

How Dry We Are

1 When the heat has even the grackles lying low, the pleasure of a swimming hole cold enough to knock the breath out of you is limitless. Alas, water is not, a truism sorely evident to the residents of the Hill Country town of Wimberley, where proposed development may spell the end for the beloved Jacob's Well, already stagnant due to too little rain and too much pumping. Would-be tubers along the depleted Frio, Nueces, and Medina—pretty much anywhere west of Interstate 35—are also learning firsthand how bad the situation is. >>> Thanks to the drought and Texas's unprecedented population growth, the race is on across the state for new water supplies. Even San Antonio, the poster child for water conservation, is eyeing Val Verde County, a Wild West territory where groundwater is plentiful and regulation nonexistent. What are the consequences for San Felipe Springs, the drinking water source and summer refuge for Del Rioans? No one knows. >>> This "I drink your milk shake" bonanza has been spurred on by the Legislature's \$2 billion allocation to water infrastructure, a nice subsidy for still more mega projects that will move water from rural to urban areas, where nearly a third of our supply is applied to the grass growing in our yards. >>> Can we defend the sanctity of Texans' private property while guarding our treasured watering holes? It's a quixotic but existential task. Next time you find yourself bracing for the plunge at your favorite swimming spot, ask yourself: Is it your lawn where you imagine bringing your grandchildren? Or this place? —SHARLENE LEURIG

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PAPA QUIZ

Q: What semi-infamous Texan had crossed paths with J. Edgar Hoover, legendary TCU quarterback Davey O'Brien, Lee Harvey Oswald, John Connally, John F. Kennedy's purported mistress Judith Exner, and the musicians John Denver, Delbert McClinton, and Shawn Phillips before turning 22?

A: Robert Allen Hale, who attended Arlington Heights High School with Oswald, Denver, McClinton, and Phillips and was the son of I. B. Hale, who roomed with O'Brien at TCU before going to work at the FBI under his good friend Hoover. In 1959 Robert Hale married Connally's daughter Kathleen and was the only person present when she died of a suspicious shotgun blast. Two years later the FBI spotted him breaking into Exner's apartment. (Given his father's position with the FBI and the fact that his mother,

