first floor of St. Martin's Lutheran Church; **Rosewood** and **Lakeside** are located in Austin Housing Authority public residences for the elderly."



May 27, 1967: "The new **James A. Garrison swimming pool** opens." (1967 collection of news items on the career of James A. Garrison as Director of Recreation for the City of Austin from 1928 through 1946).

June 1967: "Mrs. Willie Rutland, first and only curator of **Elisabet Ney Museum** since its opening 38 ½ years ago, retires."

August 1967: "During August, planting of 1,600 azaleas of various varieties was completed in the **Catharine Parr Hamilton Azaleas Garden**, and a permanent exposed aggregate walk was laid in the **Biblical Garden** at the **Garden Center**."

September 20, 1967: "PARC staff **Roy Guerrero**, **Mrs. Dorothy Nan McLean**, and **Bob Modlin** provided recreation at the **coliseum** for refugees from **hurricane Beulah**. Table tennis, washers, ring toss, and four-square games were assembled by head crewman **George Carmona**."

September 24, 1967: "Supervisor of Zilker Park, **Jack Robinson** reports that more than 12,000 persons participated in the **first Zilker Park "Love-in"**, sponsored by **Night Productions** and the **Vulcan Gas Co.**"

November 1967: "November saw the intense, detailed planning for the **World's Tallest Christmas Tree**, which will glow from **Zilker Park's Moonlight Tower** until January 1. Constructed and designed by the **Electrical Department** of the City of Austin, in cooperation with **PARC**, the giant man-made tree is 100 feet taller than the Nation's Capital tree, and is the department's way of saying "Merry Christmas."

December 1967: "A **Rosewood Advisory Board** was organized and officers elected. **Howard Norris**, supervisor of Rosewood, says the board can be of inestimable assistance to the Rosewood staff in programs, planning, financial and physical aid, and as a liaison between the general public and staff."

December 10, 1967: "They came by the thousands, stopping at any spot in **Zilker Park** to stare and gaze in awe at the World's Most Beautiful Tree. And, when the man-made beauty glowed for the last time, more than 400,000 persons had seen the **World's Tallest Man-Made Christmas Tree**. The park's only Moonlight Tower was converted into the World's Tallest electrical Christmas Tree. More than 3,200 lamps composed the 165 foot Tower Tree. Austin Mayor Pro Tem, Mrs. Emma Long, pushed a switch officially lighting the giant tree and



World's Tallest Christmas Tree, Zilker Tree

turning on more than 89,000 watts of electricity. Designed and built by the City of Austin Electrical Department in cooperation with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, the tree was the Electrical and Parks and Recreation Department's way of wishing Austinites a "Merry Christmas". The lighting of the tree was the beginning of PARC's annual "Yule Fest" in Zilker Park. Mrs. Alden Davis, a long-time supporter of PARC's activities, conceived the idea of the tree two years ago as part of the total lighting program of Austin's Zilker Park."

December 1967: "The five day celebration of "**Yule Fest**" started when Mrs. John Connally, wife of the Governor of Texas, received a lighted torch from running torchbearers, and set ablaze a 15 foot Yule Log at Rock Island in Zilker Park. At the entrance of the "Candle Path", Austinites viewed lighted colorful plywood cutouts of The Twelve Days of Christmas. Following the lighted path to Rock Island, Yule watchers stood by the perpetually burning Yule Logs, watched a live Nativity scene and Elizabethan dancers performing songs and dances originating in that period."

January 15, 1968: "A "**Council for Fine Arts Site**" of Austin was established January 15, as 24 persons representing nine cultural organizations met at PARC to initiate the first step toward exploring the needs and chances for the development of a Performing Arts Center in Austin."

January 1968: "**The Austin Softball Association**, was formally organized during January. Instrumental in organizing the association were **Roy Guerrero**, PARC's superintendent of Recreation, **Robert Schick**, Supervisor of Athletics and Aquatics, and **Laurence Shieffer**, Assistant Supervisor of Athletics. More than 2,000 Austinites participated in PARC's softball program last summer, establishing the need for the association. A Board of Directors and officers were named. Marvyn Krause is President and Richard Moya is vice-president.

May 13, 1968: "With Mayor Akin cutting the green ribbon, the \$20,000 complex of animal cages at the **Natural Science Center** were dedicated Monday as other city officials, Congressman Jake Pickle, Austin business representatives and members of the Austin Natural Science Association and the Junior League of Austin watched. The new structure will allow the animal exhibit to be open to the public for the first time."



Town Lake Development Program

July 1, 1968: "Women in Construction held the official ground breaking for the **Gazebo on Town Lake's Auditorium Shore**. City Council members, city



Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail

officials and other dignitaries were on hand to run the first shovel of earth. Construction of the \$36,000 Gazebo will begin immediately."

July 16, 1968: "On July 16, Congressman Jake Pickle announced official approval was secured from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for **Town Lake Development, Phase I**. The grant is \$98,500 and will be

matched by the City of Austin with an equal amount. Phase I includes the development of site plans, construction plans and specifications, for the construction of irrigation systems, five miles of walk-and-bike way, rest areas, fishing points, boat docks and observation areas."

September 1968: "The old artesian well, long a landmark of South Austin, was redesigned and beautified with cutstone, ironwork, and a water fall at a cost of \$5,000 by the South Austin Lions Club. The fountain is the starting point of the **Ben Howell Memorial trail**, located near **Stacy pool**, which was built earlier by the club."

September 1968: "Preceded by a week of registration, PARD's four recreation centers (**Austin Athletic Club, Hancock, Rosewood, Pan Am**), opened for the fall and winter season offering everything from dance and sports to judo and English classes."

November 1968: "For the first time in the history of PARD's 40 years of existence, a

Park Ranger has been added to the staff. Dressed in forest green and black, and a campaign hat is **Eugene Chappo**, PARD's Park Ranger."



Park Ranger (Park Police)

November 3, 1968: "A Texas Historical Marker was unveiled on the grounds of the **Elisabet Ney Museum**, the sculptor's grandson, T. A. Montgomery and curator emeritus, Mrs. J. W. Rutland received the honor of dedicating the beautiful marker."

November 1968: "140 Austin children entered the **Tallest Tree Drawing Contest**. The winner was 8 year old **Cathy Wettig**, a Lucy Read Elementary School third grader, who won the honor of officially turning on the World's Tallest Manmade Christmas Tree in **Zilker Park**. She is the first child named as Santa's Helper."

November 1968: "A mobile home is being constructed for Santa who is moving to a permanent home at **Zilker's Yule Fest**."

December 17-22, 1968: "For the third consecutive year, **Zilker Park** was transformed into a Christmas fairyland as the Austin Parks and Recreation Department staged **Yule Fest**. River Road was lined with trees bathed in white lights and sparkling reflectors. Among the trees were lighted signs depicting the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and Christmas Carolers made by **Mrs. Jack Robinson**. At the end of the "Avenue of Trees" was Santa's Workshop, where Santa waited to greet the children. Following the Yule Path, the visitors neared Rock Island, site of the live Nativity scene and the burning Yule Log."

December 1968: "George **Carmona** was named Supervisor of the Construction and Building Maintenance Division of PARD and **George Gonzales** was named his assistant."

February 4, 1969: "PARD Director Beverly Sheffield accepted \$1,000, a solid bronze plaque, and a flag as the 1968 **Gold Medal** winner for excellence in the field of park and recreation management."

February 1969: "A second **Park Ranger** has been added to the force. Retired Army major **Edgar Howard**, a former assistant pro at Morris Williams Gold Course, is now attending Police Cadet Training. Upon completing the 16 week instruction, Howard will join Ranger Eugene Chappo in enforcing the policies, rules, and regulations of the City-owned land and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department."



1968 Gold Metal

April 13, 1969: "The **Isamu Taniguchi Oriental Garden** was officially dedicated Sunday, April 13, after 18 months of voluntary labor by the designer, Taniguchi. Special invited guests were Aroa Ohta, Consul General of Japan and a party of 15 leading industrialists and government officials from Japan who were in the Southern United States on an economic mission. Mayor Harry Akin cut the ribbon to the 3-acre garden of winding flagstone paths, waterfalls, man-made mountains, and pools designed to spell out the word Austin."



Track and Field Program

June 1969: "The first annual **Junior Olympics Track and Field Program** came to Austin this summer. The Austin Jaycees and the Parks and Recreation Department are sponsoring the program for all boys and girls age 8 to 17."

July 11, 1969: "A crowd of some 600, including Austin Mayor **Travis LaRue** and **Beverly Sheffield, Director** of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, gathered at the **Caswell Tennis Center**, to honor **Mrs. Wilmer (Ann) Allison**, daughter of the donator of the Caswell Center. Mrs. Allison, a longtime supporter of the sport, was presented a plaque in recognition of her contribution to Austin tennis."

July 1969: "As the forthcoming budget takes shape, it appears that **Decker** will be opened in the early 1970. The initial development will feature a boat launching ramp with docking facilities, picnic units, concession, rest room facilities, and hopefully a swimming beach."

August 1969: "PARD's planning section activities during August included the completion of preliminary plans for the proposed addition to the **PARD office building**."

September 17, 1969: "At an awards banquet in Chicago, National Recreation and Park Association presented its 1969 Volunteer Service Award to the Junior League of America. **Austin's Junior League** played a major part in winning the award. Since 1932, the Austin Junior League members have produced and performed a Children's Theatre play, provided volunteers and financial assistance to Zachary Scott Theatre, to the creative dramatics summer program for children, and initiated the Student Concert series of the Austin Symphony. In addition, the Austin Junior League has given money for the development of the Natural Science Center and provides docents and volunteer lecturers."

November 1969: "The City Council has voted unanimously to accept a \$25,000 gift from the **Austin Natural Science Association** to aide in drawing up plans for the construction of the "**Living Museum of Texas Flora Fauna**" in **Zilker Park**."

November 1969: "**Brush Square and O. Henry Museum**, both a part of Austin's magnificent heritage, will become more attractive to visitors and Austinites as the city of Austin restores and re-landscapes Brush Square to its original use as a public park. Brush Square was named after Sebe Bogert Brush, a pioneer Austin merchant, in 1839, when Austin was first planned. This square was designated as a park, however, before that a portion of it was the original Austin market place. The O. Henry Museum was moved to Brush Square in 1934. The house was built in 1888 on 4th. Street and was the home of William Sydney Porter and his family from 1893-1895."

1970-1971: **Dottie Jordan** center, park and pool purchased." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

February 7-8, 1970: "Various sports activities were the center of attention at Rosewood Recreation Center with the annual **George Mabson Tournament** held February 7-8. Over 175 men and boys participated. The **Austin Eastside team** finished first, followed by Ft. Worth and Houston respectively."



Dottie Jordan Recreation Center and Park

February 23, 1970: "The rain, the wind and the cold didn't even dampen the spirits of eager fishermen and spectators as an estimated 2,500 visitors passed through the gates of **Decker Lake** on opening day."

April 1970: "The Travis County Historical Survey Committee dedicated a Texas Historical Marker in **Pease Park** in April. The park is named for Governor Elisha Marshall Pease who, in 1875, gave the 23 acre site along Shoal Creek to the city for use as a public park. The area was left underdeveloped until 1926 when the Austin Kiwanis Club retained a landscape engineer to assist the group in lighting the area and installing a water system. The Recreation Department took over the park's operation in 1929." (1970-1971 Annual Report),

April 22, 1970: "April 22 was designated as **"Earth Day"**. Aided by trucks from the Parks Division, student groups from local high schools converged on various areas and engaged in clean-up activities. Perhaps the most important and most lasting effect of Earth Day was an increased awareness of and concern over our environment's deterioration.

May 1970: "A new district park - approximately 45 acres of parkland in northwest Austin on **Bull Creek** were acquired by the city of Austin, with assistance of federal fund provided by the bureau of Outdoor Recreation." (1970-1971 Annual Report).

June 1970: "**The Austin City Junior Golf Championships**, sponsored by PARD and **George Hannon** and his staff was a great success this year with a record 300 entries."

June 1970: An official Texas Historical Marker was dedicated in June at **Wooldridge Park** by the Travis County Historical Survey Committee. The idea for Wooldridge Park was conceived by Austin's long-time mayor, Alex Penn Wooldridge, early in 1909. When the original plan for Austin was drawn, four blocks of land were set aside for public use. Weekly band concerts were held in the park each Friday evening for more than 20 years as well as state and county political rallies." (1970-1971 Annual Report).

August 1970: "The new **Zilker Play-Scape** officially opened at ceremonies held in August, attended by Congressman J. J. "Jake" Pickle, city dignitaries and member of the Austin Lions Club. The play area adjacent to Barton Springs now features a covered shelter area with a capacity of up to 50 persons, a space platform, an antique fire engine and a



Zilker Park Playscape



PICA 25669, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

ship complete with a plank to work. The majority of the total cost of \$16,000 was donated by the Austin Lions Club and labor was provided by men employed with Green Thumb, a work program for persons over the age of 65 with incomes below the poverty level." (1970-1971 Annual Report).

September 1970: "70-71 budget reflects a new **Parks Division**. This new division will have as the new Superintendent of Parks, Mr. **Jack Robinson**, formerly the assistant superintendent."

August 1970: "Austin's oldest recreation center was christened with a new name – **Austin Recreation Center** (built in 1923 and formerly known as the **Austin Athletic Club**). The center was sold to the city for a small remuneration by W. T. Caswell, past Parks Board Chairman and long-time supporter of recreational activities in Austin". (1970-71 Annual Report).

August 31, 1970: "**Mayor Roy Butler Davidson** names **Dan H. Davidson** as successor to former City Manager Lynn Andrews." ("City of Austin employe")."

1971: Mary Mayfield Gutsch, wills the Mayfield land and house that will be known as **Mayfield Park** to the city. (Mayfield Park/Community Project booklet).



Mayfield House

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1970-71: "A new nature trail is now available for Austinites to enjoy at **Givens Park**. The trail along Tannehill Branch Creek was constructed by Green Thumb, Inc. through a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor". (1970-71 Annual Report).

1972: "The original land on which **Metz Recreation Center** is located was acquired by a bond purchase in 1933. The existing facility was built in 1972 through matching funds from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and Model Cities Fund." (1982-1983 Annual Report).

1972-73: "PAR and the Austin Independent School District began a history-making project this year, jointly financing a swimming facility at **Murchison Junior High School**". (1972-73 Annual Report).

March 1972: "The greatest single achievement of the 1972-73 fiscal year was the completion of Phase I of the **Town Lake Development Program** in March, when planting operation inaugurated by Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson were completed". (1972-73 Annual Report).

April 1972: "**Mrs. Alden Davis**, civic leader whose service to Austin spanned more than 60 years, was honored in April when the City Council named the **Zilker Park Rose Garden** in her honor. Mrs. Davis was Life Chairman Emeritus of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, on which she served since its formation in 1951." (1972-73, 1973-74 Annual Report).

May 1972: "**Walter E. Long**, long-time business and civic leader, was honored in May when the Austin City Council re-named **Decker Lake** in his honor. (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).

1972-73 1973-74: **Elisabet Ney** and **O. Henry Museums** were honored with entry in the National Register of Historic Places. Ney Museum is the studio of the German sculptress whose statues of Texas heroes stand in the Capitol rotunda. The O. Henry Museum is the cottage where William Sydney Porter lived with his wife Margaret, from 1892 until 1895. The museum contains a collection of the family's personal memorabilia from those years. (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report)

October 1972: "**Director Beverly Sheffield** recently announces the appointment of **Jack Robinson** as assistant director of the Parks and Recreation Department." ("City of Austin employee")



Jack Robinson

1973-74: "Beverly Sheffield directs the Office of Bicentennial Affairs and **Jack Robinson** assumes the position of Director of the Parks and Recreation Department." (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).

October 1973: "The Parks and Recreation Department purchased the community center (formerly, an Austin Model Cities Program) in October 1973 for \$150,000 and it became the **Montopolis Recreation Center**. (1981-1982 Annual Report).

1973-74: "During the year, two district parks, two greenbelt areas and five neighborhood playgrounds were acquired for a total of 352 acres of land. Among the areas are **Barton Creek District Park** and

Greenbelt, Southeast District Park, Dottie Jordan Park, South Austin Recreation Center and **Montopolis Recreation Center**." (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).

1973-74: "The major event of the year at the **Natural Science Center** was the leasing of the 71-acre Giles homestead. The heritage property was donated for the development of **Pioneer Settlement Memorial Park**. The Austin Natural Science Association, together with the Natural science Guild, raised more than \$13,000 for the development". (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).

March 1973: "The highlight of the 1973-74 Senior Citizens Program was the start of the **Austin-Travis County Senior Luncheon Program**. The project funded by Title VII of the Older Americans Act, provides a hot, noon meal for 345 elderly people, five days a week. Another project of the senior program, the **Community Workshop Market**, involved 400 seniors in arts and crafts classes. Located in Mayfield Center, the market and workshop had six sales throughout the year which benefited the senior citizens." (1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).



Senior Luncheon Program

1974: "In excess of 330 acres of land was added to the park system at 26 sites.

Probably the most note worthy was the return of the original public square located between Fourth and Fifth Streets and Guadalupe and San Antonio Streets, for use as a public park to be known as **Republic Square.**"

(1974-1975, 1975-1976 Bi-Annual report).



Republic Square

1974: "The **Zaragosa Recreation Center** was first dedicated in 1931 and redeveloped in 1974 through various public and private funding sources." (1982-1983 Annual Report).

June 1974: "Special activities were expanded during the fiscal year, and in June 1974, the department began **services for handicapped citizens** of Austin."

(1972-73 1973-74 Annual Report).



South Austin Recreation Center

September 5, 1974: "The **South Austin Recreation Center** was completed and the official dedication was held on September 5, 1974, with an initial cost of the new center totaling \$430,000". (1981-1982 Annual Report).

December 1974: "Mrs. Lyndon Johnson accepts a gift from the Austin Board of Realtors, to begin the **Town Lake** azalea garden project." ("City of Austin employee").

September 1975: An exciting new development of the fiscal year 1974-1975 was the establishment of an **Arts Commission** by the Austin city council in September, 1975". (1974-1975, 1975-1976 Bi-Annual Report).

January 27, 1976: "**Alamo Recreation Center**, established in 1976 at 2100 Alamo Street, east of IH 35, provides leisure services for all age groups." (1983-1984 Annual Report).

1976: "80.6 acres acquired for the **Northeast District Park**". (1974-1975, 1975-1976 B-Annual Report),

1976-77: "An 8,000 square foot addition to the Parks and Recreation Department administrative office is completed." (1976-77 Annual Report).

1976-77: "Accomplishments: Plans are initiated for construction of a major recreation center in **Givens Park**. A year-round program is initiated at the newly remodeled recreation center in **Zaragosa Park**." (1976-77 Annual Report).

1976-77: "Accomplishments: Planned and monitored the eleven **City Arts Service Contracts** with major arts groups. Worked with the **Arts Commission** committee in surveying local arts groups and in planning the renovation of the Naval Reserve Building into a **Cultural Center**. Developed the **Old Bakery and Emporium** with the State of Texas and First Lady Volunteers. Initiated the **Senior Aide Program** which proves employment for older adults through a federal grant \$265,000. Planned and broke ground for a **Senior Activity Center** at 29th and Lamar." (1976-77 Annual Report).

1977-78: "The Austin Parks and Recreation Department has enjoyed an outstanding reputation since it was first established in 1928 and 1977-78 was a fitting year for the celebration of the department's **50th Anniversary**. Many services were extended this past year with the completion of new facilities such as the **Mary Ireland Graves Dougherty Cultural Arts Center**, new swimming



Mrs. Lyndon Johnson

pools at **Martin** and **Montopolis Parks**, the **Senior Activity Center**, and two additional miles of trail along **Town Lake**." (1977-78 Annual Report).

February 24, 1978: "Jack Robinson resigns as Director of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department to become Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, City of Dallas. Mike Segrest is named Acting Director." ("City of Austin employe")

1978: "Leonard Ehrler, Jr. became the new director and the department celebrated its 50th. Anniversary". (1977-78 Annual Report).

1978: "A Joint Resolution was adopted by the City of Austin and the Austin Independent School District by which the two entities agreed to jointly sponsor and fund the **Community Education Project**." (1978,1979, 1980 Annual Report).



March 30, 1979: "Givens Recreation Center was opened to the public. The center was named in memory of the late Dr. Everett H. Givens who was a dentist and community leader in East Austin." (1981-1982 Annual Report).

1979: "Eleven Recreation Centers and a twelfth, the **Northwest Recreation Center**, scheduled to open its doors in November, 1979, are available for the citizens of Austin of all ages to enjoy a wide variety of leisure experiences." (1978,1979, 1980 Annual Report).

1979-1980: "Mable Davis District Park and **Walnut Creek District Park** were completed in this year according to the Master Plan." (1978,1979,1980 Annual Report).

May 1981: "In May, the Parks and Recreation Department suffered approximately three million dollars worth of damage to existing facilities during the **Memorial Day flood**." (1981-1982 Annual Report).

1982: "Opening its doors in 1982, the new **Austin Nature Center** and Annex (formerly known as the Natural Science Center) offers educational programs for children in areas of plants, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, and small mammals." (1981-1982 Annual Report).



Austin Nature and Science Center

1982: "Land acquisitions continued throughout the year. The most notable tract acquired was the 215 acre **Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park**." (1982-1983 Annual Report).



Commons Ford Ranch Metropolitan Park

1982: "In 1982, Gloria Mata Pennington, a supervisor in Senior Programs and a seasoned Dancing Doll, took over as the **Dancing Dolls** sponsor and instructor. For the next eighteen years she recruited dancers and taught the "set-in-stone" routine to hundreds of Parks and Recreation Department employees, who performed on the Trail of Lights stage. Soon Mrs. Pennington became known as "Momma Doll". (2000-2001 Annual Report).

June 1982: "**Danny G. McBeth Recreation Center** is a totally accessible facility. The recreation center, located in Zilker Park, was purchased from the Knight of Columbus in 1981. The Parks and Recreation Department officially took possession of the center in June, 1982." (1982-1983 Annual Report).



Danny G. McBeth Recreation Center participant

1983: "In 1983, the department completed the **Central Maintenance Complex**. Located at 2525 S. Lakeshore Blvd., at the intersection with Pleasant Valley Road. The complex covers two and one-half acres and has over 16,000 square feet of combined office, shop, and storage space." (1983-1984 Annual Report).

1983: "In conjunction with the Sesquicentennial celebration, **Gloria Mata Pennington**, Manager of **Senior Programs** is coordinating a Senior Oral History project, collecting stories, recollections, and old photographs. Through arrangements made by **Senator Gonzalo Barrientos**, the project will be on exhibit at the Capitol and at various elementary schools during the Sesquicentennial year." (1983-84 Annual Report).

1984: "Senior Nutrition Program: Two nutrition sites were opened in 1984 bringing the total number of sites to 24. The **North Loop Senior Nutrition Center** located at 2300 N. Loop West was opened in January 1984. In September 1984, the **Center for the Visual Impaired Elderly** opened at the Unity Church of Austin." (1983-84 Annual Report).

1985-1995: Annual Reports were not published during these years.

1985: "The 12.6 acre land for **A. B. Dittmar Park and Center**, named for Adolph Barnhart Dittmar, who once owned and ran a large dairy on the land, was purchased in 1985 for \$800,000 with funds approved in a 1982 bond election." (Dittmar file)

1986: "During the 1981 Memorial Day floods, the Austin Recreation Center sustained an enormous amount of damage. As a result of this damage, a new **Austin Recreation Center** was built across the parking lot from the old building. The center, now located at 1301 Shoal Creek Blvd., opened in 1986."



Dittmar Recreation Center

(2000-2001 Annual Report).

1988: "Conley-Guererro Senior Center opens." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

1989: "Historic **Treaty Oak** vandalized with poison. Incredible efforts were undertaken to save the tree." (Treaty Oak Project Fact Sheet).

1994: "Dick Nichols Park opens." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

1994: "Dove Springs Pool opens." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

November 17, 1995: "Dedication ceremony is held for the **South Austin Senior Center**". (South Austin Center file).

May 5, 1996: "Dedication Ceremonies for the new **Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center**. Construction of the 17,500 square foot center is a Capital Improvements Project approved by voters in the 1992 bond election." (Dedication Program).



Treaty Oak

May 1996: "The **Austin Nature & Science Center** opened a new satellite facility in the **Barton Springs Bathhouse** in Zilker Park. The **Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center** includes two classroom/laboratories (outfitted and taught by Jr. League of Austin volunteers, and an exhibit hall under construction." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

May 24, 1996: "Opened the **Dick Nichols pool** on May 24th. The community use has been overwhelming with participant hours over 59,000 its first summer. This exceeds any other neighborhood pool." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

1996-97: "The Austin City Council allocated \$1.4 million for the **Social Fabric Initiative** which provided funding for the enhancement of youth programs. Programs Division Manager, Robert Armistead announced the funds were appropriated to create a balance between addressing crime and crime prevention and to increase recreation opportunities for youth. The programs include: Expansion of the **Summer Playground Program**, the **Summer Teen Recreation Academy**, the **PARDner Program**, the **Community Outreach after School Program**, the **Totally Cool, Totally Art Program** and other outreach and enrichment programs." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

February 26 – March 2, 1997: "Hosted, coordinated, and made presentations for the **National Recreation and Park Association Southwest Regional** and the **Texas Recreation and Park Society Annual Institute**." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

March 18-22, 1997: "Coordinated and hosted the **National Recreation and Park Aquatics Conference**." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

May 1997: "Hosted the **United Park and Recreation Affiliation**. UPRA is made up of the directors of the 50 largest Parks and Recreation Departments in the United States." (1996-1997 Annual Report).

1997-98: "The first annual **Adopt-A-Park** awards luncheon honored those who increased community support for Parks and Recreation during fiscal year 1997-98. More than \$2,595,800 and 62,820 hours of volunteer time has been generated by Adopt-A-Park. Of the funding, \$2,375,636 came from in-kind contributions and \$220,232 was raised in cash donations. The volunteer hours were contributed by 4,980 volunteers." (1997-98 Annual Report).



Dove Springs Recreation Center

March 28, 1998: "Grand Opening of the **Dove Springs Recreation Center**. Construction of the 18,000 square foot recreation center is a \$2.2 million Capital Improvement Project." (1997-98 Annual Report).

April 25, 1998: "More than 100 youth and adults attended the ground breaking ceremony marking the beginning of the construction of the **Montopolis Sportsplex** at 800 Grove Blvd." (1997-98 Annual Report).



Montopolis Sportsplex

February 1998: The **Roving Leader** program was created in 1997-98 as part of the **Social Fabric Initiative** of the City of Austin. Described by the organizers as a "recreation center on wheels", the leaders "rove their communities, carrying equipment and supplies for impromptu games, crafts, and athletic activities". (1997-98 Annual Report).

1998: "Greenspace to the east and building the **Colorado River Park** were among 16 Parks and Recreation projects approved by voters in the **Fall 1998 Bond Elections**. The general obligation bond ballot included \$97.3 million for Parks and Recreation. On the ballot, Proposition 2 – Parks and Recreation contained 14 project totaling \$75.9 million. Additionally, two Parks and Recreation facilities, the **Carver Museum** and the **Mexican American Cultural Center** were included under Proposition 4 – Libraries, Museums and Cultural Centers. These two projects total \$21.4 million." (1997-98 Annual Report).

October 17, 1998: "An exciting, educational exhibit, **SPLASH** into the Edwards Aquifer was completed by the partnership of the **Austin Nature & Science Center** with area businesses, and hundreds of sponsor and volunteer organizations and individuals. This new, permanent exhibit follows the journey of raindrops through the Hill Country, the Edwards Aquifer ecosystem and to the final destination in the Gulf of Mexico" (1997-98 Annual Report).

1999: "**Alamo Basketball Pavilion** opens. Named for neighborhood parks activist **Katherine T. Pool**, the pavilion is a structure without walls that essentially puts a roof over the court." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

1999: "Everyone loves a parade and in Austin, the Parks and Recreation Department put on the biggest of 1999. To honor local sports heroes **Lance Armstrong** and **Ricky Williams** and the **UT football team**, Mayor Kirk Watson wanted to have a parade. To have the parades be a success, Mayor Watson called on the Parks and Recreation Department." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

1999: "**Millennium Youth Center** is completed and opened." (1989-1999 Annual Report).

March 11, 1999: " **Aquatics** Program awarded the 1999 Excellence in Aquatics Award of the National Park and Recreation Association. The Austin City Council honored the Aquatics program achievement by proclaiming Thursday, March 11th as Aquatics Day in Austin."

March 1999: "The Get R.E.A.L. **Roving Leader** and the **M.A.P.** (Music-Art-Performance) programs earned awards from the Texas Recreation and Park Society. This marks the second consecutive year Austin Parks and Recreation programs have earned these two awards. The department was also awarded the Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the field of recreation management". (1998-1999 Annual Report).

May 7, 1999: "**President Clinton's** arrival on Airforce One at Austin's new airport the afternoon of Friday, May 7, 1999, was the first major passenger landing at **Austin-Bergstrom International** and marked the opening of the nation's newest airport. In the midst and behind the scenes of the hoopla were not only the Secret Service, but Parks and Recreation staff." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

1999: "On November 13, 1899 at 4:00 p.m., Lewis Hancock, 66 men and 4 women met at the Driskill Hotel and organized the **Austin Golf Club**. Together they pledged their financial support. By the following June, they were playing on what is now known as the **Hancock Golf Course**. A century later, Hancock stands as the oldest golf course in Texas." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

October 23, 1999: "**Totally Cool, Totally Art**, a program of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, accepted the Dorothy Mullen National Arts and Humanities Award Saturday, Oct. 23 at the National Parks and Recreation Association Conference in Nashville, Tenn." (1998-1999 Annual Report).

November 1999: "**O. Henry Museum** was honored with the prestigious National Literary Landmark status from the Friend of Libraries USA and became the first literary landmark in Texas. First Lady of Texas Laura Bush accepted the bronze plaque on behalf of Texas."(1999-2000 Annual Report).

November 20, 1999: A community party including refreshments and plenty of play celebrated the opening of **Springdale Park**. The park is located just east of the intersection of E. 12th Street and Webberville Road." (1998-1999 Annual Report).



Springdale Park

2000: "The **Creativity Club**, a program of the **Dougherty Arts Center**, earned this year's TRAPS Arts and Humanities Award.

Springdale Park, the successful transformation of a former waste disposal site into a valuable neighborhood asset earned park planners of Austin Parks and Recreation statewide recognition, this year's TRAPS Innovations in Park Development Award." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

2000: "Austin's Sister City, Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, presented an architectural sculpture of Mexican historian Don Vito Alessio Robles to the City of Austin for **Plaza Saltillo**. The donation made of bronze, Saltillo tile and iron was added to the Art in Public Places Collection." (1999-2000 Annual Report).



Plaza Saltillo

2000: "Eula and Diana Wheeler of Tucson, Arizona donated 50 original **O. Henry** letters that O. Henry wrote to his editor Gilman Hall while living in New York. Along with the rare letters, O. Henry illustrations, original photographs, and other rare letters written to Gilman Hall that relate to O. Henry were donated." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

March 4, 2000: The first mountain bike team in the United States, sponsored by a parks and recreation department rode its first race. This national first is the **Austin Parks and Recreation Mountain Bike Race Team**. The team is made up of teens ages 13-15. (1999-2000 Annual Report).

May 28, 2000: "Words cannot adequately convey the deep sorrow felt by all who mourn the untimely death of **Austin Park Police Officer William Jones**, a courageous man who was tragically slain in the line of duty on May 28, 2000, at the age of 49." (1999-2000 Annual Report).



Park Police Officer William Jones

September 12, 2000: "**Director Jesus Olivares** announced that the Austin City Council has approved a \$67.6 million budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. The funding for the new fiscal year, which began October 1, 2000, was an increase of \$11 million over the past year and added 68 new positions department wide." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

September 16, 2000: The **Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center** opened at Bergman Avenue and Robert Martinez Street. The construction of the center was made possible by Austin Energy, through the Holly Good Neighbor Program." (1999-2000 Annual Report).



Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center Opening

October 11, 2000: "The **National Gold Medal Award** recognizes excellence in parks and recreation administration and outstanding service. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department was one of four finalists vying for the honor this year. It marks the second consecutive year Austin Parks and Recreation has earned such national prominence as one of the best in the country." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

October 11, 2000: "The **Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm** earned this year's Dorothy Mullen National Arts and Humanities Award. The award was presented at the National Recreation and Park Association annual conference on October 11 in Phoenix, Arizona." (1999-2000 Annual Report).

January 31, 2000: "Mrs. Gloria Pennington, after many years of devoted leadership to the Senior Programs, announced her retirement in January 31, 2000. The three **Senior Centers** (SAC Lamar, Conley-Guerrero SAC, and SASAC) are all products of Mrs. Pennington's devotion to the Seniors of Austin." (1999-2000 Annual Report).



Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metropolitan Park Dedication

Austin Parks and Recreation Department and those the department serves. On August 25, 2001, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department dedicated the **Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metropolitan Park** in his honor." (2000-2001 Annual Report).

September 14, 2001: "Northwest District Park was renamed the **Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park**. Family, friends, community members, Parks and Recreation staff and current and former city officials showed up for the renaming dedication. Mr. Sheffield had a 40-year career with the Austin Recreation Department and served as Director from 1947 to 1973". (2000-2001 Annual Report).



Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park Dedication.

August 25, 2001: "Roy Guerrero, affectionately known as Mr. "G", dedicated thirty four years of his life to the

2001: "The National Recreation and Park Association Dorothy Mullen Arts and Humanities Awards Program honors the most innovative and effective arts and humanities programs across the nation. The **Lorraine "Grandma Camacho Activity Center** received this award at the NRPA National Conference in Denver, Colorado in recognition of its program introducing youth to digital video technology." (2000-2001 Annual Report).

2001: "The Texas Recreation and Park Society awarded the Lone Star Programming Award to the Austin Parks and Recreation Department's **Mountain Bike Team** as the most innovative program in the state." (2000-2001 Annual Report).

June 16, 2001: "The **James D. Pfluger** town Lake Pedestrian Bridge opened with much fanfare. A fun-run attracted over 900 runners and the Austin Civic Wind ensemble delighted the crowd with a variety of music. The Pfluger family, along with Mayor Kirk Watson, cut the ribbon and lead the crowd in a walk over the bridge." (2000-2001 Annual Report).

December 2001: "A ribbon-cutting for the **Hartman Prehistoric Garden** will be held which will bring the **Zilker Botanical Garden** into the dinosaur era. A three-acre, former limestone quarry onsite has been converted into a unique garden habitat that mimics the vegetation typical of the time 100 million years ago when dinosaurs actually roamed this site. Through a generous donation by Claudette and Douglas Hartman, this new garden seeks to recreate the ancient vegetated habitat look typical of this prehistoric era." (2000-2002 Annual Report).

2002: "The newly opened **Pickfair Community Center** continues to thrive in northwest Austin." (2002 Annual Report).

2002: "The National Recreation and Parks Society chose **Totally Cool, Totally Art** as the first branded NRPA National Model Program. The program was featured in "Best Practices in Youth Development in Public Park and Recreation Settings", a book by Dr. Peter Witt and Dr. John L. Crompton of Texas A&M University." (2002 Annual Report).



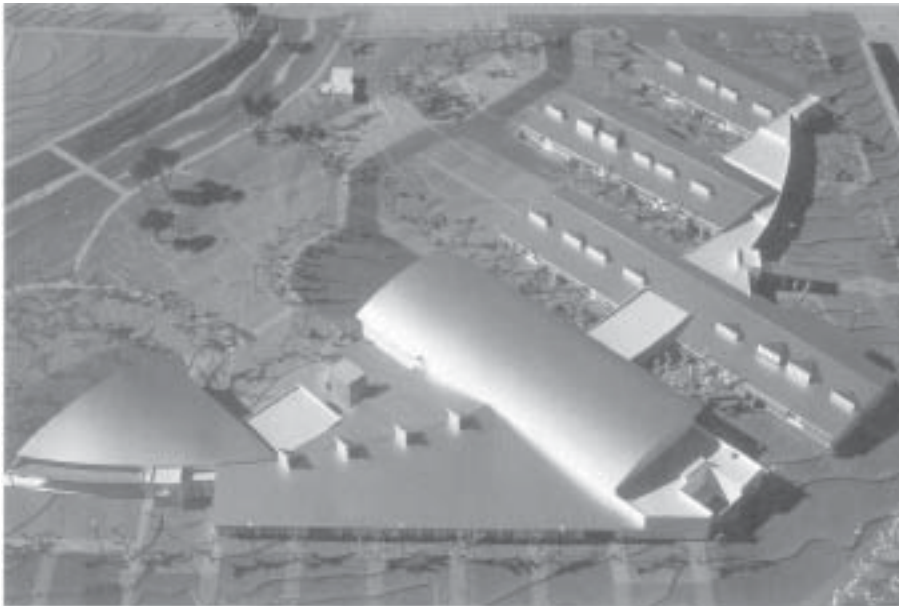
National Junior Tennis League

2002: "Just off the heels of winning the **Texas National Junior Tennis**

League of the Year Award, the program almost tripled participation from 470 in 2001 to over 1,300 youth participants in 2002. Creative marketing and programming helped boost the program's numbers, as well as the energy created by **Lonnie Lyman**, the program coordinator and the tennis instructors." (2002 Annual Report).

2002: "New park land added this year: Big Walnut Creek 260 acres, Little Walnut Creek – 198 acres, Slaughter Creek Greenbelt – 309 acres and Chestnut Pocke Park – ½ acre". (2002 Annual Report).

January 27, 2002: "The **St. John's Community Center** opened on January 27th. The rich history of the St. John community in northeast Austin is the backdrop for this unique joint venture between the neighborhood, the Austin Independent School District and the City of Austin". Included in the center are a **Recreation Center**, Health and Human Services, the St. John's branch library and an Austin Police Department Community Policing Office." (2002 Annual Report).



St. John's Recreation Center

March 8, 2002: "The Department received the **Best Web Site Award** at the Texas Recreation and Parks Society Awards Banquet in Abilene. **Mendy Marshall**, Web Liaison accepted the award." (2002 Annual Report).

March 22, 2002: "The groundbreaking ceremony for the **Dino Pit** was held on March 22nd. This exhibit was designed to teach participants of all ages about the field of paleontology through hands-on educational activities. The development of this exhibit was a collaborative effort of the **Austin Nature and Science Center** and the Texas Memorial Museum of Science and History at the University of Texas." (2002 Annual Report).



Hartman Prehistoric Garden

March 30, 2002: The Grand Opening for the **Hartman Prehistoric Garden** in **Zilker Botanical Garden** was held on March 30, 2002. In the early 1990s, over 100 dinosaur tracks were discovered on the exposed rock in the limestone quarry with Zilker Botanical Gardens. A generous donation from **Claudette and Douglas Hartman** and a collaboration between Larson/Burns Landscape Architects, L&R Landscape contractors, and horticultural advisor Craig Nazon helped transform the quarry into a prehistoric garden". (2002 Annual Report).



Jones Memorial

May 28, 2002: "On May 28, 2000, **Austin Parks and Recreation Police Officer, William D. Jones** made the ultimate sacrifice protecting the citizens of Austin. He was shot and killed while making a traffic stop in Zilker Parks. Shortly after the tragedy, a committee of Parks and Recreation staff was put together to plan, design, and

construct a fitting memorial to the fallen officer. The memorial was dedicated during a ceremony held on May 28, 2002." (2002 Annual Report).

June 8, 2002: The Austin Parks and Recreation Department opened its first water playground at **Metz Recreation Center**, with funding from the Water and Wastewater Conservation Department." (2002 Annual Report).

June 29, 2002: "After heavy rainfall, a wall of water flowed down Barton Creek and through **Barton Springs Pool**. The flow of water did not subside until July 11th. The Barton Springs staff logged countless hours of cleaning and repairing the damages caused by the flood and were able to reopen the pool on July 20th." (2002 Annual Report).

September 8, 2002: "The 18th. Annual "**Rock the Boat**" was held at **Fiesta Gardens**. This canoe and kayak event is held each year to give individuals with special needs an opportunity to participate in boating experiences in a safe environment." (2002 Annual Report).



Metz Water Playground



Rock the Boat

September 13, 2002: "In the 1870s and until 1927, the Diez y Seis Celebrations were held at Public Square, now named **Republic Square**, located at 422 Guadalupe Street. When the history of the square became known, **Director Jesus Olivares** decided it would be most appropriate to bring the Diez y Seis celebration back to Republic Square. He assigned **Gloria Mata Pennington** to head up a committee to plan the event." (2002 Annual Report).

October 16, 2002: "The **Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center** was the recipient of the National Recreation and Parks Association's Dorothy Mullen Arts and Humanities Award for the second consecutive year at the NRPA Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida. **Don Goerner**, Site Manager of the Camacho Activity Center, accepted the award for the Department. The center was honored for its "Heroes Among Us" a documentary

project about Veterans of World War II, produced by teens. The program had already won the Lone Star Programming Award at the Texas Recreation and Parks Society Awards Banquet in Abilene on March 8, 2002." (2002 Annual Report).

November 2002: At a directive from **Director Jesus Olivares**, a committee was created to plan a special event for each month during **2003**, to celebrate the **75th. Anniversary** of the department. The major celebration will be a reception and historic photo exhibit to be held June 30, 2003 at the Austin History Center. The photo exhibit will continue to be on display throughout the month of July which is National Parks and Recreation Month.



Jesus M. Olivares, Director, Parks and Recreation Department



PICA 13283, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



PICA 11195, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



PICA 2631, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



PICA 11626, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

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Toby Futrell

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