



ANNUAL MEETING

- * Update on Progress
- * Discussion of goals for next year
- * Q&A with NPS Supt. Joe Siano

Thurs., Nov. 8, 7 p.m.
Lowry Room
Norman Public Library

ONE FOR 100,000

By Kent Nicholson

Imagine Norman with one public pool to serve the entire city. You won't have to hold that thought long, because it will be a reality before you know it. Murray Case Sells (the OU Pool) has acted as Norman's second public pool for the last thirty years and will be leveled within the next three years. To give you a quick picture of the volume of swimmers the OU Pool has handled in the summer months: the OU pool taught over 1,000 swimming lessons this summer and was near capacity when it opened its doors to the public during the dog days of summer for recreational and lap swimming. Westwood is much the same, but with more lessons and more people. Westwood, which already programs it's time to the maximum, can't possible handle the double workload.

Westwood can't handle all of Norman's needs and can't continue to operate much longer. Westwood is at the tail end of its life span. A number of pools were built around the same time as Westwood around the state and Westwood is in the best shape of them

all, thanks to the work of the Akeys, who have run the pool for the last 20 plus years. However, along with the OU pool, the Akeys are done. Double the workload and nobody with the ability to anticipate the problems an old pool provides, and Westwood's already short time becomes very much shorter. Norman has to do something now.

The Norman community has always had adequate options when it comes to aquatics. Thirty years ago Norman had four outdoor and three indoor pools. That number continues to shrink, and Norman is about to feel the pinch in a big way.

PISCES PROJECT MEETS WITH SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

By Ed Baron

In March we held an informal informational get-together with Norman School Board member Joe Sparks. Mr. Sparks is somewhat acquainted with swimming in Norman; he has a ten year old daughter who attends Monroe Elementary and swims with the club team at the YMCA. Overall Mr. Sparks was extremely excited by our vision of having both an indoor and outdoor aquatic facility in Norman. As a Norman businessman, (Mr. Sparks is the owner of Legends Restaurant), he felt that there was a large amount of untapped support from the Norman business community and they would like to see an aquatic facility in Norman both for quality of life and to help in building businesses and retaining employees. Mr. Sparks urged us to get in touch with Jim Adair, who is working on the Imagine Norman project.

Following up on Mr. Sparks' suggestion, we met with Jim Adair and School Board members Darry Stacy and Ken McBride in May. Again the meeting was positive, Mr. McBride and Mr. Stacy expressed support for second grade swim, and Mr. Adair urged us to attend the Imagine Norman sessions that were held this summer.

PISCES MEMBERS ATTEND IMAGINE NORMAN BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

By Diane Moershel

At the invitation of the Norman Chamber of Commerce, two representatives of the Pisces Project attended each of three meetings held in July to identify potential quality-of-life projects for Norman. Naturally, we urged construction of an Aquatic Center, as well as other recreational facilities for Norman citizens. The results of the three brainstorming sessions can be viewed at <http://www.normanok.org/documents/ImagineNorman>. Or you can google Imagine Norman. Either way, you will see that an aquatic center ranks high on the list of potential projects.

It is interesting that the new city manager for Norman, Steve Lewis, listed “unifying the city’s response to the community dialogue and Imagine Norman projects via a citizen’s survey and development of an action plan” as a high priority in his September 16 interview in the Norman Transcript.

Jim Adair is the chair of the Imagine Norman project, and we have high hopes for the inclusion of the aquatic center funding in any proposal that goes before Norman citizens.

PISCES PROJECT HOSTS RECEPTION FOR NORMAN HIGH’S FIRST SWIM TEAM

By Nancy Yoch

This summer nine members of the first Norman High School swim team from the class of 1957 convened in Norman for their 50th reunion. They were joined by their coach, Rick Rowland, who was a member of the OU swim team at the time he volunteered to coach. Member of the Pisces Project held a reception for the team and Coach Rowland who was presented with a plaque by Dr. Siano and also was honored by Mayor Cindy Rosenthal with a proclamation recognizing his contribution. In addition to the swimmers from 1957, many swimmers from other classes attended as did 2 swimmers, Peter Duncan and Lin Meiring, who had come to OU from South Africa and swam at the same time as did Rick Rowland. Pisces Project believes this event generated a lot of attention for Norman’s long tradition of swimming excellence, as well as Norman’s imminent pool crisis.

OU’S NEW, NEW SWIM COMPLEX

By Diane Moershel

On September 20th, the Oklahoma Daily reported on a proposal for a modified swim complex, greatly reducing the scope of the project and thereby, the cost per credit hour students will have to pay for running the facility. This plan would reduce the indoor lap pool from 50 meters to 25 meters. The indoor leisure pool would remain, but the outdoor “Lazy River” and pool have been eliminated from the plans, as were the indoor facilities with saunas and hot tubs. An outdoor sunning deck was included.

Much of the impetus for the changes seems to have come from the cost per credit hour the students would have to pay with the original plan. The vote in the spring passed, but by a narrow margin. As the Daily reported, “wider margins would have helped better secure donors’ money, officials said at the time.” UOSA President Kenay Nyanat stated that “We are still committed to lap swimming and an indoor recreational portion of the complex... Also a new locker room and (additions) to the Huston Huffman Center.” These additions were not described in the article, but were alluded to by President Boren in a letter sent in September to parents of OU students, in which he described a 30-million-dollar project, paid for with private donations and state bonds, which will include improvements to Huston Huffman and two new indoor pools.

PISCES PROJECT NEEDS MORE SUPPORT

By Diane Moershel

The announcement in April by OU that the Murray Case Sells pool complex would be demolished within three years was scary enough. Now we know that the initial OU plans for a 50-meter indoor pool have been scrapped. The new plans call for a greatly downsized facility attached to Huston Huffman, featuring a leisure pool and lap lane pool. While we applaud OU for keeping its students’ needs foremost, we must realize that within three years, competitive swimming in Norman will be a memory if action is not taken now.

The Pisces Project steering committee has been meeting bi-weekly for over two years now. In that time, it has raised awareness in the swim

community of the immediate threat to competitive swimming. Pisces members have generously donated money, allowing Pisces Project to produce colorful informative brochures, bumper stickers, informational position papers and newsletters, and colorful tee-shirts to give as appropriate. We have raised public consciousness of competitive swimming to the point where influential leaders with Norman Public Schools, the City of Norman, and the Norman Chamber of Commerce are talking directly to us about how we can get pools built in time.

Overall, memberships have contributed about \$1600. We have spent approximately \$2500, much coming from steering committee members' private donations. Currently, we have \$405 in the bank (specific accounting available upon request). We are asking all members who joined in 2006 to renew your membership (fee--\$20) to augment these funds.

Basically Pisces Project costs very little to operate; but we do have a pressing need for your participation at a particular level. Of course, your input is always welcome. But we have found that most Pisces Project members are busy people, with many obligations outside of Pisces Project. What we really need is a commitment from you to attend events where decision makers could be swayed by a show of support for swimming in Norman. We don't envision these occasions occurring more than two or three times a year. But it's important, when we try to make the case that an aquatic center would impact many of Norman's citizens, that the people who are most directly affected—parents and supporters of competitive swimmers—show up in impressive numbers. We are asking for a commitment from you that no more than three times a year, when you receive an e-mail or post card request from Pisces Project, you will attend at a designated venue and demonstrate your whole-hearted support for building an aquatic center in Norman. This may be a public meeting, a reception or another activity. **When necessary, we want to show the non-swimming community that we have actual people who stand with us on this project.**

If you can make this commitment, please e-mail Nancy Yoch at nyoch@buynorman.com or Diane Moershel at diane@moershel.com or fill out the form below and mail it to Pisces Project, P.O. Box 6093, Norman OK, 73070. We would really appreciate it if you could also mail your membership renewal check (\$20) in the same envelope. Thank you for your ongoing support.

PISCES PROJECT

COMMITMENT TO ATTEND EVENTS

I agree that when notified via mail or e-mail, no more than 3 times a calendar year, I will attend and be counted as a supporter of building a new aquatic center in Norman.

Signed: _____

Please send me a post card notification at this address:

Or e-mail me at: _____

My best times for participation are:

Evenings _____

Afternoons _____

Mornings _____

Weekends _____

<p>Pisces Project P.O. Box 6093 Norman, OK 73070 www.piscesproject.org Diane Moershel: 405-236-5938 Nancy Yoch: 405-329-7042</p>
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