



The Rumor Mill

By: Bret Raley, Lake Conroe Division



Figure 1

Periodically our employees here at the Lake Conroe Division office receive phone calls that start something like this – “Is it really true that . . .” or “One of my neighbors told me that . . .”

Over the years, we’ve heard some interesting stories, including one that came with a photograph of a giant alligator swimming across Lake Conroe carrying a deer in its mouth (which, you’ll be glad to know, was not taken on Lake Conroe!).

But some of the stories we hear are about important issues that are of great concern to our neighbors around Lake Conroe, so we appreciate the opportunity to provide answers and shed some light on the issue whenever possible.

One recent concern we’ve heard has to do with the cranes and barges that are working at the south end of Lake Conroe near the dam. At certain times, four or five cranes can be seen from the road at the west end of the dam where it nears SH 105. As a result of all this construction activity, a buzz is being generated throughout the community as people attempt to interpret what is happening. One concern that has surfaced is that there might be a problem with the dam itself, and the cranes are here as some sort of repair effort. In the reservoir business, you’ll almost never hear us use the word “leak,” but for this article let me just assure everyone that there are no prob-



Figure 2

lems with the dam, and the cranes are not here as part of any repair project related to the dam.

Figures 1 and 2 show some of the barges and cranes that are currently operating on Lake Conroe as part of SJRA’s construction of a water treatment plant.

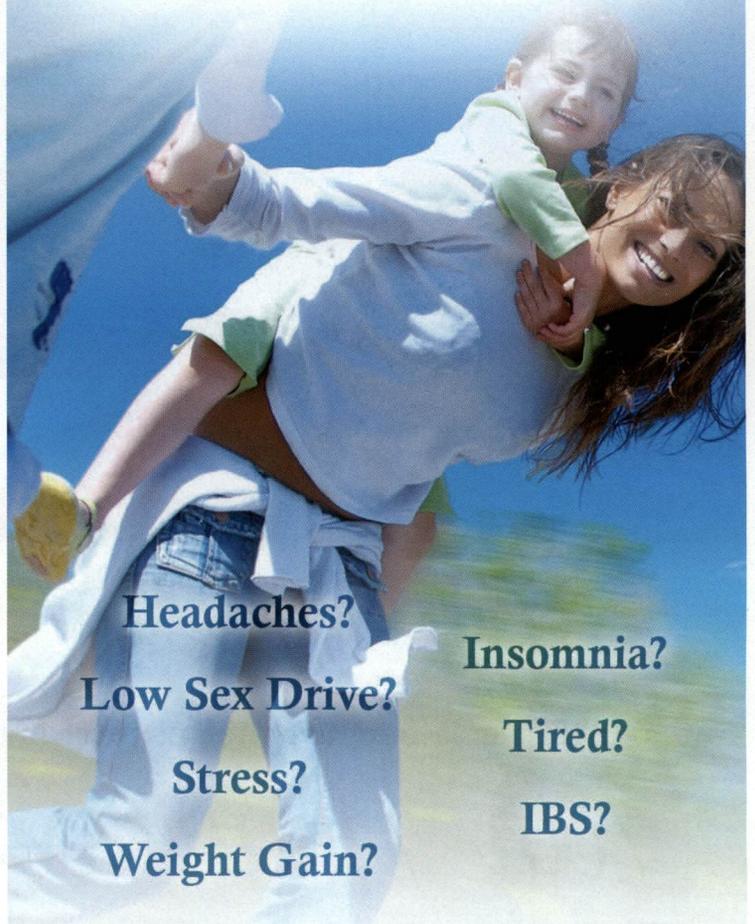
The cranes are here as part of SJRA’s construction of a water treatment plant to begin using water from Lake Conroe to supplement Montgomery County’s water supplies. The details of that program, being implemented by the Groundwater Reduction Plan Division of SJRA, are beyond the scope of this article, but there is a great deal of information available at www.sjra.net under the GRP Division tab.

Another persistent concern that we have heard is that SJRA is



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Figure 3



Figure 4

intentionally keeping the lake level down to accommodate the construction that is taking place for the water treatment plant. This is simply not the case. The construction activities that are occurring on the water near the dam do not require that any particular lake level be maintained. Right now, piers are being installed that will eventually support an access bridge and pump building. The pipes that will deliver water from the pump building to the water treatment plant go over the top of the dam well above the water line.

Figures 3 and 4 - Raw water transmission lines going from the lake to the water treatment plant are located well above the water line of Lake Conroe.

Finally, I'd like to address a recent rumor that the reason Lake Conroe has not returned to full is because SJRA has been releasing water from the dam. Let me start by saying that the only releases of water that have occurred since April of 2010 have been the releases to the City of Houston during the severe drought of 2011.

One reason that was given to support the belief that releases were being made had to do with a United States Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauge that is located downriver from Lake Conroe. The gauge was showing a small amount of flow, and it was assumed that this gauge was measuring flow from the dam. In actuality, this gauge is located on the West Fork of the San Jacinto River at the SH 105 bridge.

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Figure 5

Figure 5 shows the USGS gauge station at the SH 105 bridge over the San Jacinto River.

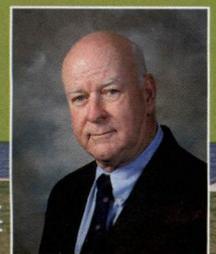
The gauge, which is operated and maintained by the USGS, actually picks up run-off from an approximately 4,000-acre drainage area south of the dam and includes at least one wastewater treatment plant discharge. Due to the drainage area and treated wastewater flows, this gauge almost always shows a small amount of flow.

There are certainly other concerns that aren't addressed in this article, and we always appreciate the opportunity to answer questions and share information. So if you hear a story that doesn't seem to make sense, feel free to contact us or visit our website. Often times we will post information to our website to address questions or concerns. You can also register an email address or link to our Facebook page to receive updates directly. ♦

The San Jacinto River Authority celebrates its
75th Anniversary



Since 1937, the San Jacinto River Authority has been quietly and effectively accomplishing its mission of developing, conserving, and protecting the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. As we celebrate SJRA's 75th anniversary, it is an appropriate time to commemorate some of the major accomplishments that have enabled SJRA to timely and cost-effectively meet the water needs in our basin.



Lloyd B. Tisdale,
 SJRA Board President

As we look to the future, the leadership and staff of SJRA are committed to honoring the legacy of the men and women who established our successful foundation by continuing to diligently pursue SJRA's primary objective of developing and conserving the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin for the benefit of all who live and work here.



Jace A. Houston,
 General Manager

**Read SJRA's 75th
 Anniversary brochure
 at www.sjra.net**