

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

ACC WORKS TO PROTECT ARLINGTON'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EDUCATION,
COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND ADVOCACY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2016

www.acctexas.org

April Meeting

Project Bluebird: Local efforts to increase bluebird numbers

Donna Piercy,
Texas Bluebird Society
Bluebirder of the Year 2015

**Wednesday, April 6,
7 pm**
**Fielder Museum,
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)**



Many cavity nesters in urban areas are declining, including some local species. Donna will review the problem bluebirds and other cavity nesters face and introduce us to several local groups aiding the nesting effort. Donna is responsible for establishing the Tierra Verde Bluebird Nestbox Trail at Arlington's premier golf course.

This presentation will cover many aspects of attracting bluebirds and setting up/maintaining nestboxes. It will include types of bluebirds, habitat, nestboxes, nesting, reproduction, predator threats, Cornell University's Nestwatch program, and good sources of bluebird info.

Bring Something for the Raffle

Bits & Pieces

Are You Here?

You think you know a thing or two, but a simple question can change all that. Maybe you think you know local mammals, until you're on the spot. What about the Long-tailed weasel? Does it occur in Arlington? It's an aggressive little predator that ranges over most of Texas, basically wherever pocket gophers and ground squirrels live. We do have ground squirrels in spots, but what about pocket gophers? Surely we must, but where exactly? And are weasels fiercely pursuing them? If you know about either gophers or weasels in town, please tell the ignorant editor.



Today's Inspirational Moment



You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

Jane Goodall

Neil Sperry, Triple Threat

Is the Plant Guru an argument for the death of newspapers? Last week's advice included killing weeds with products that contain possible carcinogens, and this week it's planting invasive nandina among other non-native plants in tough spots.

But wait, there's more: For great soil in those harsh locations, one thing Mr Sperry says to add is sphagnum peat moss. Coir is a sustainable alternative that doesn't involve long-term disruption of delicate wetland ecosystems. Thanks, Neil.





Cedar waxwings on Yaupon holly. Photo by Dick Schoech.

From the President Jan Miller

A visionary of conservation and humanity paid a visit to Arlington this week as Dr. Jane Goodall spoke at UTA's Maverick Speakers Series. I was doubly lucky to be offered a ticket to this sold-out event and to see this hero for the second time in my life. At first, she confessed to being a bit tired; after all, at age 82, she travels more than 300 days per year. But as she embarked on the story of her early life and passion to observe and study creatures, the fatigue was left behind. Her soft vibrant voice was measured and solid as she recounted the challenges of her life and transitioned into the seemingly insurmountable environmental challenges we all face. After more than 50 years of work in Africa, she has experienced some of the worst of human and animal nature but she has continued to witness and to broaden her commitment to leaving the world a better place. Following a moving video of her beloved chimpanzees, she stood silently at the podium, a formidable and resilient figure. She closed with her five reasons for hope: youth, the human brain, environmental resilience, indomitable human spirit and social media capabilities.



Maybe everybody needs to have their batteries recharged by someone larger than life once in a while. But it was encouraging too, to know she'd spent the previous evening in Arlington, experiencing a spring storm with 70 mph winds, hail and rain, followed by a double rainbow, just as many of us did.

http://www.theshorthorn.com/news/jane-goodall-recounts-inspiration-for-research-awareness/article_4ae8037e-f7c6-11e5-bcef-1f28a22d273d.html

THE POST OAK

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

John Darling, Editor
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Julia Burgen,
Grace Darling, Jan Miller,
Wesley Miller, Dick Schoech,
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.

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.

John DYCUS

3607 Shady Park Drive
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 271-2138
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 817-555-1152

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

m|m|a
mycoskie + mcinnis + associates
civil engineering surveying landscape architecture planning
www.mmtexas.com
817-469-9671

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve Jan Miller with photos by Wes Miller

Mission accomplished! APRD arranged for prairie mowing in a very brief window before spring buds emerged and between early spring rains. Amazingly, soil conditions were just firm enough to mow. Mowing helps limit the growth of trees and shrubs, allowing prairie grasses and forbs to take their rightful place. Watch that prairie — and let the spring blooms begin!



Prairie Stewards
Third Saturday
Blackland Prairie
Nature Preserve
4907 New York Avenue
April 16
9:00 –12:00

Our piece of prairie has just got to be good in April. Find out what's blooming since the last rains and mowing. Have a good look while we get a real feel for the power of spring. There's so much to see and enjoy!

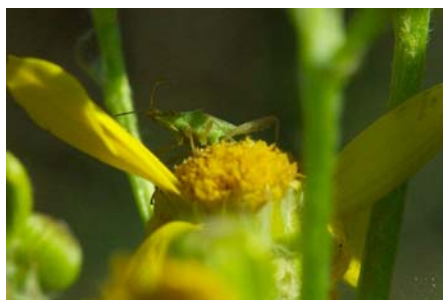
Wear long sleeves and pants, plus sturdy boots or shoes. Bring gloves, loppers, water container. Consider a camera and/or binoculars because spring blooms and migration will be underway.

Though not required, an RSVP is helpful in case of inclement weather.

See the links below for more information and latest updates:

Friends of the Prairie www.theprairie.org

Friends of the Prairie e-mail
info@theprairie.org



What's this? Looks a lot like a Burrowing owl, a little predator of the short-grass prairie just passing through on migration. Nice find, Wesley.

Wildscape Update *Marylee Thomason*

Walk on the Wildside with Goodman Elementary School third-graders

Her hand held up for counting off, a volunteer asked the students gathered around the table, "What are things living organisms need to survive?" Answers came fast, "Food." "Water." "Warmth."
A chorus of voices rose, "That's not one of the things!" Undeterred the speaker replied "Well, I need it." Laughter all around.

ANTICIPATION: Arrival



CONCENTRATION: Flower parts with Joyce Duty and Dawn Hancock



PRIDE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT:

Seed Tacos with Molly Hollar, Callie Mitchell, Jennifer Hiler, and Anne Alderfer



INVOLVEMENT:

Erosion and Weathering with Hester Schwarzer and Larry Norris



SHARING THE FUN:

Sharon Schoech and Peggy Quinn



continued on page 6

Wildscape Update continued from page 5

LICHENS, WORMS, & MUSHROOMS:
Woodland Environment
with Marylee Thomason and Joe Martinez



AWE INSPIRING:
Butterflies in their Ecosystem
with Josephine Keeney and Jane Oosterhuis



Soon after the last group ran up the hill to the playground and lunch, WOW organizer Ann Knudsen got a text. Goodman Lead teacher, Terri Miller, had asked the students if this was a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down field trip. The kids gave it an enthusiastic two thumbs-up accompanied by a loud "Yeah!" Carrie Donovan and the other teachers seconded that opinion. They said it was the best WOW yet. "It was just like being out in the wilderness!"

The route was simplified with dual stations. Between stations the students did a new activity in the form of a scavenger hunt, collecting only sightings, not items. This was a big hit. The kids even saw things that weren't there, like a turtle. Charley Amos found raccoon tracks, which was exciting.

On a cold windy morning 25 people turned out. For those who missed the fun, better luck next time.

In addition to the presenters, other people turned out, carried tables, chairs and stuff, and kept the program running on time. Special thanks to Dick Schoech and Carrie Donovan for the great photographs.

Guides/timekeepers

Carol Shinsky
Dick Schoech
Beverly Crawford
Susan Marchbanks
Ann Trenton
Diane Kocurek
Robert Faires
Dorothy Hildebrand
Patsy Miller
Charley Amos

Coordinators

Peggy Quinn
Hester Schwarzer
Molly Hollar
Carrie Donovan
Ann Knudsen



Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller



Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, April 19, 7:00 pm

West Arlington Police Service Center, Community Room

2060 W. Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76013

Parking is available in front of the building, via Ron McAndrew Drive.

Mammals of the Southwest Nature Preserve:

An exercise in speculation

presented by John Darling, natural history geek
and reformed vertebrate collections manager



North-central Texas occupies an area of relatively low species diversity, but that doesn't mean we know exactly who's living very quietly in our piece of post oak woodland. Come see what we know, and learn about the many unanswered questions. After all, a basic notion in conservation biology is this: You don't know what you might be losing if you don't know what's there.

More calendar events:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 4/9 | 9 am – 1pm | UTA's Big Event — Join Friends to lead teams of UTA volunteers at this annual event tackling some of our major projects. |
| 4/17 | TBD | Aquatic event — Crosstimbers Connection aquatic survey. Registration is required; see www.crosstimbersconnection.org |
| 4/21 | TBD | Volunteer event with Fellowship Academy — Volunteers needed to lead groups of high school students. This event takes the place of regular 3 rd Thursday and 4 th Saturday volunteer events. |
| 4/23 | Quarterly Bird ID Class and Survey— | |
| | 8:00 am | Classroom (optional). Due to limited seating, registration is required. Contact: http://www.cityofkennedale.com/642/Bird-Workshop |
| | 8:30 am | Meet at SWNP for quarterly survey; everyone's welcome. |

For details, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org



Left, On March 19, botanical authority Jeff Quayle led a plant walk at the preserve. Above, Texas Parks & Wildlife Urban Biologist Sam Kieschnick spoke on iNaturalist at the Friends meeting on March 15.

Environmental Dates Julia Burgen

April 2016

Noteworthy dates for our public lands and other special places and habitats

April 16 – 24	National Park Week.
April 21, 1838	John Muir, birth date, born in Scotland; emigrated to U.S. with family in 1849.
April 22, 1970	First Earth Day celebrated in United States. If you participated in some event that day, email me and tell me where you were and what you did.
April 23, 1995	Wildscape Dedication at Arlington's Veterans Park. If you were among those in attendance, email me jburgen@sbcglobal.net and we will see how many of us are still around and reading this online ACC newsletter.
April 26, 1785	John James Audubon's birthdate.
April 29, 2016	Arbor Day celebration, most commonly on last Friday in April. Some states select a different date, often to accommodate best dates for planting certain species of trees

THE TOAD

And then one magic time I found a toad
Asleep deep in its winter house,
Hidden away in wait for spring.

How long it had been waiting underground
I could not tell.
Its skin was pale and slack;
Its eyes were clouded;
And there, in a dark chamber
Just barely bigger than its body,
It lay day after day without a change.

Now how did the toad know
That warmth and rain and food and light
Would come once more into its life,
That one day again the world would be
All starlit nights and time for singing?

©2002 John I. Blair

Thanks to our Last Speaker



We're indebted to Melissa Walker, Education Specialist at Arlington Public Works & Transportation Dept for her lively talk last month on stormwater pollution and prevention in Arlington. It's always a pleasure to hear someone who loves her job, and her talk was packed with down-to-earth information. And a bonus: Melissa likes aquatic bugs! We want to know more about the BioBlitz critters she finds at Viridian.



Wildscape Bonus: An Interview with Bev Crawford Marylee Thomason

Bev Crawford, Master Gardener, Master Composter, and member of the Arlington Citizens Environmental Committee, was beginning to take on a major leadership role at the Molly Hollar Wildscape when family health issues side-lined her.

She is back on a limited basis because she was offered a dream job for 16 weeks this spring. "It is really fun, but tough getting back to work after retirement." In a recent interview Bev talked about the job, the company, and some of the products she helps sell.

Marylee: Who are you working for?

Bev: Central Garden & Pet, an organic products company that sells fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides, bird and grass seed. You might recognize some of the brand names; Seven, Amdro, Over & Out, Pennington. Central also sells under third-party labels for big companies like Home Depot, Lowes, and Walmart.

One of my favorite products, and one that I push a lot is Milorganite. *(It is manufactured by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District. All you supporters of recycling, stop cringing. It does come from the microbes that devour sewage, but it is*

baked at 900° to 1200° until is it a pathogen-free organic product perfect for lawns, flower beds and vegetable gardens.)

I push that a lot. It feeds up to 10 weeks.

Another great product is Meter Magic. People will say, "My tomatoes! I have never grown them before. What do I do?" When I tell them that Meter Magic will prevent blossom drop and make the tomatoes strong, they almost always buy it.

Marylee: What do you do for Central?

Bev: I provide product knowledge to customers, answer general questions, and offer suggestions about where to plant their selections to be successful. You have to watch their body language. If I approach a customer and they don't even look at me, I wish them a nice day and leave them alone.

A lot of people ask what to plant in the shady places where grass won't grow. I tell them they have three choices: Pennington grass seed mix for shade, ground covers, or more extensive landscaping. We go from there.

One day a mother and daughter approached me to help them find plants to decorate the front yard for the daughter's wedding *this* weekend. They

didn't have a clue what to buy. They didn't even have a color scheme so I helped them pick out plants.

Marylee: How did you find this job?

Bev: I was doing the Weekend Warrior job for Bayer Advanced last year at Home Depot. The manager for Central Garden and Pet kept hanging around whenever I talked to customers. After a few weeks, he offered me a job working full time for 16 weeks. I researched the company very thoroughly before I put in my application. They have almost no turnover because they treat their employees so well. They care about their customers too.

Bev sets her own schedule as the only Central representative in the DFW area. She travels to all of the Home Depot and Lowes stores on a rotating basis, plus five Walmarts. When she is not helping customers, she is spiffing up displays, making sure the shelves are full and the products are correctly signed and priced.

Forty hours a week March through May. Then Bev will get back to being a full-time volunteer in retirement. We will undoubtedly lose her to her dream job again next year about this time.

Leave those dead trees standing



The look on the young downy woodpecker coming out of the hole in the tree is a nice reward for not cutting down dead trees. This will be the Schoech's second year of downy babies, which are very, very cute when they fledge.

Here's a plea to everyone to remove overhanging branches from dead trees, but leave the trunks for woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds.

And speaking of dead wood



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and the habitats in which they are found. The law requires federal agencies, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the NOAA Fisheries Service, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species. The law also prohibits any action that causes a "taking" of any listed species of endangered fish or wildlife.

Our state is unique in many ways, among them in how we value our natural resources: oil and gas are paramount; wildlife and the native landscape, not so much. In Texas, for example, the state comptroller oversees the protection and management of endangered species — the lone state in the union where its top money manager is also its chief critter caretaker. What follows is a brief tale of what happens when you put the fox in charge of the hen house, annotated from extensive reports by Eric Dexheimer of the *Austin-American Statesman* and the *Texas*

Standard. For more information, go to <http://dfw.cbslocal.com/2016/03/25/texas-terminates-foundation-formed-to-manage-lizard-species/> and <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/state-fires-organization-formed-by-big-oil-to-manage-nqrgrt/>.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the dunes sagebrush lizard as endangered because of a precipitous decline in its numbers in the face of disappearing habitat from their oil-rich Permian Basin range. That would have had a



negative effect on the oil-drilling boom in West Texas and, by default, on the state's coffers. But in the last moments of the 2011 special session of the Legislature, state representative (R-Pampa) Warren Chisum tucked an amendment to move oversight of endangered species from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to the comptroller's office into a "fiscal bill," which passed without scrutiny. There was no explanation of why the duties were moved from the wildlife department to the comptroller; it wasn't an independent bill, so there was never a hearing on the rationale. (A subsequent attempt to return jurisdiction over endangered species to a multi-agency panel of scientists, HB 3509, was vetoed by Gov. Rick Perry in 2013.)

Then-state comptroller Susan Combs, a staunch opponent of federal species listings because of the economic cost to landowners and the state treasury, began trying to fend off an endangered designation for the lizard. She worked with the oil and gas industry and private property owners to craft a plan that would allow petroleum companies to voluntarily sign on and pay for conservation and mitigation efforts to protect the lizard. Though controversial from the start, the Texas Conservation

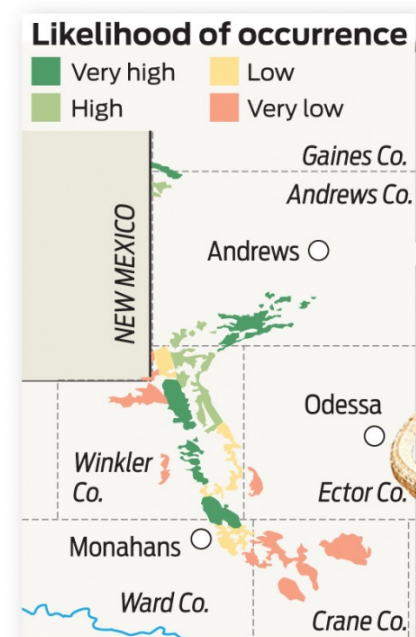
Plan was adopted in 2012, and federal regulators withdrew their proposal to designate the lizard as endangered. Touted as a landmark compromise that would protect both the lizard and the Texas economy without onerous federal regulations, the TCP was nevertheless vigorously fought by environmental groups -- who sued and eventually lost in federal appeals court last month.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a division of the university, was hired to manage the details. It in turn sought out a contractor to work on-site with landowners and petroleum companies in the Permian Basin. When one couldn't be found, the Texas Oil and Gas Association formed the nonprofit Texas Habitat Conservation Foundation to handle the on-the-ground work.

When Glenn Hegar replaced Combs as comptroller in 2015, he hired Robert Gulley, a San Antonio lawyer and scientist, to lead the agency's endangered species program. Concerned that Texas Habitat Conservation Foundation was charged with handling both field work and compliance, in late December Gulley hired a company he'd worked with on the Edwards Aquifer project, Bio-

continued on page 11

In Case You Missed It continued from page 10



Source: Texas Comptroller's Office

Lizard habitat

This map illustrates where the dunes sagebrush lizard may be found in Texas. There are 197,606 acres of habitat across several counties in the West Texas oil patch.



risked negative publicity to his party and his office by exposing and firing the culprits; Gulley retired from the Habitat Conservation Program at the Edwards Aquifer Authority and is now Director of Economic Growth and Endangered Species Management at the comptroller's office; and the folks at Bio-West are well-respected for their track record in ecological monitoring and endangered species management, so we are hopeful.

And the bad guys? In 2012, after 24 years representing his Panhandle constituents, Chisum retired from the Texas House, where he is mainly remembered for circulating an appeal to ban the teaching of evolution as derived from "Rabbinic writings" and other Jewish texts. Oh yes, he is also a lobbyist for the oil and gas industry, a founder and current chairman of the board of the Texas Habitat Conservation Foundation.

As for the dune sagebrush lizard, well, we can always look at photographs.

West, to ensure oil and gas companies were complying with the lizard protections. But after discovering evidence of the foundation's substandard oversight, Hegar's office fired the foundation on Feb. 11, hiring Bio-West full-time.

Evidently, the oil and gas industry-funded organization charged with overseeing the protection of the rare West Texas reptile had not only failed to perform any of the habitat restoration work it was supposed to do, but also it was negligent in monitoring drillers and other landowners to ensure they were performing conservation measures to protect the lizard. Instead, the THCF

had simply permitted them to self-report once a year on whether they had done the required work.

Since state law shields landowners from most forms of governmental inspection of private property (98% of Texas), federal regulators could not verify or deny any activity had taken place. "One of the biggest problems of the lizard plan is that it is hard for any member of the public to know who's participating in the plan and what conservation measures are being undertaken, in a way that can make them confident of the protection of the species," said Melinda Taylor, director of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Center for Energy, Law and Business at the University of Texas, in a monumental understatement.

So what happens now, you ask. To their credit, Hegar

A LIZARD ON THE PATH

I stepped along my garden path,
Thinking of flowery things,
When on the bricks I saw a lizard
Sitting in the sun.

I stopped. The lizard did not move, nor I,
Nor time upon that spot.

Its belly rose and fell with breath;
Its rough skin glistened in the brilliant light.

Warm on the red clay, it calmly watched me,
Dazzling me with its perfect lizardness.

John I. Blair 11/26/2001



Another Round of Privet Pulverizing for Molly's Birthday

It's happened again: Molly Hollar has marked another year of inspirational living as many friends gathered recently at O.S. Gray Natural Area to celebrate by removing privet. Happy birthday, Molly, and we look forward to many more piles of privet gathered in your honor.



NPSOT Spring Native Plant Sale

North Central Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

Sale Features

The sale features a large variety of plant species grown organically by our Chapter Members, including: Ground Covers Perennials, Shrubs, Vines and Trees.

- Grown from local seeds
- Better adapted to our climate
- Low requirement for water
- No need for pesticides or fertilizers

When: Saturday, May 7, 2016

Where: River Legacy Park
Elm Grove pavilion
701 NE Green Oaks Blvd.
Arlington, TX 76005

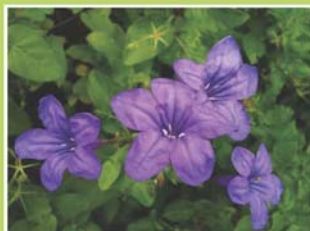
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Other: Our website shows the plants for the 2015 Sale. The 2016 Spring Sale plants will be posted in April.

www.txnativeplants.org



Butterfly Milkweed



Wild Petunia

Earth Day Texas April 22 – 24

Jim Duncan reminds us that a very large number of groups and businesses will be at the Earth Day Texas event at Fair Park in Dallas. Go to the [Web site](#) for lots more information.



EARTH DAY TEXAS

Tandy Hills BioBlitz

ACC is proud to sponsor of the first-ever Tandy Hills BioBlitz on April 22 – 23. It's a premier citizen science event of north Texas, which plans to catalog as many living things as possible over a 36-hour period. Besides the citizen science, there will be wildflower hikes and kids activities too. While it's a fun event, it's also serious science, recruiting top scientists from across Texas to provide quantitative and qualitative data which will be used to guide resource management and restoration planning at Tandy Hills NA. For details and schedules, or to volunteer, see <http://www.tandyhills.org/events/bioblitz>

ACC will have an outreach table/booth at BioBlitz. If you can help for an hour or 2, please e-mail info@acctexas.org or just stop by and say "Hi!"



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 Jan Miller
Vice President Dick Schoech
Treasurer Marian Hiler

Secretary/Program Coordinator
Dick Schoech
Webmaster Frank Keeney
Editor John Darling

Board Members
Grace Darling
Danny Kocurek
Roy Miliner

THE POST OAK

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

Don't Forget!

Wednesday, April 6
Fielder Museum
7:00 – 8:00 pm

Donna Piercy
Project Bluebird

Local efforts to increase bluebird numbers