

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2014

www.acctexas.org

January Meeting

NOTE:

**Special Meeting Place,
Time, and Date**

**Annual Potluck
and Business Meeting**

**Saturday, January 17, 10 – noon
Montessori Academy,
3428 West Arkansas Lane**

Don't miss our annual chance to get together for good food and conversation. We'll look back at 2014, vote on the slate of board members for 2015, and get a good look at the winners of our second FOCUS contest for young nature photographers.

We'll supply drinks, dishes, and silverware. And you always do, but it's worth repeating:

Bring food!

Bits & Pieces

Melodious Canadian

The striking white-throated sparrow scratching around in our winter yards isn't just another pretty face: It may be the best singer in its boreal forest summer home, and it's a complicated bird. The two morphs almost always form mixed breeding pairs and produce equal numbers of tan-striped and white-striped morphs. And there's lots more; you've got to look this bird up.



Today's Inspirational Moment

From the Star-Telegram, January 9:

Declaring that freedom and private-property rights will not be bound by city limits, Governor-elect Greg Abbott on Thursday called for doing away with a "patchwork quilt" of local bans on everything from paper and plastic bags to fracking that he said threatens to turn Texas into California.

Free at last from local environmental tyranny!

Thanks, Lon

We're about to begin our first legislative session in 18 years without environmental stalwart Lon Burnam in the Texas House of Representatives. This Thursday you can come say thanks to Lon at South Street Patio (next to the main Post Office). At 7:30 there will be an appreciation dinner for Lon that will benefit Downwinders at Risk. For tickets and information go to downwindersatrisk.org.



From the President **Danny Kocurek**



Economic Denial

It has become politically popular, even essential for some elected officials, to deny science in order

to get elected. Examples are easy to find in the fields of biology, physics and chemistry, with most based on religious beliefs. What is not talked about as much, however, is economic denial. It is not based on religion and I can't figure out where it comes from. If you were to believe our politicians, conserving our forests, water, air and fossil fuels is bad for the economy because it "kills jobs." If you analyze this from a scientific standpoint, you realize it is the equivalent of believing in Santa Claus. A healthy forest, river, ocean, or prairie is essential to a healthy local economy. Examples are myriad cities, states and even countries

that have devastated their economies by destroying their local environment to the point where it no longer supports the economy. When an area is overfished, the fish population collapses and the fishing industry suffers. Then all of the industries supporting the fishing industry also suffer. It is a wicked domino effect where the loss of fishing jobs leads to a loss of merchant jobs, service jobs, teaching jobs, government jobs, etc. Essentially the only people that remain employed are the politicians.

Hold on, I think I figured it out.

THE POST OAK

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conserve Arlington's
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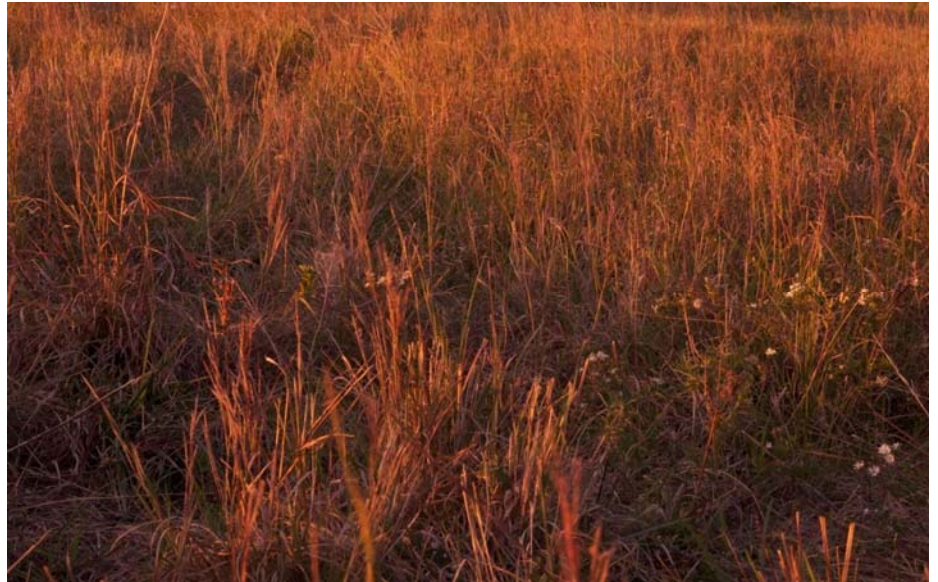
Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve Photos by Wes Miller

Our piece of prairie was mowed in September. That was good for temporarily beating back the woody invasives, but it's been looking dead and ragged ever since.

But it is a prairie after all, and it knows a thing or two about healing. Thanks to Wes Miller's photos from the last three months, we see once again that new life is on the way, just as it has been for centuries.

For map and directions:

<http://goo.gl/maps/W01P9>



Wildscape Update Molly Hollar as told to Marylee Thomason and John Dycus

It was a dark night in a landscape that keeps its secrets. One person was still trying to find the answers to life's persistent questions. Molly Hollar, private eye.

A leaf slipped between sock and ankle while I was walking among the trees. She was slender in a brown bodysuit so tight you could see her veins. Her petiole was tapered right up to where it joined the blade.

"What can I do for you, Ms. ...?" I was about to supply "Brown," but she quickly interjected.

"Green. It's Green. You're Molly Hollar, the famous wildscape detective, aren't you?"

"Why, yes."

"Oh, good," she said with a sigh. "I've been clinging to my twig in hopes of fluttering down just as you walked by. Tree is pushing us off our branches. I hear people talk about *falling* leaves, but we are being pushed!"

"I am very sorry to hear that. Do go on."

Ms. Green appeared to be of the deciduous family, known for wafer-thin bodies and none of the waxy makeup that evergreens exhibit. She was no longer a youthful green, but a mature brown. A leaf of a certain age.

"About the time of winter solstice the delivery boy started removing carbon and nitrogen instead of

bringing them," she said. "I caught him once and demanded to know what he was doing. He said Tree told him to take them before the fall and store them in the branches until spring.

"The abscission cells between my petiole and the twig started to shift and grow, forming a barrier and a bump. I am very faithful about checking my *connections*. Well, I felt that bump beginning to form. The tree doctor said it was normal. Yeah, sure, normal to push off the poor leaves and seal in the sap. I was the sap to trust him!"

It sounded as if Ms. Green was being laid off without notice.

"Perhaps you will spring back to work next spring." I knew it was lame even before I said it.

She began to cry. "My chlorophyll is diminished, and there is less sunlight now to power photosynthesis. I have no energy. I didn't sign up for For-estcare when I should have. I'm too young for Arbori Security. What am I going to do?"

She sounded desperate. Deciduous trees drop their leaves and stay bare during stressful times such as drought or severe weather. At the next growing season, they leaf out again. After 350 million years, Mother Nature must have a plan, but what?

I set out for Mother Nature Headquarters and a serious talk with Big Tree. I needed answers.

"Good golly, Ms. Molly, leaves are expensive to maintain," Tree barked. "Sure they feed us, but we feed them, too. And the water bill! They shower everything below through those little stomata on their undersides. We can keep up when there's plenty of rain, but if we carried them all winter, they would desiccate us.

"Not only that, but those lithe little leaves are so sensitive to cold that they shiver to death at the first freeze. Where would we be with a dead kitchen staff when we need to start growing again?"

This only piqued my interest. "That cool feeling under a tree is so calming. People benefit from it physically and emotionally. We're always sorry to see the leaves go. How do you decide when to kick them off?"

"Listen, I'm tired of being blamed for killing off the leaves," Tree replied. "The timing is up to them. They have a contract to produce as much of the auxin as their tree does. When they run out of steam and their output drops, it's time to shut things down."

"Wait a minute. Do you mean auxin, the Greek word for growth or increase?"

"Hey, you know your ancients! Yes, auxin, without the 'e,' is the tree hormone that keeps tabs on the environment and runs all over the place in the tree helping it to grow

continued on page 5

Wildscape Update continued from page 4

and stop growing and grow again. With that stuff, we don't need a nervous system."

"So it really is a business decision?"

"Pretty much. Evergreens make leaves that can withstand severe weather, but that stresses the whole tree. A tree under stress is vulnerable to disease, insects and desiccation. It doesn't have the exertion of growing new leaves, but it has considerable upkeep during the winter."

Just as I was turning away, Tree softened.

"Molly, those nutrients we suck back are in short supply in the soil. If we don't have those in the spring, we can't grow any new leaves."

"I see your point. No new leaves means no food to make the tree grow."

"It sounds like I didn't get around to talking to the leaves on Ms. Green's branch. We really do value our leaves. They cling to the security of the familiar so we have to close the doors and slowly build up the abscission layer on the tree side to nudge them off. Deciduous trees like ours can't maintain leaves during very cold or dry weather. This region gets too cold, so trees in this area anticipate that."

"You mean trees can forecast the weather?"

"Not exactly, but each environment has its own weather, soil composi-



tion and water supply. The trees in each region grow up under those conditions and learn to cope with them."

"How disappointing for Ms. Green. She feels terribly rejected and useless."

"But here's some good news for Ms. Green and her friends. Leaves are purposely nudged off, not thrown away, so that they fall close to us. We need them to maintain the soil moisture and temperature. This is a new purpose for them, a new way to benefit their tree."

"That sounds like Mother Nature's own mulch recipe," I said. "Thanks so much for this. Ms. Green will be happy to know that she still has a purpose."

I felt like a speaker at a leaf convention when I explained to Ms. Green and her friends what I had learned about Tree's plan for its leaves. Delivering good news is always so gratifying. I bowed out to a rustle of applause.

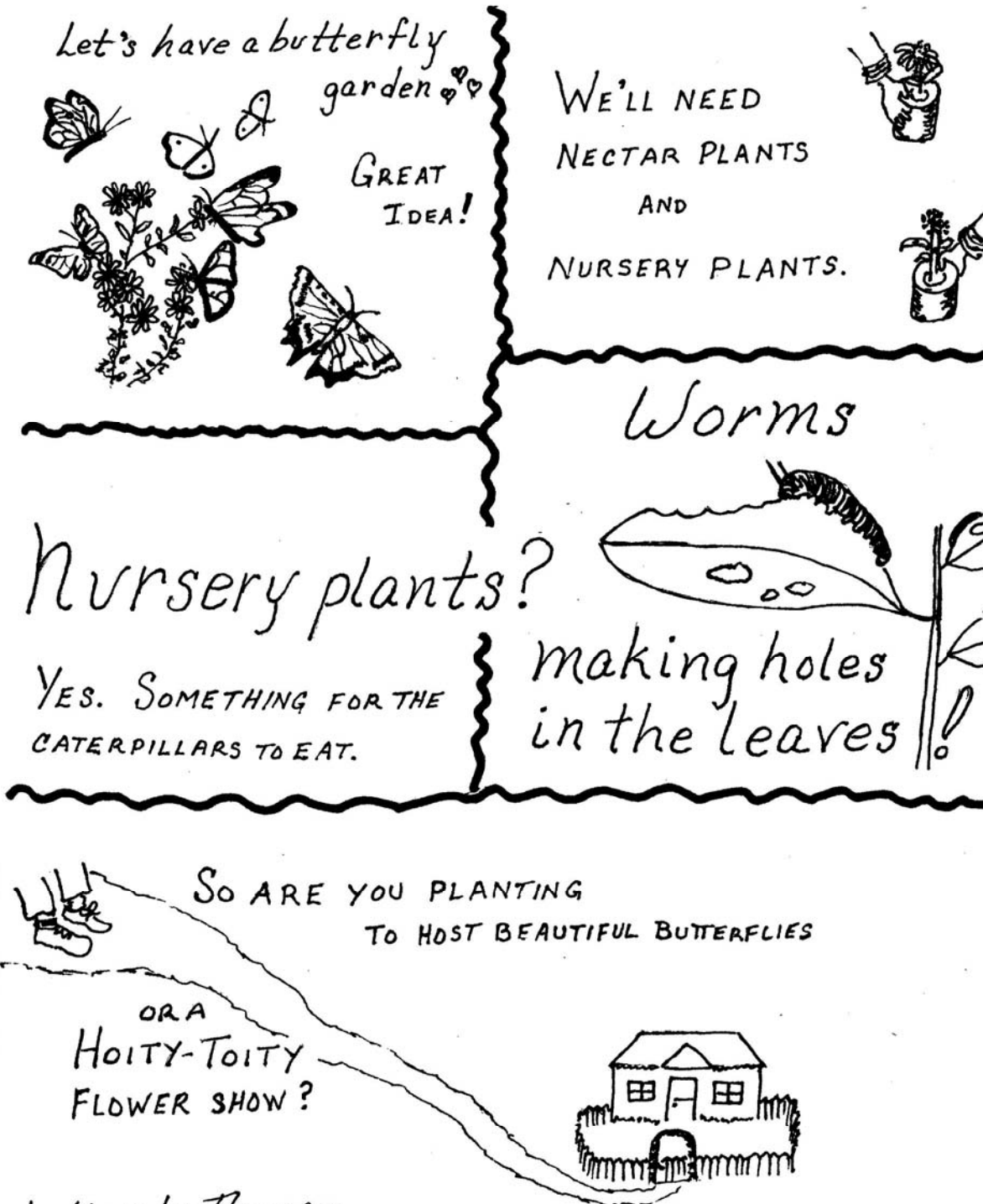
Definitions:

abscission – a region at the base of a leaf, flower, fruit or other plant part where the formation of a cork layer results in the separation of that part from the rest of the plant

blade – the broad section of the leaf that is distinct from the petiole

petiole – the stalk that joins the leaf to the stem

stomata - tiny pores found on the underside of a leaf, that are used for gas exchange and respiration

Wildscape Sidebar Marylee Thomason

by Marylee Thomason

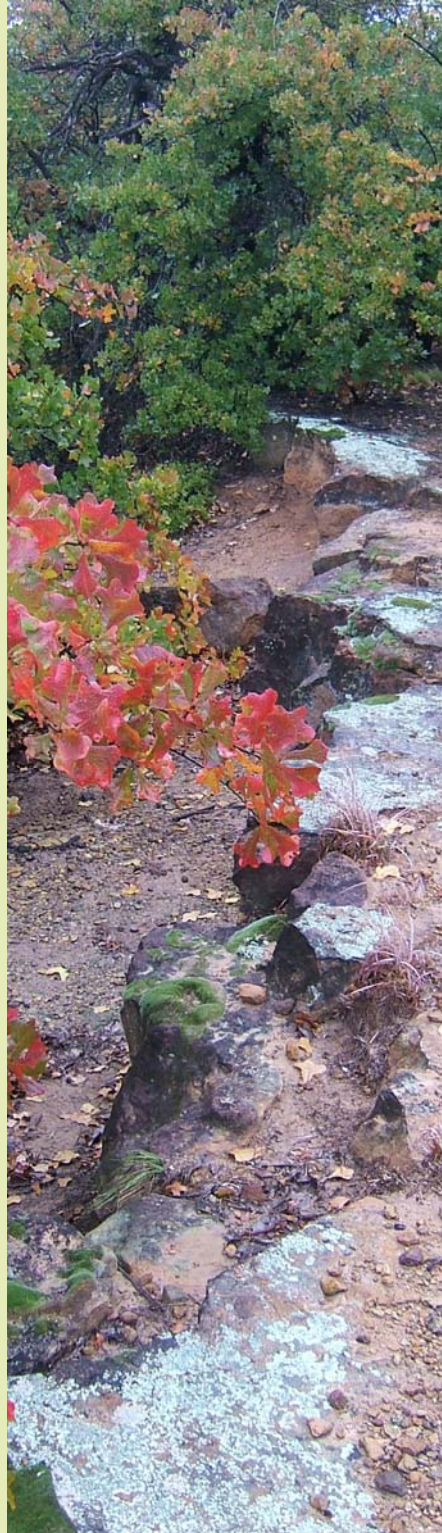
Inspired by Josephine's Mini-Class on How to Create a Butterfly Garden.

Southwest Nature Preserve

Fall was a busy and colorful time at our wonderful post oak woodland preserve.

On December 15, the youth group from Fielder Church held its fourth Sunday workday (*below*). Once again those great workers, led by the tireless Jay Falgout and crew, worked on construction projects, picked up lots of trash, and pulled invasives.

Naturalist extraordinaire Jim Varnum (*right*) had another of his excellent plant walks on November 22 and easily held the interest of plant fans on a damp day.



Cache In, Trash Out From Arlington Parks & Recreation Department

The City of Arlington Parks and Recreation Department and Keep Arlington Beautiful would like to invite you to participate in our planned beautification CITO event for 2015. FREE PATHTAG from past events will be given to the first 100 who attend on **January 17 GC5HMBY, February 21 and March 21.**

We will kick off the event at 9:00am with an anticipated finish time being around 11:00am.

Volunteer cachers will pick up trash along Ave F in January. This location is in the Great Southwest Industrial Park. Keep Arlington Beautiful and the Parks and Recreation Department recently conducted some tree trimming and exposed a considerable amount of trash that is a result of years of litter from the interstate. This event is great for all ages, whether you're with a troop, church, family, or an individual beautification advocate!

Prizes will be given away at the event, including free rounds of golf, backpacks, and more. Bring gloves if you have them. If not, we will provide rubber gloves and a limited number of litter pickers. Parking on Ave F. Thank you for helping Keep Arlington Beautiful!

Here is how you can get yourself and/or your friends and family started geocaching: You will need a GPS (Garmin, Etrex, etc) or a smart phone, and a Keep Arlington Beautiful

ful Pathtag. Create an account on www.geocaching.com Download the geocaching smartphone app. Search local geocaches by entering a zip code or name. Select the geocache you want to find based on difficulty level and location. Input the coordinates or tap the GO TO button on the app to begin using your GPS unit. Follow the arrow until you are within range of the cache. Now find it!

See more at:

<http://keeparlingtonbeautiful.com/2015/01/08/new-year-new-you-cito-events-in-arlington/>

All volunteers must complete our volunteer waiver form. For more information contact the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department at 817-459-5477.

SOUTHERN AUTUMN

Southern autumn seems to come
One leaf at a time, slow and shy,
As if preparing us subliminally for winter.

In the South so many trees
Stay evergreen, autumn can appear
As a passing fling
That leaves a cleanup problem.

Nothing like the sudden drama
Of the New England year
Where winter bullies past
The radiant days of Indian summer
And leaves trees destitute in hours.

Rather the languid southern autumn
Disassembles summer so disarmingly
That winter's often able
To sneak in through the back door
And spread ice over everything
Before we know it's here.

©2003 John I. Blair

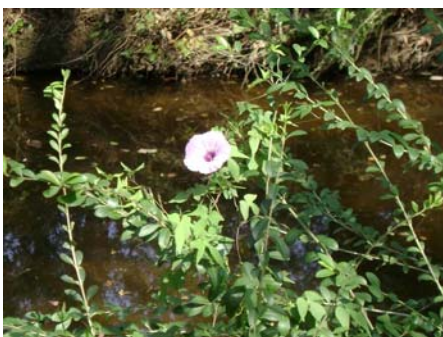


Congratulations to the FOCUS 2014 Photo Contest Winners



Grade 3 winners clockwise from lower left: 1st place, Daniela Candiloros-Bake. 2nd place, Franco Navas. 3rd place, Jennifer Villegas. 4th place, Edgar Ortega.

Grade 4 winners clockwise from upper right: 1st place, Signy Ackermann. 2nd place, Cindy Sander. 3rd place, Stephanie Villegas. 4th place, Erika Ortega.



continued on page 10

Congratulations continued from page 9

Grade 5 winners left to right:

1st place Zoey Willis.

2nd place Noah Shannon.



Grade 6 winners clockwise from lower left:

1st place Anna Lewis.

2nd place Harry Black.

3rd place Benjamin Kocurek.

4th place Isabella Robinson.



Arlington Parks & Rec: Finalist for National Award MyArlington Web site

As a finalist for the National Gold Medal award, the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) travelled to Charlotte, North Carolina, for an awards presentation at the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Congress from Oct. 13-16, 2014.

Founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Awards program honors communities in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition. Applications are separated into seven classes, with five classes based on population, one class for armed forces recreation communities and the State Park System Class awarded during odd-numbered years.

The APRD was selected as a 2014 finalist in the Class II category for the Gold Medal award. Agencies are judged on their abil-

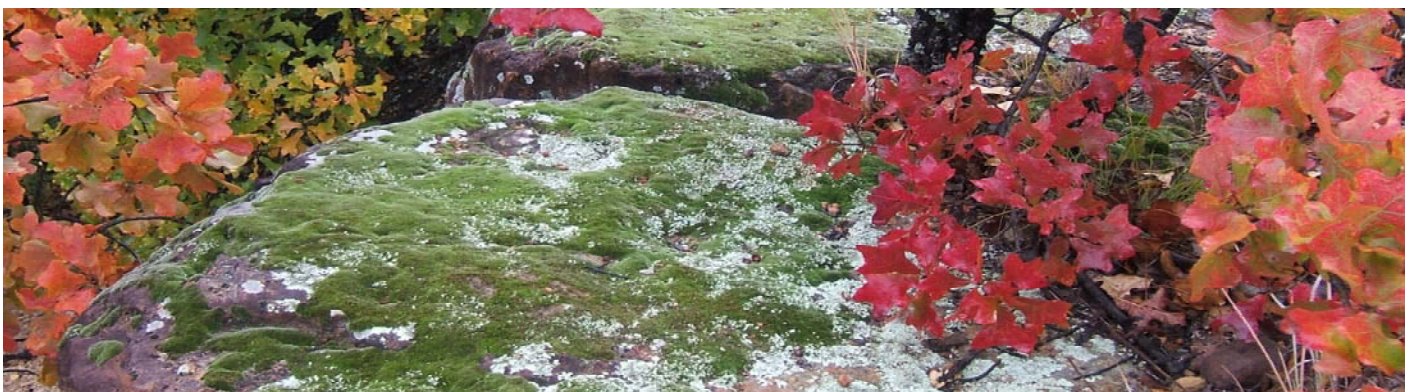


ity to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials. Four finalists in each class are chosen to compete for grand honors each year.

Class II (population 150,001 – 400,000)

- ☐ Arlington Parks and Recreation, Texas
- ☐ Bakersfield Recreation and Parks Department, California
- ☐ Henderson Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Nevada
- ☐ Plano Parks and Recreation Department, Texas

Selection as a finalist for this award is a phenomenal achievement for the department. The nomination is due to the long hours and hard work, from each member of our parks team here in Arlington, Texas. We as a city are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated staff, passionate city supporters, faithful fans and followers on social media, and outstanding community partners. It is because of these people that Arlington remains a thriving cultural hub for the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex; enough to grab the attention of national organizations such as NRPA.



The Solar Option: Julia Burgen Lecture Draws Big Crowd

On November 5, our special annual program honoring Julia Burgen drew over 100 attendees to hear an excellent set of presentations on various aspects of residential solar power.

The panelists included (*from left to right*)

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

Homeowner: Danny Kocurek, solar power consumer

Community: Robert Litwins, Plano Solar Advocates

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

Thanks to everyone who helped with refreshments and setup, and to Frank Keeney for introducing the speakers. We're all especially indebted to Marian Hiler and Jan Miller who put in hours of hard work to make the program a success.



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	
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	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.

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Don't Forget!

Saturday, January 17
The Montessori Academy of Arlington
10 am – noon

Annual Potluck and Business Meeting

NOTE: Special Meeting Place, Time, and Date
Another Note: It's 2015! Pay Your Dues! Please!