

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

NOVEMBER 2014

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 9

November Meeting
A Julia Burgen Lecture Series Event

The Solar Option: Obstacles and Opportunities A Panel Presentation

Wednesday, November 5

6:30 pm Reception

7:00 Panel presentation followed by Q&A

Eunice Activity Center, 1000 Eunice St



**Solar Power:
Is it right for you?
What's involved?**



This panel will discuss aspects of current solar power applications, including residential installation, incentives, payback time, and buyback programs. Bring your questions!

Community: Robert Litwins, Plano Solar Advocates

Homeowner: Danny Kocurek, solar power consumer

Industry: Kristy Tyra, Program Manager, Energy Efficiency, Oncor incentive program

Government: Tamara Cook, Manager of Environment & Development Programs,
NCTCOG Solar Ready II

Julia Burgen: Our lecture series' namesake is a tireless conservation advocate and former Arlington City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission member. A former ACC president, she reactivated the organization in 1994.

From the President **Danny Kocurek**



Happiness and the Sustainability Advocate

It has always struck me as strange that folks who spend their lives promoting sustainability are so

happy. You cannot turn on your radio or walk out your door without seeing something depressing. Climate change, careless and wasteful energy practices, habitat destruction, pollution, litter, short-sighted political policies...the list goes on and on. So how is it that people saddened and disgusted by all this can keep smiling?

I was intrigued by a recent editorial by Arthur C. Brooks, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/opinion/sunday/arthur-c-brooks-love-people-not-pleasure.htm> in which he argues that happiness boils down to loving people and rejecting materialism. With a lot of research to back him up, he finds the pursuit of fame and material wealth to be unsatisfy-

ing and helping others to be highly rewarding. It made me think about my fellow sustainability advocates. They love nature, rivers, animals, helping people lead healthy lives, our children's future, and outdoor activities. They could not care less about expensive cars, big screen TVs, designer clothes and fancy restaurants. This focus on people and nature and rejection of materialism seems akin to Brooks' secret to happiness.

That is why Julia, Molly, and our ACC volunteers are so often smiling and the Koch brothers always look like they just ate something unpleasant. Was I the only one who didn't know this?

THE POST OAK

Published 10 times a year by the
Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216, Arlington, TX
78004-0216.

John Darling, Editor
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

Julia Burgen, Grace Darling,
John Darling, John Dycus,
Molly Hollar, Danny Kocurek,
Jan Miller, Wesley Miller,
Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Join us today!
Use the handy
application form
on the back page.

The *Post Oak* will not knowingly accept sponsors who are deceptive, misleading, or expressly incompatible with its mission. The *Post Oak* does not endorse, advocate, or guarantee any offer, viewpoint or representation made by its sponsors.

r

redenta's
 garden shops
 landscape design

arlington
 817.451.2149

dallas
 214.823.9421

landscape
 817.469.6786

www.redentas.com

"an experience in gardening the way it was meant to be"

GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

J

D

YCUS

3607 Shady Park Drive
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 277-2138
john@xdycus.com

**LAW OFFICE OF
SHANE GOETZ**

1304 WEST ABRAM STREET
 ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013
SHANEGOETZ@SBCGLOBAL.NET

LOCAL: 817-274-2905
 METRO: 817-265-2902
 FACSIMILE: 817-861-8909

Herb 'n Health

Natural Foods Market & Herb Shoppe

3759 E. Lancaster St. Ft. Worth Tx. 76103
Karen Foley 817-535-1152

Thanks A.C.C. for working to
conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

m|ma

mycoskie + mcinnis + associates
 civil engineering surveying landscape architecture planning
www.mmaia.com
 817-469-9671

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve Jan Miller Photos by Wes Miller

Thanks to prairie stalwart Wes Miller for organizing September's cleanup and planting of the entry area: Limbs were trimmed away to clear the views to the prairie and added to the mulch pile. (A wren later seemed to sing its approval of the addition to its winter shelter.) Invasives (like Johnson grass and small trees) were removed from the

entry area, and in their place small scattered pockets were planted with seeds harvested from the prairie. So watch that space. Maybe next year we'll see prairie clover, Indian grass, rosinweed, silver bluestem, Mexican hat, lemon balm, and more.

About halfway through the morning, another car pulled in. Not more volunteers, but prairie visitors. It

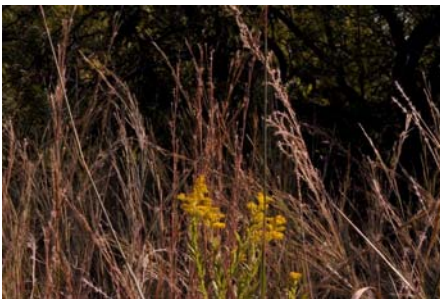
was an Arlington family, a mom with her teenage daughter and son, on a mission to visit all our city parks and preserves! They asked a few questions about the volunteers' work and the prairie, then began to explore. When they came back, they had more questions, said they had enjoyed their prairie time and would be back for more.

3rd Saturday Stewardship Workday Saturday, November 15, 9 am – noon

Your prairie needs you! Join us for the whole thing, or spend whatever time you can spare. We'll have a prairie walkabout before leaving for lunch. RSVP to info@theprairie.org in case of weird weather, etc.

Wear sturdy-soled shoes or boots and long pants. Bring gloves, loppers and hand saws if you have them. Bring your own water, but refills will be provided. We'll work up an appetite so, lunch anyone?

For map and directions: <http://goo.gl/maps/W01P9>



Wildscape Update *Molly Hollar, Marylee Thomason, John Dycus*

Wildscape quiz of the month: What is the most effective organic way to kill the nasty and undeservedly popular invasive, Bermuda grass?

Native plants are gaining favor outside the usual choir. Despite several conflicting events, attendance at the annual Wildscape Fall Plant Sale, Sept. 27 at the greenhouse in Randol Mill Park, was good. Sales topped \$4,600, a record for a fall sale. Only one spring sale about eight years ago made more.



Gardeners were starting new beds, filling holes and replacing lawns with natives. It was the Whole Foods crowd of gardeners, like the couple who arrived early and waited impatiently until the gates opened and then joined the Walmart rush to grab their favorites. Not a purple strand of hair or a nose ring among these people. No bearded hippies smoking a pipe.

Many thanks to everyone who helped plan and execute this successful event. Josephine Keeney calls herself "floater/helper" in the list of



Plant sale workers left to right. Standing: Brian Keeney, Frank Keeney, Larry Norris, Nancy Swan, Molly Hollar, Dick Pafford, Joe Martinez, Marylee Thomason. Front: Kay Sekio, Joyce Duty, Sheila Franklin, Hester Schwartz, Jane Oosterhuis

participants, but more accurately she arranged, sorted, assembled, marshaled, put straight, grouped, classified, categorized, cataloged, systematized, methodized, coordinated, fixed up, set up, took care of, dealt with, managed, mobilized, scheduled, programmed and orchestrated the plants, the people and the sale! Floater/helper, indeed.

Thank you, greenhouse crew, for pampering the beautiful, healthy plants. Credits roll for Molly Hollar, greeter-adviser; Nancy Swan and Brian Keeney, greeter-carriers; Hester Schwarzer, cashier; Sharon Schoech, assistant cashier; Dick Schoech, ticket writer; Jane Oosterhuis and Marylee Thomason, groundcovers and grasses; Betsy Kalina, Jo Popplereiter and Kay Sekio, perennials, Joyce Duty, shrubs; Frank Keeney, cactus and vines; Joe Martinez and Larry Norris, trees; and Sheila Franklin, butterfly plants. Honorable mention to Hester for the pictures of the plants in bloom.

Molly hopes to repair and upgrade the wildscape's kiosks and trail signs. This and other projects will now be possible with the plant sale funds.

The wildscape was honored Oct. 3 by a surprise visit from landscape architect and professor David Hopman. He brought his UTA landscape class of approximately 20 students to meet Molly and to "see such a great example of native plants in this area." Such abundant success, too.



On Oct. 9 more than 90 Goodman Elementary School third-graders spilled off their buses to Walk on the Wild Side. Clutching pencils and notebooks, they could barely contain their excitement for a day out of school and running through the woods!

The WOW stations did not disappoint. Ooohs and ahhs resonated through the trees in Spanish and English as the students moved from

continued on page 5



Wildscape Update continued from page 4

one station to the next, wide-eyed and impatient to inhale mysterious revelations.

Joyce Duty and Anne Alderfer treated the students to a scavenger hunt with magnifying glasses and dental mirrors in a search for woodland creatures. Callie Mitchell, Molly Hollar and Joe Martinez helped crews plant Mexican Buckeye trees. Thanks to Mike Warren's service hours group for digging the trench in preparation.

Seed dispersal was never so interesting before Terry Gratton and Dawn Hancock took over teaching it. Jane Oosterhuis and Marylee Thomason introduced the students to the life of lichens. The big favorite was tree cookie necklaces made from a branch cross section. Hester Schwarzer and Dick Schoech guided the stringing and pointed out the significance. Wearing those lanyards was an emblem of accomplishment.

When it looks effortless, you know professionals are at work. Thanks for keeping the 10-minute schedule go to Anne Alderfer, Charlie Amos, Ramona Gratton, Norah Green, Sandy Hertzler, Jennifer Hiler, Linda Mitchell, Larry Norris, Dick Pafford, Mary Sanford, Glen Troutman and Evaline Woodrey.

As the wildscape matures, there will be less need to water and more time for education. One little girl at the WOW incorrectly identified a picture of a cowpen daisy as a dandelion. The child next to her asked with a perplexed look, "What's a dandelion?" If you ever doubted that the wildscape serves a purpose, there it was.

Quiz answer: Shade. Plant more trees!



Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve monthly meeting Tuesday, November 18 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Southwest Branch Public Library*
3311 SW Green Oaks Blvd.
(west of Bowen Rd, east of Park Springs)

**This event is not sponsored by the Arlington Public Library.*

2nd Sunday Stewardship Sunday, November 9 and Sunday, December 12 10 am – 1 pm

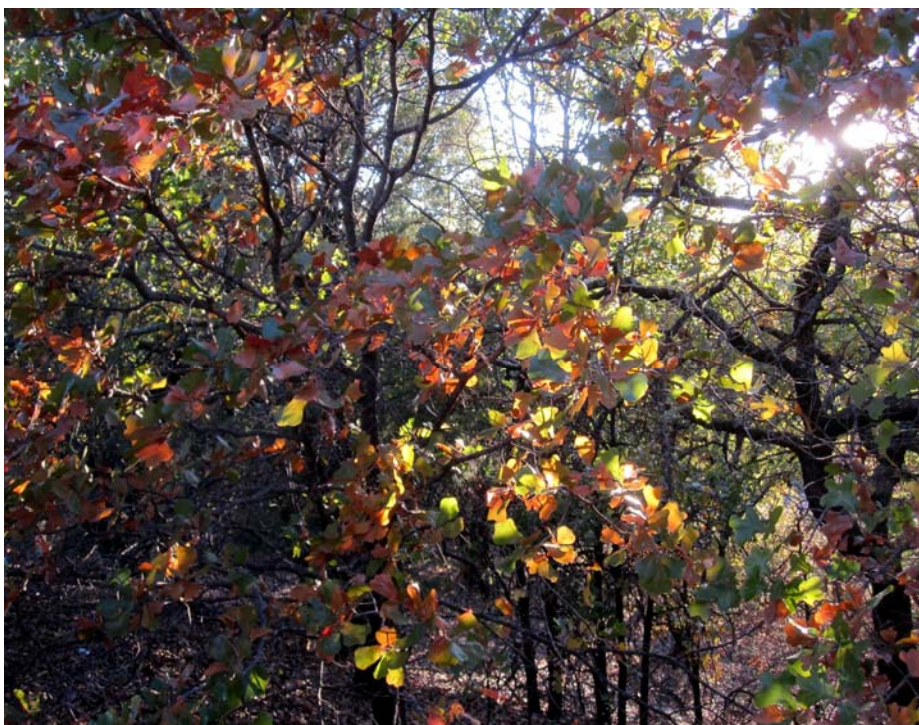
A large number of young adult volunteers from Fielder Road Church continue tackling the big projects on 2nd Sundays, September through December. With support of Jay Falgout's APRD staff and Friends volunteers, they're doing amazing work on trails, invasive plant removal and trash cleanup. The volunteers are a fabulous opportunity, but team leaders familiar with the preserve are essential. Please contact info@swnp.org if you can help on one or more of these days.

4th Saturday Nature Walk with Jim Varnum Saturday, November 22 10 am – 11 am

Join Master Naturalist Jim Varnum for a fall nature walk to explore the changing seasons around the preserve. We'll look for everything, especially newly arrived winter bird species. Bring binoculars if you have them — and your curiosity. The group will gather at the parking lot.



Clockwise from lower left: Jay Falgout readies the troops. Happy trash collectors. Old dump before cleaning. Walkway by big pond. Blackjack oaks in early fall.



Wonderful Week for Monarchs *Julia Burgen*

The week of October 3–10 was miraculous here, but I saw no media coverage for what I genuinely considered a miracle.

We had hundreds and hundreds of monarch butterflies starting on October 3, the day after the tremendous rain and windstorm. The numbers kept increasing each day and continued through the week. The monarchs on Wednesday and Thursday appeared to be larger and brighter in color than those on the previous days. There was no way that I could count accurately, especially given the trees on our property. A few other residents with heavily treed property along creeks and water features in Arlington also reported great numbers.

Some reports appeared on the Journey North Web site (monarch section), but other reports that I received were from friends. At the same time the national Monarch reporting Web site also had information on large numbers gathering in the Northeast, especially at locations on the north side of the Great Lakes. Historically reported num-

bers have come from those locations as the monarchs build up there and wait for a favorable wind to head southwest across the lakes.

Other information on the Web site also mentioned that monarch numbers were increasing in mid-west locations (Kansas, Missouri) at the end of September; and speculation there was that they were waiting for favorable winds from the north-northeast to take advantage



of for the next leg of their trip south by southwest.

By October 13–14 reports were coming in from central Texas of monarchs arriving, which must have been part of the large numbers in parts of the metroplex the previous week.

I shall never forget the beauty and mystery of October 3–10, with hundreds of orange and black winged creatures flying all about our front and side yard for seven days. They were still here on the evening of the 10th, especially hanging on our cherry laurels, and then they were gone the next day after the night rains.

With so many reports of good numbers of these winged beauties from up north, we may get another infusion before the month is out. After all, they need to be in central Mexico by November 1, their traditional arrival date.

These wonderful butterflies with their remarkable lifestyle, majesty and mystery, should serve to make us all humble, decent, sharing humans who cherish this planet.

Thanks to Our Last Speaker

We were treated to another outstanding presentation last month, thanks to October program chair Jan Miller. Zac Trahan, Statewide Program Director (D/FW) of Texas Campaign for the Environment, spoke to us about moving

toward zero waste with an unusual combination of detail, clarity, and wonderful enthusiasm. It's this kind of environmental professional who makes the most jaded among us think that, with intelligent effort, there's hope ahead for us yet.



Left to right, ACC Vice President Roy Miliner, Zac Trahan, and Jan Miller.

Earth, Wind, and Fire Energy Summit Jan Miller

No, not a concert. This was a tremendous energy conference held at the Addison Conference Center in early October and sponsored by the Dallas Sierra Club. Many national energy experts were brought together for two days of presentations ranging from the energy grid (explained), economic factors influencing natural gas exports (fascinating), research on fracking effects on groundwater qual-

ity, injection well correlation with earthquakes, geothermal, solar, wind, and loads more.

The presentations are now available online at the event Web site: <http://earthwindfiresummit.org>. Go to "Presentations and Speakers" tab to access the individual presentation files. Be aware that some files are very large; others may require an animation application to make the illustra-

tions animate correctly. Presentations are made available for personal use or notes only; please do not alter content.

Several were related to solar energy. As a preview to ACC's Solar Option panel presentations on November 5, you might like to view those by Katherine Jack, Jim Duncan and Steve Wiese.

Texas Invasives Jan Miller

Maybe you took the "Texas Invaders" training a few years ago? It's a great program, now new and improved and renamed "Texas Invasives". Justin Bush (LBJ Wildflower Center) held a training session at River Legacy in late September to acquaint users with the new app and program improvements.

The new smartphone app now has information about more than just invasive plants, although that's what many of us think of first. The program now can be used to track insects (like the emerald ash borer), mollusks (like zebra mussels), mammals (like feral hogs) and more. There's even a section where anyone (regardless of training) can submit a sighting for the most undesirable natives through the **Sentinel Pest Network**. The app even has a feature that allows infested areas to be sized and the cost to remove and restore the area to be estimated, an important factor in documenting the economic consequences of invasives.

Blue Windows, Dead Birds, Nitrogen, and Barry Commoner John Darling



The other day I saw a pigeon hit a window and die. Pigeons are great examples of invasive exotic birds, posing health hazards in some situations. So okay, that's one less pigeon. On the other hand, it was a living creature that died unnecessarily because of us. More important, about 100 million birds die annually from window strikes in this country, the great majority valuable native species. Anyway, some passing students recoiled when I picked it up, but I found myself thinking about Barry Commoner, one of the first environmental activists I became aware of in the 1970s. Here's one of his four laws of ecology: Everything must go somewhere. (Or, nothing ever really goes away.) [Check this site for more.](#) Two contrasting fates for this carcass were the landfill (waste and methane) or, as luck would have it, the big compost pile I was headed for. Disgusting? Birds might be about 3% nitrogen; that's almost as much as fresh grass clippings and coffee grounds, all good for compost. Just don't tell the groundskeepers who use the final product. They'll never know.

Good News All Around **Grace Darling**



The Nature Conservancy has just acquired more than 1,500 acres in the Texas Hill Country adjacent to their Cibolo Bluffs Preserve that will create an uninterrupted expanse of nearly 5,000 protected acres. The purchased tract includes the Bracken Bat Cave, home to more than 15 million Mexican free-tailed bats and considered to be the world's largest bat colony, as well as precious habitat for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler overlying the recharge zone for the Edwards Aquifer. The land was slated to become a 3,500 home subdivision, but a coalition of public and private organizations – The Nature Conservancy, the City of San Antonio, Bat Conservation International, the Edwards Aquifer Authority, Forestar, the United States Army, and Bexar County – was able to come up with the necessary funding just ahead of the bulldozers. “It also highlights the good work that can happen when we prioritize Texas' vast natural assets,” reads their press release.

After a 14-year campaign, state-of-the-art pollution control is finally coming to Midlothian. DFW-based clean-air group **Downwinders at Risk** has been advocating the use of Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) in the three Midlothian cement plants located just south of I-20 since 2000, when a German cement kiln first operated the technology successfully. Together, the TXI, Ash Grove, and Holcim plants represent the largest concentration of cement manufacturing in the country and are a major contributor to DFW's smog problem. HolcimUS is now applying for a permit to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to install an SCR unit in their Midlothian facility in response to new EPA emission standards for hydrocarbon pollution from cement plants. It's the first application for commercial use of SCR technology in any U.S. cement kiln. According to Downwinders' executive director Jim Schermbeck, Holcim's application for a permit to install SCR “makes it more likely that all Midlothian cement plants and others in EPA non-attainment areas around the country will be adopting the technology sooner rather than later.”

McAllen, Texas. When their local Walmart shut down, officials in McAllen did an amazing thing: Instead of letting the giant building sit vacant, they transformed it into the largest single-floor public library in America. After stripping out the old walls and ceiling, the developers opted for a very modern feel for the space. The library now boasts 16 public meeting spaces, 14 public study rooms, 64 computer stations, 10 children's computer labs, and 2 genealogy computer labs. There is also a cafe, a used book store, an auditorium, and self check-out stations. Even the landscape is now appropriate for the climate. (Source: Weburbanist)



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

Name _____	First-year member \$10.00	
Address _____	Individual \$15.00	New Member ☐
_____	Family \$25.00	
Phone _____	Supporting \$40.00	Renewing member ☐
E-mail _____	Sponsor \$100.00	
	Lifetime Individual \$250.00	
	Other \$ _____	

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Contributions and dues are not tax-deductible. Note: If you cannot pay, please let any board member know. The only available newsletter format is electronic, and it can be obtained via e-mail and the ACC Web site.

President Danny Kocurek
Vice President Roy Miliner
Treasurer Marian Hiler

Secretary Dick Schoech
Editor John Darling
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Board Members
Grace Darling Frank Keeney
Kevin Donovan Jan Miller

THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-216

Don't Forget!**Wednesday, November 5****Eunice Activity Center****6:30 – 8:00 pm***A Julia Burgen Lecture Series Event*

**The Solar Option:
Obstacles and Opportunities
A Panel Presentation**