

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3

MAY 2005

May Meeting

- Topic:** The Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Program
- Speaker:** Mindy Mize
Senior Transportation Planner
North Central Texas Council
of Governments
- When:** Wednesday, May 11, 7:00 pm
- Where:** First United Methodist Church,
313 N. Center at Division
(enter through north door.)
- Note:** The program will cover various clean vehicle initiatives in our area to save energy and improve air quality

Remember to bring
something for the raffle!

A New School Garden

Carrie Donovan

Wimbish Elementary has been awarded a grant from the Richard Rainwater Foundation to participate in the REAL SCHOOL INITIATIVES that will allow our students to create gardens on campus. Our goal is to create future community leaders from our student body, promote family involvement, and to involve the business community.

The Wimbish Outdoor Learning Environment (O.L.E.) is made up of 6 school gardening projects: a Butterfly Garden, Salsa Garden, Birdscape, Wildscape Garden, Potted Garden, and a special garden designed for our orthopedically handicapped students in wheelchairs.

We would be delighted to have you join us! There are plenty of volunteer opportunities available. We're looking for Master Gardeners, Master Composters, or just volunteers who would like to water, weed, or help our students learn gardening skills.

Or you may help by adopting a garden. Garden adoption includes donations of materials or discounts on materials that are needed to maintain the Outdoor Learning Environment.

Thanks to the Arlington Conservation Council volunteers: Wayne and Candy Halliburton, Marian Hiler, Jean-Marie and Stephen Smith, Kevin and Eoin Donovan. With their help, Wimbish students were able to enjoy their first workday during our first Science Night on March 31. These volunteers helped the parents and students mulch the Birdscape.

Thanks to Ruth Kinler of Redenta's Garden, Wimbish now has an established Butterfly Garden. Redenta's has adopted the Wimbish Elementary O.L.E.

Workdays at Wimbish Elementary O.L.E. will be May 14 and 21. We need people to help mulch, plant, compost, and lay stepping stones in our Physically Handicapped Garden.

If you have any questions, please call Carrie Donovan at 817-801-6000 or send e-mail to carriedonovan@sbcglobal.net.



*Science Night volunteers from ACC.
Front row: Jean-Marie and Stephen
Smith. Back row: Eoin Donovan, Marian
Hiler, Candy and Wayne Halliburton,
Carrie and Kevin Donovan*

From the President

Candy Halliburton



For one group of students on the UTA campus, a tree planting is an exciting and symbolic celebration of their fledgling organization.

Donna Piercy and I joined the Sierra Club – UTA Chapter this past month in planting (actually they planted, we lent moral support) a Southern red oak that you can take a peek at if you are strolling by Nedderman Hall and the Geoscience buildings on campus. There were about a dozen students on hand, as well as Dr. Larry Standlee, their faculty advisor, and groundskeeper and crew leader, Robert Lee.

Though not officially affiliated with the Sierra Club then, the UTA chapter of the Sierra Club was “born” on Earth Day, 2004, when Dr. Standlee set up a table at the Earth Day fair, asking for email addresses of anyone interested in starting a conservation group. Alia Selim, the first and current president of the group, and her friend Kendra Long answered the call for “green” volunteers, and Ms. Selim busied herself by making flyers and posters to gather attendees for the first few meetings.

Now, one year later, they were celebrating Earth Day and the anniversary of their group by planting a tree, the culmination of a week of events they hosted in appreciation of our planet.

When asked about her motivation for getting involved, Ms. Selim replied, “My feeling is that we have been given a beautiful gift, and to squander the bounties we have been given is immoral and irresponsible no matter who you are.” (Isn’t that a lovely sentiment?)

Her goal and that of the group is “to build a membership base because without people you can’t make an impact that matters.” Through a year’s worth of work, including an awareness campaign for the elections and a clean-up project at Trading House Creek on campus, where they collected 30 bags of garbage (plus much, much more), and by participating in Arlington’s Litter Challenge the group has grown and learned what they can realistically achieve. My favorite event was the brainchild of Syed Faraz, vice president of the group, who led an awareness campaign called “Fossil Fools Day.” Club members distributed information on ways to conserve gasoline and statistics about

pollution levels, truck and SUV emissions, and positive ways in which an individual can make a difference.

I thoroughly enjoyed sharing this experience with the enthusiastic members of the UTA club and would love to see ACC collaborate on a project or two with them in the future. As Mr. Lee said, it is “refreshing to have students concerned with the environment and willing to do their part.” And thank you, Robert, for showing me that you can plant a rootball sideways so that the top of the tree is perfectly straight even though the bottom has its imperfections.



UTA Sierra Club members, from left to right: Kanchan Shrestha, K.D. Long, Robert Rodriguez, Alia Selim, and Syed Faraz.

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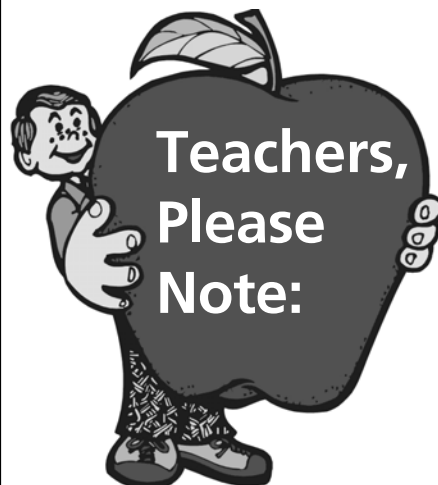
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We’ve been sending you complimentary copies of the *Post Oak* for a while, and we hope you’ve enjoyed seeing what we’re up to. Now we’ve decided to cut back on newsletters, so this will be your last issue unless you notify the editor (see back page) that you’d like to stay on our complimentary mailing list.

You can always find the newsletter and other ACC information at www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

New York Avenue Blackland Prairie: Next workday May 14

Earth Day (almost) on the Prairie, Saturday April 23

What a day! Fabulous spring weather, a brisk spring morning that almost felt like somewhere farther north, but we were in Texas at Arlington's blackland prairie. Surprise guests were able and enthusiastic Girl Scouts from Vicki Dixon's troop, including her two daughters. We cleared brush and cut limbs brought down by Jason from Arlington Parks and Recreation, then indulged in a wildflower walk. We saw spiderworts of many colors, from hot fuchsia to midnight purple. Still blooming were blue-eyed grass (really a small iris) and a great many prairie celestials (that most heavenly shade of blue). Englemann daisy, multi-hued purple paintbrush, skullcap, gaura, yarrow, prairie parsley, bluebonnets, verbena, Texas star and fringed puccoon, and more. A great find by the Girl Scouts was prairie larkspur, a beautiful resident of the prairie. Promising to bloom soon were gaillardia, clasping leaf coneflower and Indian plantain. The park department's winter mowing has allowed the wildflowers to be more visible this year, but drier weather this spring has caused the gilgai to finally dry out.

Bouquets of prairie celestials to Arlington Parks & Recreation Department for their continued support and to all the volunteers!

The next workday is scheduled for May 14. If you're interested, contact Jan Miller at 817/483-0579 or jgmiller@gbonline.com.



Vicki Dixon and Girl Scouts. Also present and hard at work were Jan Miller, Ann Trenton, Mary Turner, Dan von Bose, and Laura Whitelaw.

March for Parks



We haven't held an official March for Parks event for a while, but the park bond election inspired us to try something different this year. On April 23 we promoted the election at the Harold Patterson Sports Complex, and on April 30 we did it again at River Legacy parks.



Above left, Sue Phillips and Candy Halliburton braved the arctic winds at Harold Patterson Sports Complex. Above center, Jean-Marie Smith, Stephen Smith, and Jan Miller at River Legacy. Above right, the ubiquitous Julia Burgen and Candy Halliburton at River Legacy. Marianne Herrmann was there too.

Thanks to Our April Speakers

Our special meeting last month featured three speakers who addressed various aspects of green building. A big crowd turned out to reap the benefits of Jo Ann Duman's hard work in putting this fine program together.



Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck, MD provided insight into the Cowboys stadium project.



Architect and ACC board member Roy Miliner gave an overview of green-certified building.



Roger Tadlock discussed permeable paving products.

Wildscape Update John Dycus



Excitement is where you find it, and there was plenty to be found in April at the wildscape. Pat Lovejoy and her volunteer crew started the month off right by banishing weeds

from the butterfly garden, and they made good progress as they continued weeding on down the hill.

The birdbath in the pavilion will soon be trickling happily across the boulder and into the depression. Thanks, Anne Alderfer, for your pond skills, and thanks, Rosa Finsley, for donating a huge water tank. Since the parks water is turned off during cold spells and at night to avoid vandalism, the uphill tank will gravity-feed to the birdbath. Water is the most important need for wildlife, especially birds, so expect to see more birds drinking and bathing in front of the pavilion soon.

More excitement. On April 28, Rosa met her stone foreman at the wildscape to instruct him in repairing the bridge over the creek, setting boulders next to the pavilion boardwalk and repairing the boulder birdbath. And the spring native plant sale snared an astounding \$5,000 to benefit the wildscape. And Arlington Parks & Rec has agreed to connect the original wildscape pond to the irrigation system so the pond gets a boost every time the sprinklers come on. This is Rosa's ingenious low-tech solution since there's not enough electricity to run even a small pump to maintain the water level. Soon all the water features will be working, the bridge will be functioning again, and new boulders will be in place.

The last workday was remarkable, as several groups came together to accomplish many things. Synergy, I believe it's called. Parks & Rec folks and volunteers from Denece Newsom's Sam Houston High School science class were making gabions (rock enclosed in cyclone fencing) to place in eroded channels to slow runoff, and they were shorthanded. They asked Molly Hollar for help—no

extra wildscape volunteers were available, she reported—and magically, at that moment, Mike Warren of Tarrant County Juvenile Services appeared with a group of kids ready to go to work.

As they began loading the rock into wheelbarrows, someone said pictures would be nice. Nearby, AISD teacher Suzanne Dudek was taking photos and



The other day Molly Hollar took this photo of a blotched water snake (Nerodia erythrogaster) in the wildscape. This harmless species is often mistaken for a water moccasin.

told Molly that she would like to start a wildscape in her school. Suzanne agreed to take pictures of the young people making gabions, and Molly told her of the wildscape volunteer, another AISD teacher, who had been awarded a grant to start such a garden at her school. Then guess who walked up? Carrie Donovan, the teacher Molly had told Suzanne about!

It gets better. Next, one of the science teachers asked Molly to talk to the kids about biology and ecology, to help them on their TAKS tests. Molly is neither a biologist nor a botanist, but just then, magically (did we say that before?), another wildscape volunteer, Dawn Hancock—a retired biology teacher—walked

up and agreed to do the job, saying she had been TAKS tutoring all week.

And with that, someone told Molly, "With your luck today, you should go buy a lottery ticket."

Even after the regular enthusiasts, Northrop-Grumman volunteers and parks department workers spent hours removing wildscape privet, a noxious spread of Satan's ground cover remained. So the parks department came to the rescue, as it often does, and provided crews to pull about 95 percent of the remaining privet. Privet is an invasive weed (thug) from Asia, where the cold keeps it in balance. In a warmer climate like Texas, it rivals kudzu vine in taking over. Left alone, it will kill everything except poison ivy, leaving only a monoculture of privet. First to go are the wildflowers and understory, then the lovely blooming understory trees, and finally even the shade trees. Usurping all the light and water prevents the continuing germination of seed and acorns needed to sustain the woodland. Now that the privet is gone, the volunteers will continue to plant more of the hundreds of understory trees that have been rescued and many dozens donated by volunteer Shirley Craig and others from their own property.



John Davis, Texas Parks & Wildlife Urban Biologist, was one of the many volunteers who made the latest Walk on the Wildside a success. On April 12 we hosted about 80 students from the Montessori School and we all had a good time.

Why a Green Stadium? Grace Darling

Editor's note: Grace has been working on a detailed petition to submit to city officials—and through them to the Cowboys organization, we hope—on behalf of ACC and perhaps several other civic groups. The following is excerpted from the introductory section.*

Green building design has environmental, economic, and social advantages that benefit everyone, including owners, occupants, and the general public. ...Traditional building practices often overlook the interrelationships between a building, its components, its surroundings, and its occupants. "Typical" buildings consume more of our resources than necessary, negatively impact the environment, and generate a large amount of waste. In contrast, green building practices offer an opportunity to create environmentally sound and resource-thrifty buildings by using an integrated approach to design. Green building promotes resource conservation, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation features; takes into account environmental impacts and waste minimization; creates a healthy and comfortable environment indoors and out; reduces operation and maintenance costs; and addresses issues such as preservation of natural habitats, access to roadways and public transportation, and other community infrastructure systems. The entire life-cycle of a building and its components is considered, as well as the economic and environmental impact and performance.

In an environment like that surrounding Johnson Creek, stormwater runoff management and erosion control are especially important to prevent further damage to an already stressed ecosystem. While the city is studying measures to deal with these problems, it has declared green building design to be the goal of all future construction.

As the flagship structure in the northeast sector of Arlington, Cowboys Stadium will set the standard and the tone in our part of Texas for many years to come. The stadium should be the greenest building in the region. It should comply with LEED standards for certification and strive for a silver rating, and it should enjoy appropriate landscaping, maximum recycling, and similar environmentally-friendly measures. We cannot miss this opportunity to leave such an important legacy to the community.

**To add your name in support, email Grace at darlingg@sbcglobal.net.*



April is a busy Month

Marianne Herrmann (left) represented ACC at UTA Earth Day on April 20, and Marian Hiler did the honors at the second Arlington Community Fair on April 30.



Thanks To Shane Goetz for supporting our efforts. If you'd like to help ACC and publicize your business, call any board member for details.

METRO 817/265-2902
LOCAL 817/274-2905

THE LAW OFFICE OF SHANE GOETZ

715 WEST ABRAM ST. ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013

Welcome

Here's another one of our most recent new members:

Mary Cato

Thanks—we can't do a thing without you.

Electronic Post Oaks?

ACC Members: Would you rather receive your newsletter online?

Just let the editor know (see back page) and we'll notify you by email when it's ready.

Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

Membership Information

Please circle membership category.

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Don't forget!

May 11

Mindy Mize,
Senior Transportation Planner,
NCTCOG

The Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Program

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