

## H-Zmarch24column A One Water Window Opens for Our Future

A fresh thoughtful look toward a future of careful water usage is now available for our futures, particularly in the Texas Hill Country. When the gift of headwaters for thirteen rivers providing sustenance for our region becomes a focus for consideration in our sustained period of drought, every opportunity to consider water's capture, usages and reuse becomes very important. Come join the conversation and discovery at McKenna Center 12 March 6-7:30 pm when NBU's One Water Coordinator, Robin Gary helps underscore the value of ALL WATER. It serves as a fresh way to think and act in a time when we know our water sources are limited and to be carefully utilized. Bring your questions and neighbors.

When I think back to my earliest years and first recognition that water didn't just flow from an opened faucet, it brings me to those moments standing beside the hand pumped water source of my grandparents. In the morning, we were given a modest sized bowl and pitcher. Your assignment was to use the handle and pump water into the pitcher to use for toothbrushing and freshening for the day ahead. Any water not used remained in the pitcher. Used waters were poured over some eager plantings nearby, "not just tossed away." Once pump motors were available and one attached, even use of the outdoor shower was for quick in and out with the faucet soon off. The temperature unless the water in a tank had been held in the sun much of the day was incentive for brevity as well, facilitating less use per person. Then I was "of sufficient age" to get assignments for chores. One of mine was to keep the shallow drain to the pond some yards downhill and away from the well shelter and shower open for flow, particularly when rains came most afternoons on the Gulf Coast. My grandmother captured waters pouring off the rooftops of out buildings, pump shelter canopy and home. Those waters were what kept a myriad of interesting potted plants happily growing. Discovery that all these life experiences were life lessons came later.

Our opportunity for a fresh view and approach to the waters available to us gets transformed when we view an integrated water management whether for a household, public building or local community. Traditionally for most water usages our access to fresh sources have meant looking around for capture, use and release. In the more integrated approach, which some have labelled ONE WATER, linkages are made between our supplies, wastewater utilization and stormwater channeling for capture and strategic releases as needed. An entire system begins to bloom with less and less demand upon outside sources and a dramatic reduction in the shared natural resources we too often have erroneously considered infinitely available. One of the exquisite demonstrations of ONE WATER praxis is at the Blue Hole Elementary School at Wimberly right here among our Texas Hill Country neighbors. Even the condensation from cooling systems gets cycled into the preparation for use in the water supplies flowing through translucent piping! The children get to observe the captured and channeled water as it flows toward usefulness. A Comal neighbor reports that her friend, a grandparent, said her grandson, a Blue Hole School student, eagerly reported when nearby Jacob's Well began to come back to life, "our school helped that happen!" Check out for yourself the marvel of the Blue Hole School story and vision.

Let's look forward to hearing what Robin Gary has to offer us as vision and opportunity March 12th.