

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Fannie Davis Town Lake Gazebo Lady Bird Lake, Austin, Texas

ABOUT OUR GAZEBO *“A Tribute to the Construction Industry”*

It was dedicated to the City of Austin in June 8, 1970 and ceremonies were held on Lake. Behind the plaque which reads, “A gift to the City of Austin by the Austin Chapter of Women in Construction” is a posterity box containing the following:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

When this box is opened, a page of history is revealed. The Construction and Dedication of the Gazebo is again alive and exciting. We wish the contents of this posterity box to be given to the Austin Chapter of Women In Construction; if one exists, if not to the National Association of Women In Construction; or the in the event the Association no longer exists, to the Austin Public Library, in member of a group of dedicated women who served the Construction Industry.

Along with the above letter, the posterity box contains:

- Agenda of Dedication Ceremony
- Invitation to Dedication
- Gazebo Brochure with invitation
- Two copies of **“On The Level”** with copy of charter
- WIC Week Program
- Dedication Chairmen and Committee members
- Membership List
- Memorial Donations and other donations
- List of City Council members
- 1 Kennedy 50¢
- 2 Stamps - 6¢

History of the Fannie Davis Town Lake Gazebo from 1985 to present

1985 - FIRST RENOVATION OF THE GAZEBO. Members of the Austin Chapter held a NAWIC meeting picnic at the Gazebo. The purpose in mind was to try to rename the Gazebo after our charter member, Ms. Fannie Davis. Vice President Gloria Hawkins and President Barbara Harrison appointed a committee to discuss what could be done to get the City Parks Dept. to make needed repairs. Pat Turner was asked to chair the committee. The following items were found to be in need of repair.

- A. Holes in the ceiling where plywood had rotted.
- B. Original lights; installed in columns were broken and not operating.
- C. Big dry hole where reflection pond was to have been placed.
- D. Cascading fountain in center of Gazebo stopped running and filled with trash.

We then decided to meet with the members of the PARKS board. After a lengthy discussion, the bottom line was they were short on money and long on maintenance backlog. They would be willing to split the costs with us to do some renovation but couldn't fund ever/thing themselves because council would have to approve it first. In their opinion, council

Going back to the chapter with these comments in mind, the conclusion was for NAWIC to once again think of a fundraiser that would help establish an on-going fund to work with Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) in the upkeep of this fifteen-year-old structure known around Austin as the "NAWIC Gazebo". As chair of the committee, Pat met with artist Lynne Hough and asked if she would be willing to do a black and white airbrush drafting of the Gazebo for a small stipend of \$300.00. Pat met with Monarch Paper Company and requested donate poster paper with acid free slip sheets on which these pictures could be printed. In exchange, we would give them publicity. They agreed. Donation of this paper along with the slip sheets amounted to about \$2,000. Pat then went to Whitley Printing Co. and met with the president. Pat had to convince him to print these for free. Cost of the print job for 1,500 copies along with 8 1/2 x 11 write-ups of the history was approximately \$1,500.00. We contacted KTBC and asked Stephanie Williams, then a reporter, to come to the Gazebo and film a story about it's decay. President Barbara Harrison and Pat were on hand for the interview.

We collaborated and worked closely with PARD using their boardroom; a press conference was called to generate publicity for the fundraiser. Pat Turner asked Carol Rylander if she would help us with the kickoff for the fundraiser and she agreed. Press releases were sent to the newspaper, three television stations and four radio stations. The press notice stated:

"The Austin, Texas Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction and Carole Rylander invites you to a press conference on Wednesday, June 16, 1985 at 2:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Parks & Recreation Department."

The newspaper, all three television stations, and four radio stations turned out. President Harrison announced the sale of the Gazebo prints and what the intent. Carol Rylander encouraged people to buy these prints and start this fund. Total sales didn't generate as much as we had hoped about - \$1,800.00.

We approached George Maxwell Engineering and Chartier Newton, architect to meet with PARD and NAWIC to engineer the renovation process. Maxwell Engineering designed new suspended lighting that was "batterproof" and Chartier Newton suggested structural changes and repairs to the roof. All of this was donated.

Roofing material was donated by Stripling Blake Lumber. The Austin Chapter purchased "batterproof" lighting at cost for approximately \$650. The Austin Remodelers Association volunteered to make all of the repairs on the roof including the beams under the direction of architect Chartier Newton. The Parks Department juggled funds and spent \$4,000.00 for a clay floor in the reflection pond to hold water so that the pond could be used. Mae Rich, former NAWIC member, donated a special cut cover for the center of the Gazebo after the pump and fountain materials were removed.

Flinkote Supply, Irene McKay's, former employer had a supplier that wanted to sell a new roofing product to the City of Austin for schools. With the aid of Irene McKay, they were willing to give this material to the City of Austin for free in exchange for being able to present their product for sales to the schools -- they agreed. This roofing substance came with a 10-year guarantee and the papers were given to PARD for filing at the Parks Dept. by the current administration. The next administration never saw these papers and by this time PARD had the third new director who didn't know who we were or what the Gazebo represented.

The Austin Chapter requested the city council rename the Gazebo "**Fannie Davis Town Lake Gazebo**". After much ado, the council agreed. To date, this is the only structure in town that was named after a living person (Miss Fannie Davis past away in May 1997) - it just wasn't done. Austin Chapter NAWIC spent \$600.00 and installed a bronze plaque bearing Ms. Frannie Davis' name. Later this plaque was stolen and we spent another \$700 to have one placed in rock. The Gazebo now has two plaques bearing NAWIC's name. NAWIC had a celebration at the Gazebo sending out invitations to all who had worked on and supported the Gazebo for the last 15 years. We had over 150 people in attendance including, -Carol Rylander, three city council members and the Austin American Statesman.

1986 - The City of Austin had hired an architectural consulting firm to come up with a Master Plan for renovation and design of the Town Lake area. We learned from inside sources who were friends of the Gazebo architect, who wasn't even from Austin, had among his suggested plans to cut the roof off, build two smaller gazebos on Town Lake, and give them all a carnival roof with flags flying.

President Hawkins and Pat Turner met with the architect and requested he take this particular proposition out of the proposal. We told him this was one of the most photographed spots in the City of Austin and was fast becoming a landmark. (We also had more prints to sell.) He said "no".

Upon the advise of Carol Rylander, President Hawkins met with councilwoman Sally Shipman and asked her to help with the Gazebo's fate. She did and it was saved. We gave her a framed print of the Gazebo.

1990 – Selling prints of the Gazebo was not generating enough revenue to keep the fund going. President Belinda Lasseter appointed a committee to research a new fund raiser. The annual fund raiser was the Gazebo Run. Runs were very successful in town and we wanted this to become an annual event to bring attention to NAWIC and make money for the Gazebo. Each year the Parks Department worked with us closely waiving all fees so we could have this event. In five years, we probably raised around \$5,000. We could not afford advertisement in the Austin American Statesman.

1992 - Because of the extensive rain, the beams in the roof and at the ends were starting to deteriorate. Luci Roberts, Tammy Walker and Pat Turner met with the Parks Department to discuss the problem and what could be done jointly to repair the beams, Architect Terry Wadsworth agreed to design a bubble for covering the top of the roof. We were able to purchase the acrylic bubble at its wholesale cost of about \$800.00. NAWIC gave money to the City to sandblast the benches and restore them to the original concrete base. They had been painted over numerous times to cover graffiti. The workforce at the Parks Department performed the work on cutting back the beams to protect them from the weather.

1995 - To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Gazebo, we sponsored the last Gazebo Run followed by the 25th Anniversary celebration on site. Funds were given by NAWIC along with contributions of material and labor to install the handicap ramp, headed by President Laura Culin and Don Willhoit (her father). NAWIC members were on site to help move the sand, pour concrete, tie rebar and level the ground area for the ramp. The Austin American Statesman photographed a picture of our involvement. Luci Roberts, Carol Brubaker, and Pat Turner's picture appeared in color in the newspaper. Austin Lumber refunded \$600 for materials and labor for the ramp. The Parks Department repainted the roof inside and outside. They reworked the grounds installing a

new cross-over bridge for entry to the Gazebo. The 25th Anniversary funds were raised separately by private individuals and companies. Channel 36 reporter Jim Swift filmed a segment for TV which aired twice on the building of the Gazebo and interviewed the original chairman Lori Nill and her husband, architect John Nill who designed the Gazebo. The President of the Chamber of Commerce was invited to attend the 25th Anniversary celebration. The Austin Chapter presented the Chamber a framed, modified color rendition of the Gazebo to hang in the halls of the Chamber of Commerce.