



# Echoes from Our Lake

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WALKER LAKESHORES LANDOWNERS  
ASSOCIATION  
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## Meet John Weber...

"I could not accept anything other than a unanimous vote. I would rather have been there all day, going through the smallest detail for the hundredth time."

So said John Weber, interim president and incoming elected president of the Walker Lakeshores Landowners Association, speaking of the Board of Directors' decision to hire a dive team to inspect the dam and not to lower the lake for now.

As it turns out, an all-day session was not needed. "We have a very intelligent Board," John observed. "When they took account of all the financial consequences of each alternative, plus the negative implications of prospectively lowering the lake on two successive occasions, the correct course of action was pretty clear." The unanimous decision came on the first round of voting.

That emphasis on unanimity – or solidarity, at least – comes through when John talks about his aspirations for the community: "My goal is a simple one: I want the Walker Lake community to be basically a friendly group of people. We've got to have a community that everybody likes and wants to be part of," he said. "Yeah, I'd love it if everybody could dig a hole on their property and find oil and then we'd have the money to fix the roads...and more, but that ain't gonna happen," he said.

John figures that folks having fun together, whether at wine and cheese parties ("fantastic turnout before the virus hit; everybody had a ball"), spaghetti dinner at the clubhouse as a weekday break for mom, or summer picnics on the beach, help people appreciate each other more, help them identify with the community. Maybe then – through that collective strength – the community as a whole will be lifted and its problems more easily and congenially solved.

Born in Bayonne, NJ, John Weber, from age 5-1/2 on, grew up in Piscataway, NJ, where his hobby as a young boy – amateur radio – turned into a career. He learned electronics in technical high school, then, in 1963, joined the US Navy as a radioman aboard a destroyer escort stationed in Newport, RI. His ship became part of a sonar school program in Key West where one group of sailor/students would be taken out on DEs looking for submarines and another would go out on subs looking for destroyers protecting a battle group.

Following discharge in 1966, John worked in a series of positions that developed his expertise by day while taking courses at Newark College of Engineering and Rutgers that did the same at night. He worked at the Engineering Labs of Burroughs Corporation developing one of the first big computers; then for ITT on transmitters and receivers used in commercial shipping; then ran the engineering department at CSI (Construction Specialties, Inc.), making products for nuclear power plants; and finally became the head of engineering for Besam US Inc., a Sweden-based manufacturing firm that, among other things, makes many of the automatic sliding, swinging and revolving doors used in commercial buildings, hospitals, etc.

Among the “cool” projects John worked with was an AutoCAD computer-aided design and drafting software application that allowed a user, who was, for instance, developing the design of the frame of a building to draw a profile, to provide dimensions and proposed materials, and then ask the program questions such as: “If I have an x-foot-wide load-bearing beam and put a y-pound weight in the middle of it, will it hold?”

Another was working with an early version of the anodizing process whereby aluminum, which corrodes in weather, is put in a chemical bath and electronically charged such that the metal surface of the end product is converted into a decorative, durable, corrosion-resistant finish.

John and his wife Kathy (Katherine), who have been married almost 50 years, have four children: Jackie, an elementary school teacher in NJ; Tricia, a registered nurse working for a Johnson & Johnson subsidiary in NJ; Timothy, an electrical engineer, also living in NJ; and Mark, who lives in Georgia and works for a start-up that makes computer equipment. John and Kathy also have seven grandchildren.

Aside from the children, but also including them from time to time, John and Kathy have, from the 1980s to now, loved exploring the North American continent in their motorhome. One goal is to visit every national park in the lower 48 – and they have only two or three to go (out of 47!). Why a motorhome? John’s answer is not what you’d think: “Because you get to go to places, and stay in places, you’d never reach in a plane/rental car situation, let alone a conventional tour...places like a pristine BLM (Bureau of Land Management) forest, spots off the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park, and remote hiking trails amongst the red rock formations in the national parks around Moab, Utah.”

How does he determine what a trip will look like? “It’s simple,” he said. “We pick a destination and then try to fit in everything along the way that’s of interest.”

John’s destination for WLLA: ongoing community amicability and solidarity, is laudable, but not easy to attain. He will use all opportunities along the way – whether they be the making of a unanimous dam-inspection / lake-lowering decision, or simple spaghetti dinners – to move the community in that direction. We wish him well.

— *Bob Fisher*



Dive team preparing to inspect the Walker Lake dam.

### **Update on the Status of Our Dam**

On July 31, Underwater Consultants International, Inc. (UCI) conducted an underwater inspection of the Outlet Works at the Walker Lake Dam. The dive team used a color video camera and audio system to record the inspection of the dam, inlet piping, and the stainless-steel trash trap. The control tower was entered to inspect the wall surfaces and the attachment of the Sluice gate valve.

After completing inspection of the interior of the control tower, the dive team proceeded to penetrate and inspect the input conduit piping. The outlet conduit piping was then entered, and a complete inspection was conducted.

The outlet pipe showed surface corrosion that will need to be repaired. The corrosion has allowed the concrete portion of the pipe to crumble in some areas.

UCI's report has been forwarded to the professional engineering company that handles our dam inspections. We have requested, and are awaiting receipt of, their recommendation on how to repair the outlet piping. Once this recommendation is reviewed, we will have the engineering company submit all required information to the State of Pennsylvania.

As this project continues, we will update the community! We expect to have all repairs to our dam completed in 2021.

— John Weber

## **A Note from Your Treasurer**



Let's talk about Assessments and Dues. Assessments and Dues are the financial lifeblood of all private communities. In some communities, these two terms are interchangeable because their deeds contain provisions that obligate membership. In our community, our deeds do not obligate membership, so these terms are not interchangeable.

Our **Assessments** are an obligation, and failure to pay those fees results in a lien being imposed on a property. The obligation comes from our deeds. The access that our deeds provide to common areas, obligates us to support the costs of those common areas. Assessments are based on the cost of maintaining these shared spaces. Our lake, boat launch and beaches are examples of common areas.

**Dues**, on the other hand, are not an obligation. Most of our deeds do not dictate that we join an association. In our community then, our definition of Dues is separate and distinct from Assessments. Think of our Dues as a membership fee (as in a club, like the Knights of Columbus, or an organization, like your school's chapter of the Parent Teacher Association). As with the dues of those fellowships, our Dues support a collective effort and bring special privileges, not the least of which is the opportunity to vote. Though Dues are voluntary, they are still especially important to our community's vitality and strength.

Assessments and Dues are billed per property owner. For most of us, owning property at Walker Lake results in a single bill each year. There are some situations, however, where more than one bill would be issued.

- 1) If, for example, you own a few lots jointly with your significant other, and own a lot individually, two bills would be generated (one for the lots under joint ownership and one for the lot under individual ownership). Think of ownership in terms of whose signature or signatures would be required at closing if the property were to be sold. Would the same signature(s) be required for all your lots?
- 2) Even if all your holdings within the community are titled to the same ownership, but there are two residences among those holdings, two bills would be generated (one for each residence).

I hope that this helps to clarify our methods. If you have any questions about a specific situation, please feel to reach out to the office.

Assessments and Dues are the tools that help us to support our common areas and our collective effort.

— Carol Gillen, Treasurer

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## **Keeping Up-to-Date**

Email blasts from WLLA are a great way to find out about important things happening in your community, such as beach closures, board meetings, etc. If you have not been receiving email blasts please send the office your email to be added to our list.

## Walker Lake Alumni

### Kyle Dawson

Kyle Dawson, 45, son of Chet and Pat Dawson, part-time-plus residents of Walker Lake for more than 50 years, is Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. An astrophysicist, Kyle is in the news because he and his team have produced a 3D map of the universe, the largest ever created, the product of a project that has spanned decades. More about that in a minute.



Kyle Dawson (left) with his parents, Chet & Pat Dawson and children, Max, now 8, and Sawyer, now 5.

From as early in life as he can remember to his mid-twenties, Kyle spent a lot of time at Walker Lake. “It was a very central part of my life at the time,” he said. His experiences and exposure here sparked his interest in nature, which evolved into his becoming, as a young man, a wilderness guide in Canada. “We went to progressively more remote regions,” he said, “places where no human beings go.”

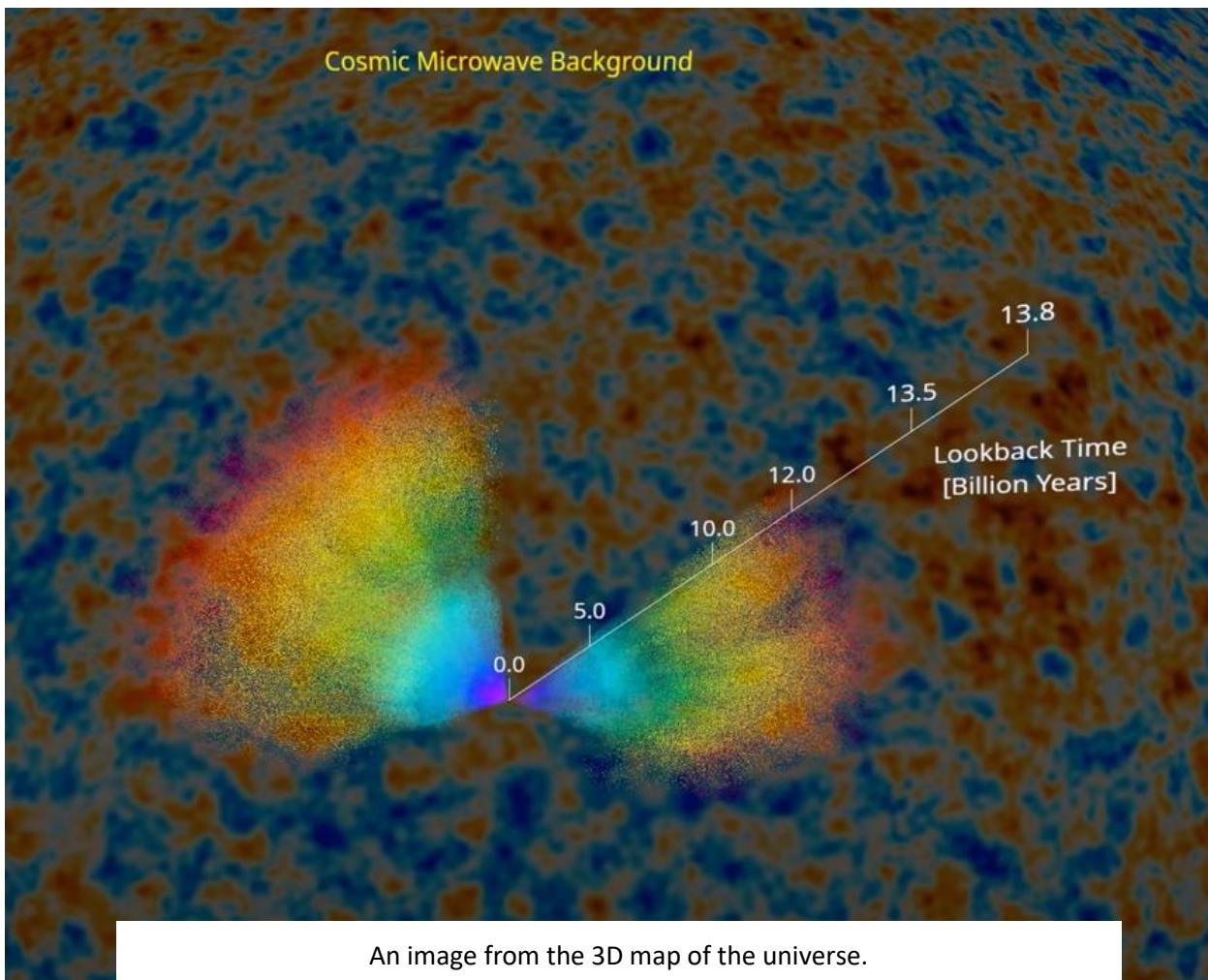
He grew to appreciate, and be intrigued by, the world around him. “I saw myself as a participant in a much larger system,” he said.

At age 33, Kyle married Missy Globerman, a woman who did important work for nonprofit and for-profit organizations before turning her attention full-time to their two children, Max, 8, who is entering second grade, and Sawyer, 5, who's starting kindergarten.

A graduate of Cornell, Kyle got his PhD in Physics from UC Berkeley. His CV, crammed with publications written, talks delivered and courses offered, runs to eight pages.

Kyle is principal investigator a cosmology project named eBOSS, which was one of three surveys within the latest iteration of something called the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS). The Sloan Survey, which uses a telescope at Apache Point Observatory, New Mexico, is said to be “one of the most ambitious and influential surveys in the history of astronomy,” and its data have supported studies of the properties of galaxies, the evolution of quasars, and the structure and stellar populations of the Milky Way, among other things.

The extended Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey, or eBOSS, applies precision cosmological measurements to an early phase of cosmic history, and, combined with its predecessor BOSS, uses upgraded Sloan spectrographs to measure the three-dimensional locations of more than two million galaxies and quasars. The three-dimensional maps built from these observations enable astrophysicists



to fill a gap of 11 billion years in the expansion history of the universe, confirming, among other things, that the universe has a complex history of expansion that provides strong evidence for an unknown form of energy that dominates expansion today.

In the map, as Kyle explains it, Earth, spatially, is at the center, *not* because it *is* the center of the universe, but because it *is*, inevitably, our only point of observation. It is also, in terms of time, the present moment: zero look-back time, in other words. From the Earth and from the present moment, the map takes us out in distance and back in time to roughly 13.8 billion years, which means that, what we see at the farthest reaches is, literally, 13.8 billion years old. It has taken all that time, in other words – at the speed of light – for the images of that portion of the universe to reach us.

The mottled background reflects cosmic microwaves – electromagnetic radiation that is thought to be leftover radiation from the Big Bang, or the time when the universe began. The grainy, rainbow-shaded sectors are comprised of galaxies, like our own Milky Way, with each grain being a galaxy which could be comprised, as is ours, of upwards of one hundred billion sun-like stars. The rainbow colors correspond to the type of galaxy that then existed in the time period of the look back. The mottled, otherwise blank pie wedges are the parts of the universe we cannot at present, see; they are blocked from our view by the many stars and dust of our galaxy.

"We know both the ancient history of the Universe and its recent expansion history fairly well," Kyle said, "but there's a troublesome gap in the middle 11 billion years." What makes this map unique is its third dimension – which provides a clearer representation of the distance between objects like galaxies and quasars. That information, in turn, will help scientists in at least two key ways: First, answer such questions as: How fast is the universe is expanding? Why is it expanding? How has that expansion changed with time? And, second, arrive at a better understanding of the absolute fundamental model of physics, figuring out, in short, what are the true laws that govern the universe.

As a cosmologist, Kyle has a depth of understanding of the universe, with as many as one trillion galaxies, that few of us will ever have. On a day-to-day basis, he says, "you're mired in details because you have to be sure you *have all* the details." But, stepping back, "You acquire a sense of where the Earth is in it all," he concludes. "It's either small and irrelevant, or it's our own island, disconnected from everything else. It's all we're ever going to have, and that's something we should take very seriously."

In connection with release of the 3D map, Kyle was interviewed by National Public Radio. You can listen to that interview here:

<https://www.kuer.org/post/3d-map-universe-gives-scientists-clearer-picture-cosmos-and-new-questions>

And you can take a journey in the universe in this brief video, a journey well worth taking:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=15&v=KJXbcf8kxA&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=KJXbcf8kxA&feature=emb_logo)

## Varying Oxygen Levels in Walker Lake

Our lake manager and volunteers from the Twin and Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy have been measuring lake water oxygen levels at different depths since at least 2001. What they find is that the oxygen starts high near the surface, and may even increase at first but then suddenly drops very quickly. The point where it drops quickly is also where the temperature starts to drop rapidly and is called the thermocline. When the water is warm during summer months, the point that it starts dropping quickly is relatively shallow usually around 8 to 10 ft. During the cooler months the thermocline is reached at greater depths.

Photosynthesis, as we know from Biology 101, is the chemical process where bacteria and plants replenish the oxygen in our atmosphere, allowing us to exist. The same occurs in our lake. Plants and bacteria require carbon dioxide, water and sunlight to produce their food, and oxygen is the byproduct. Some oxygen is also absorbed by wave action and during rainstorms but mostly through photosynthesis. Near the shore, submerged and floating plants play a large role in the generation of oxygen, but at greater depths, algae produce most of the oxygen.

We use a device called a Secchi disc to determine how deep sunlight penetrates. Sunlight generally only reaches depths near the thermocline. Below that depth, therefore, there is insufficient sunlight for photosynthesis to take place and algae have trouble surviving. Algae densities are highest a few feet below the surface and decrease as the thermocline is approached. Oxygen levels follow the algae density in the deeper parts of the lake.

The deepest part of the lake is about 23 ft. Particularly in the summer, there is insufficient oxygen for fish to survive below the 8 to 9 foot depth that the sunlight penetrates. Fish also go to where food is plentiful. The food chain on a lake starts with phytoplankton or tiny algae. The organisms called zooplankton that children look at under a microscope, feed on the phytoplankton and small fish in turn eat these. In clear lakes, the algae go to deeper depths to escape the harsh rays of sunlight. Oxygen and food are both then plentiful at lower depths where the water is also cooler making it healthy for trout. Most lakes in our region, though, are similar to Walker Lake and fish are mostly found in shallow waters.

— Chet Dawson, Lake Committee member

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### **Please take note:**

The community again requests property owners to clear ditches and culverts on their property borders with Association-maintained roads, so drainage flows freely alongside the roads and not on the roads. Thank you.

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