

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

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

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4

MAY 2017

www.acctexas.org

May Meeting

Challenges with water quality monitoring and implications for endangered species in Central and North Texas

Erik L. Orsak,

Branch of Restoration and Pre-listing,
Arlington Ecological Services,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wednesday, May 3, 7 pm

Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)

Erik has worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service for twenty years. He currently serves as a Branch Chief in the Arlington Office of the FWS. He holds a B.S. in Biology with a Chemistry Minor, and an M.S. in Biology with Emphasis on Environmental Science from the University of North Texas. His areas of expertise include toxicology, water quality evaluations, and endangered species exposure to environmental contaminants.

Erik's office information, explaining its role and history is at:

<https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ArlingtonTexas/Index.htm>

Bring Something for the Raffle

Bits & Pieces

Here today...

It's May and this space must be devoted to mayflies because a big one (maybe an inch) is squandering a chunk of its very short adult life on my window. Might be the Giant mayfly, biggest species in Texas. Its aquatic babies are 1 mm long at birth, feed on debris moved through their burrows by constantly beating gills, and may develop into adults in 17 weeks or so. Alas, the delicate, graceful grownups do not eat and may live only a day or two. Look fast.



Today's inspirational moment



Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!

Sitting Bull

Nature Won

The results are in for a national effort to involve people with urban wildlife. Here are excerpts from a piece by Texas Parks & Wildlife Urban Biologist (and motivator extraordinaire) Sam Kieschnick:

The City Nature Challenge was a huge success. In DFW, I wasn't alone in using [iNaturalist] — almost 500 fellow citizen scientists joined me in this! Around 24000 observations of about 2300 species were documented during just 5 days (April 14 – 18). Amazing.

Not only do these numbers show that diversity exists in the metroplex, but they also show that there is an active constituency that wants to go to these areas with this diversity. It shows that if a city maintains areas that are good for wildlife, the naturalist community will come and enjoy it. This naturalist community will be stewards of it as well!

Julia's park, at last more on pages 3, 7, 9 – 13



Courtesy of Arlington Parks & Recreation Department

Julia Burgen Park is an example of dreams getting done O.K. Carter

The park is named for former Arlington City Council member Julia Burgen, well-known for her environmental activism.

"Julia Burgen dramatically increased the environmental awareness of the overall community and the political community – from protections we have now for trees to expanded landscaping requirements," said Donna Darovich, Parks and Recreation Board Chair.

O.K. Carter, Arlington historian and former publisher of the original Arlington Citizen-Journal, is one of many left impressed by Burgen's passion for nature.

"Burgen held a copy of the Citizen-Journal in one hand when she first walked into my office, the other hand holding a bribe — a dogwood tree sapling about six inches high that a few minutes earlier had been growing in her front yard. The lead photo on the front page showed a long stretch of busy Arlington street with a circus of competing signage splashed across acres of parking lot asphalt," Carter said.

"She outlined a couple of then-dramatic ideas that included landscaping requirements and signage limitations before launching into her favorite topic, mitigating tree loss and planting more of them. Lots more. Very soon she would run for the Arlington Council and become a champion for environmental enhancements. I planted the dogwood in the newspaper courtyard. It's now fully grown and offers a seasonal explosion of aroma and white-blossomed beauty. Multiply that little tree by a few thousand and you get just a little sense of Burgen's impact on this community," Carter said.

From the President Jan Miller

"Twenty years ago today"...well several more, but pretty close. Amazingly, little evidence can be found online or in newspaper archives about the relatively recent history of Johnson Creek and how Julia Burgen's Linear Park came to be. Any park dedication is reason for celebration, but this park and its dedication are much more. This one signifies Julia's commitment to Arlington's environment. Think that slogan "Nevertheless, she persisted" started with Elizabeth Warren? Nah, it was Julia Burgen.

Arlington's rapid urbanization of the Johnson Creek watershed in the mid-1900s led to repeated and devastating floods of homes that lined the creek. Some homeowners moved out, others loved their wooded creekside homes and refused to move despite the risk, cleaning up and rebuilding each time. In the mid-1990s, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE) proposed replacing Johnson Creek with a giant gabion-lined channel. It was state-of-the-art flood mitigation strategy for its time, but an environmental disaster: Some homes could remain but would be sited along a treeless and dangerous floodway, with raw floodwaters rapidly funneled down a channel lacking aesthetic value or ecological function. Residents cringed with each rain event.

The topic came before Julia and the recently re-formed Arlington Conservation Council. There seemed little recourse, but Julia made contacts, researched, asked questions, and decided to ask the city and ACoE to find another way. The alternative involved buying out homes in the 100-year floodplain and giving Johnson Creek space to be a creek. Julia addressed city council, city staff, ACoE, legislators and the tide started to turn. She ran and was elected to city council. There were ensuing stories of glorious plans and burst bubbles, failed bond proposals, shenanigans at state and federal legislatures, but in the end, homes were purchased, families moved and the land and creek rested. Neighborhood streets were eventually removed, homes cleared, the land sat idle, the creek ran and no one had to be rescued from floodwaters in the middle of the night.

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THE POST OAK

Published 10 times a year by
Arlington Conservation Council
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78004-0216.

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**Thanks A.C.C. for working to
conserve Arlington's
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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller

It looks sparse and it feels sparse. It is sparsely populated, sparsely watered, sparsely adorned, and sparsely acknowledged. That is its real strength.

Andrew John Liccardo



Wildscape Update **Marylee Thomason**

Double WOWs for April 2017

It was a double header! The Wildscape Volunteers won over the crowds. The cheering could be heard down the street and on the buses home. Coach Ann Knudsen barely escaped being carried out on the team's shoulders.

Every spring Molly Hollar Wildscape volunteers fulfill the mission to educate with Walk On the Wild Side (WOW) events. Third-grade students from Goodman Elementary School, last year joined by Anderson Elementary School and this year by Anderson and Merryhill School, move through stations where they see and hear a nature theme explained.



Last year Anderson brought a group for the first time. This year the program added Merryhill School, a small private school for infants through sixth grade.

Of course, this is an educational tour not a baseball game, but treating it like a game makes learning much more fun.

Coach Diaz (Jose Diaz, Anderson Curriculum Instructor & in Science, Third Grade Bilingual Teacher/Team leader) brought Third Grade Anderson for the first match up on April 7. It was a spectacular game.

Baseball is famous for unusual pitches such as the forkball, palmball and screwball, but those maneuvers have nothing on the pitches the students faced including seed tacos, erosion, flower parts, butterflies and woodlands (rotting logs). Every one was a hit. Just hours after the students returned to school, Mr. Diaz sent this email.

April 7 WOW Volunteers, pitchers and fielders (aka presenters and guides)

Pitchers

Butterflies:

Josephine Keeney & Jane Oosterhuis

Flower Parts:

Joyce Duty & Dawn Hancock

Woodlands:

Marylee Thomason & Joe Martinez

Erosion:

Peggy Quinn & Hester Schwarzer

Seed Tacos:

Anne Alderfer, Molly Hollar,

Candy Halliburton, Marian Hiler

Fielders

Robert Faires

Danny Kocurek

Carol Shinsky

Jim Domke

Kevin Donovan

Alice Moffitt

Rozanna Francis



"Ms. Knudsen,

I really want to give you and all the volunteers a great thanks. Our kids were very engaged and were able to experience nature like they had never before. You guys are amazing, the enthusiasm, knowledge, and spirit that all of you share is commendable. Once again thank you very much!"

You are only as good as your fans and the real fans are the students. Merryhill School's Ayden thrilled us with this letter; "Thank you for the awesome time at Veterans Park. I loved our field trip and want to inform you that our trip was extraordinary (sic)."

April 13 WOW Volunteers, pitchers and fielders

Pitchers

Butterflies:

Josephine Keeney & Jane Oosterhuis

Flower Parts:

Joyce Duty & Dawn Hancock

Woodlands: Rotting Logs

Marylee Thomason & Joe Martinez

Erosion:

Peggy Quinn & Hester Schwarzer

Seed Tacos:

Carol Shinsky, Candy Halliburton,

Danny Kocurek, Marian Hiler

Fielders

Susan Marchbanks

Nancy Price

Rosalie Rogers

Ann Trenton

Amelia Gomez-Barroso

Patsy Miller

Robert Faires

Mary Sanford

Nancy Price

continued on page 6

Wildscape Update continued from page 5



That is the sort of response that will have us suiting up next year.

High drama preceded the second game when weather and transportation challenges made rescheduling necessary three times. The Goodman and Wildscape teams were so resolved to meet that they rebounded after each delay.

The Goodman students finally arrived April 13 making it a double header for the month. They loved filling out their



scavenger sheets with discoveries such as animal prints, acorns and bird sightings.

A few staff changes put new presenters to the test. Rookie pitcher Carol Shinsky admitted to some first-time jitters. "At first I wasn't at all sure of myself, but by the time the fifth group came through, I thought, 'I've got this. Bring on the next group.' But that was the last one!"

Coach Knudsen was heard to whisper in reference to her team, "Thank you,



blessed souls, for being flexible when things go awry." Team Goodman's coach, Terri Miller, expressed a similar sentiment.

The students were escorted by tour guides who were tasked with timely delivery of young players, time-keeping during the presentations and a prompt departure when time was up. Everything WOW-related is a volunteer effort. Thank you all very much.

Wildscape Extra

The Big Event

UTA's Big Event, where students volunteer to help on campus and in the community, spilled over to the wildscape this year. This group of nearly all military veterans did a wonderful job. They were enthusiastic, organized go-getters. When they finished one project, they asked what else they could do. Cheers to this group of hard workers.

First Saturday bee encounters with Danny Kocurek, beekeeper

Danny has retired from one buzzing activity to another. It is not entirely different from his emergency room duties because there are still occasional wounds to be attended.

Danny brought cardboard boxes to show how bees are transported through the mail. He talked about how the queens are developed and what a worker female bee can expect during her life in the hive. Young bees graduate from nursery to house keeping and sentry duties. Only the mature females who are strong enough go foraging. Unlike wasps, which die every winter, honeybees produce enough honey for current and winter consumption.



Brave and ever cautious (but curious!) attendees followed Danny through the woods to his house where he keeps hives in his back yard. Some of us chose to suit up and brave the bees' anger when Danny took out various trays to reveal breeding chambers and honey storage.

Others preferred the relative safety of the screened porch, but even there a few bees got in and punished the invaders. Getting honey is worth a few stings.

Thank you, bees, from all who love honey.



From the President

continued from page 3

This month, on Thursday, May 25, at 11 am, a linear park will be dedicated to Julia Burgen. It's more than just a park in the center of Arlington: It's a green pulse of life, reminding us where we come from, who and what we are, and of a woman who worked against difficult odds to do the right thing for Arlington's people and its environment. Julia, thank you for your commitment, hard work and persistence. Wishing you bouquets of prairie celestials and woodland violets. They may yet grow again on the banks of Johnson Creek.

Join us for ACC's June 7 meeting and please invite a friend or neighbor. Thanks!



Grace Darling, Annabelle Corboy, and Jan Miller at EarthDay Texas

Wolf

For years I've dreamed about you,
Thought about you, written
Letters, posted urgent pleas
For help to keep your kind alive

And roaming in the wild,
Uncounted miles from here,
Our cozy, sheltered home
Where wolves do not exist

Except as cute and fuzzy dolls
That sit on bookshelves,
Howling only when I squeeze
Their little bellies,

Hair-erecting records
That I play on Halloween
To frighten kids,
Poignant photographs on calendars.

I sometimes wonder (thinking
With a sector of my brain
That formed ten million years ago)
What feelings I might have

Alone in night-dark woods
With nothing but a pointed stick
If I heard your padded paws
Behind me on the path.

©2009 John I. Blair

Thanks to our speaker

Last month a big crowd turned out to hear from Lemuel Randolph, Director of Arlington Parks & Recreation Department. He returned to give us an update on our parks and open spaces and in the process demonstrated a calm mastery of the wide range of facts, figures, and issues that come with his demanding job.

Whenever city officials make time for us we're grateful. Because ACC is particularly concerned with Arlington's parks and natural areas, we are especially indebted to Mr. Randolph, who knows a thing or two about listening to lots of questions and answering them with care.



Lemuel Randolph with ACC President Jan Miller



Southwest Nature Preserve and OS Gray Natural Area Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, 7:00 pm

No Program – Business Meeting Only

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.

Saturday, May 20

An Evening at Southwest Nature Preserve

Details soon: Please save the date for a late afternoon-early evening event

Check the website or e-mail for more information about the special Saturday event and about Southwest Nature Preserve,

see www.swnp.org

or e-mail info@swnp.org.

EarthDayTexas Grant

Friends of SWNP and APRD won a civic grant at EarthDayTx's [EarthxPitch](#). The grant funds will be used to restore native pollinator habitat to the southwest corner of the preserve. The 2-acre project site was transferred to the City of Arlington and SWNP from the City of Kennedale after re-alignment of Bowman Springs Road in 2014 and includes the old roadway and right-of-way. The project will include preparation of the site, followed by planting and management of native wildflowers (including milkweed for Monarchs), grasses suited for the preserve's Eastern Crosstimbers site, and signage to explain the project.

UTA's Big Event

On Saturday, April 8, Annabelle Corboy supplied photos and this message about the Big Event: We got so much done today! Special thanks to APRD's Jay Falgout for a great plan and execution, Jan Miller for keeping us straight on plantings, and the amazing volunteers from UT Arlington.



Do Not Miss This!



JULIA BURGEN PARK DEDICATION

Thursday, May 25th, 2017 | 11:00 AM
1008 Ruby St, Arlington, TX 76010



It all started with Julia Burgen Sue Phillips

A Little Known Story

Julia Burgen could easily be declared the founder of all things environmental in Arlington, Texas; long before most of us could spell it, Julia was preaching the virtues of saving trees to promote air quality and the greening of Arlington. And she had a passion for creeks and rivers and how their erosion affected the landscape of a city with enormous drainage and flooding issues seriously affecting everything and everyone in its path.

So it was no surprise that Julia was the founding member of the reborn Arlington Conservation Council. It was during her presidency of Arlington Conservation Council she learned that the city council was to vote on whether or not to accept \$4.5 million in federal funds that would create a concrete-and rock-lined flood control channel along Johnson Creek.

Julia invited Sue Phillips, President of East Arlington Renewal; Steve McCollum, President of Arlington Neighborhood Council; and Jan Miller, member of Arlington Conservation Council, to join her in going to city council on October 31, 1995, to convince council members to reject the federal funds and think more visionary in addressing flooding issues along Johnson Creek and instead develop parks and recreation trails along the creek.

Julia was well prepared to argue that concreting the creek would only make flooding worse and also create a huge eyesore for our city. She had a vision of a beautiful greenway through the middle of Arlington.

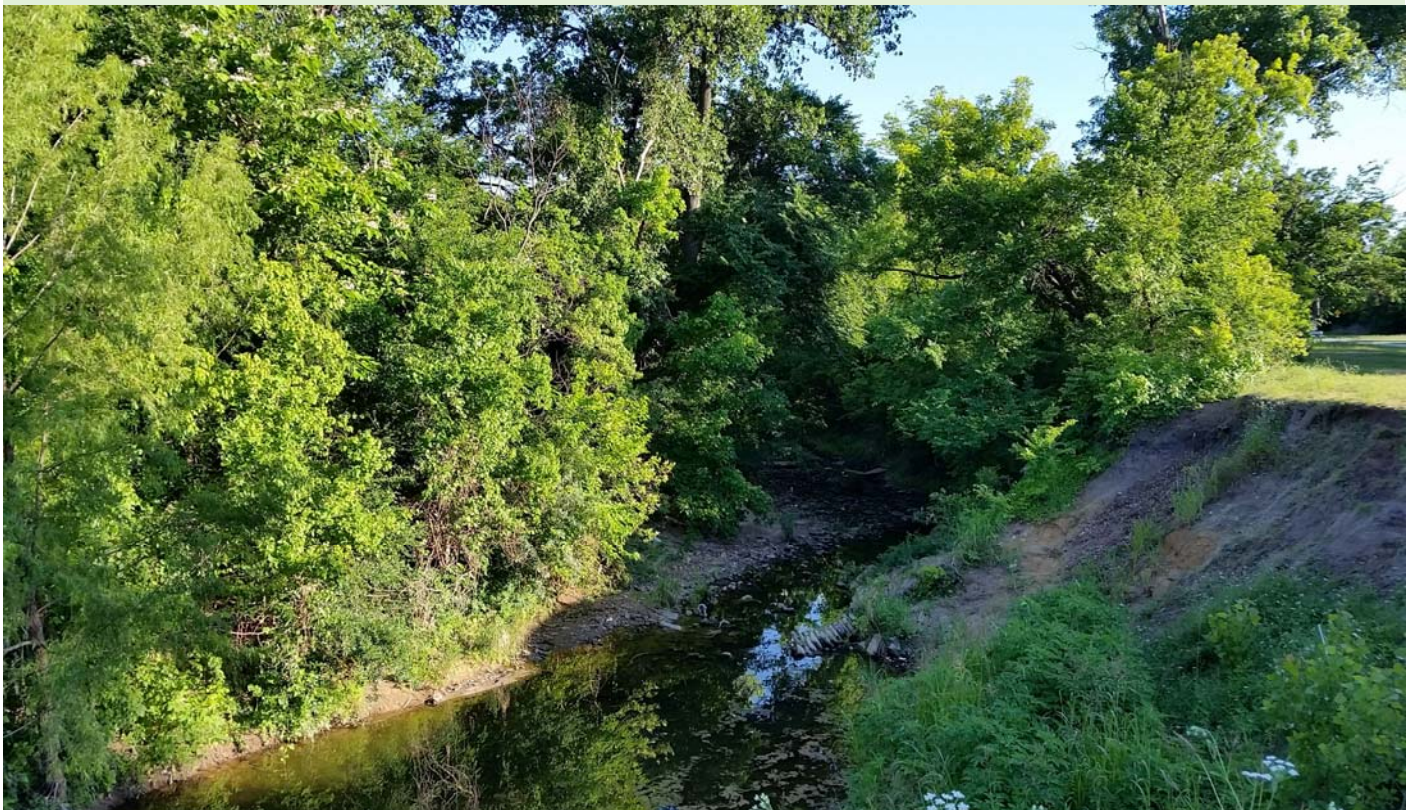
City council voted 5 to 4 against the concrete. Casting the 5 votes were Mayor Richard Greene and council members Judy Rupay, Wayne Ogle, Paula Hightower, and Dan Serna.

The council instead chose an approach that would include buyouts of flood-prone homes and development of parks and recreation trails along Johnson Creek.

Shortly thereafter, Mayor Greene moved quickly to create a Johnson Creek Committee and charged the committee with developing a master plan for the creek. The first meeting of the Johnson Creek Committee was held on December 12, 1995.

Julia's visionary leadership to think bigger and better for solving erosion and flooding issues began an effort over 20 years long to create a beautiful greenway from the entertainment district to Gateway Park near the Parks Mall.

Without a doubt, Julia Burgen is the Mother of Johnson Creek.



Julia Burgen — Environmental Conscience of Arlington Grace Darling

It was a small group of folks who believed Johnson creek was a gift to the city, a natural wonder to be admired and enjoyed, a prize to be cherished.

They were led by a little woman with a big heart and a mind like a laser. She had studied environmental science at the local university and believed nature could heal itself if given a proper hand. She dreamed of a leafy waterway running the length of the city as it was back then, a green corridor of immense ecologic, aesthetic, and economic value to its residents.

She shared her vision with like-minded friends and they formed a team of Johnson Creek saviors.

These missionaries took to the field, examined the lay of the land, consulted with experts, and became convinced that the solution to the creek flooding lay in restoring the banks to their natural state, rather than constructing a concrete ditch as the Army Corps of Engineers was proposing.

They sought reinforcements among city leaders. They held raffles, bake sales, neighborhood meetings, went to schools, and talked to anyone who would listen. They plotted strategy, lobbied hard, and preached the Save Johnson Creek sermon to movers and shakers and other influential people in the city as well as to children, their playmates, teachers, parents, and grandparents.

Driven by the indefatigable Julia Burgen, whose grit and determination to do the right thing would not ever flag, the team persisted. And one day they succeeded.

On October 31, 1995, a majority of the Arlington City Council turned down the Corps's plan and approved a costly buyout of houses along the creek's floodplain. The city's green revolution began with Julia and her Johnson Creek committee and it still forges on, occasionally bloodied but never defeated.

Twenty-two years later, the park that will bear her name is a proud testimony to what one committed



individual can accomplish when the cause is compelling.

Every tree, bush, grass and wildflower gracing the creek banks of this peaceful, old-fashioned bit of pastoral beauty in the heart of Arlington owes its life to her and her fellow campaigners. Thank you, Julia.

This park is a fitting tribute to the woman who inspired many of us to carry on the environmental torch she lit two decades ago, a tireless warrior whose legacy of tenacity for a righteous goal in the face of seemingly unbeatable odds is all the spur we need.

May the wind fill your sails.



Concrete ditch defeated. Now that park along the creek needs a name.

Below is the proposal made to the Parks Board in 2004 by ACC's then-president Marian Hiler:

THE JULIA BURGEN PARK ON THE CREEK

Proposal

To name a portion of the Johnson Creek Linear Park after Julia Burgen, former Arlington City Council member for District 5.

Specifications

This section of parkland extends along the Johnson Creek corridor from Collins Street in the northeast to Park Row Drive in the southwest. At its midpoint it encompasses the area known as Confluence Park, where Trading House Creek merges with Johnson Creek. South from this point the section meanders from just east of Center Street to Pecan Street. North of Confluence Park it runs generally northeastward before ending at the intersection of East 2nd and Collins streets.

The Julia Burgen Park on the Creek would therefore be near the historic center of the city as well as geographically central to Councilwoman Burgen's district and to Johnson Creek itself.

Reasons for the Proposed Name

Julia Burgen has served the city tirelessly, first as a private citizen embracing numerous community boards and civic activities and later as an elected City Council representative for District 5 from 1997 to 2003. Her contributions to sustain



and improve the quality of life in our city span 25 years. More than any other person, Julia is identified with efforts to conserve Arlington's natural resources and Johnson Creek in particular.

In the years prior to the council vote to reject an Army Corps of Engineers proposal for a concrete channel, she immersed herself in efforts to save the creek. She studied corps documents, researched alternatives, wrote newspaper columns, lobbied the city council and rallied support. She even hauled trash from its banks. She was key in organizing the Johnson Creek Awareness Coalition, which later became Friends of Johnson Creek and for which she served as secretary. The City Council selected her to serve on the Johnson Creek Committee.

Julia spearheaded the reorganization of the Arlington Conservation Council in 1994, serving as president until she ran for City Council in 1997. ACC's Tree Advocates Task Force led a successful effort to

create a landscape ordinance protecting trees on commercial property. As a result of this ordinance, Crystal Canyon in North Arlington was given to the city to mitigate a developer's accidental destruction of trees at a south Arlington site. In 1995, Julia represented ACC at a Park and Recreation Board hearing, urging that the remnant Blackland Prairie on New York Avenue be saved. She planted the seed that became the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park.

She has been an active parks advocate, leading trail walks for Park Pals and the River Legacy Foundation Living Science Center. She has served on citizen committees for developing the Comprehensive Plan and for the Parks Master Plan and revisions, and also on the Development Issues Committee subcommittee, Stormwater Advisory Committee and Local Emergency Planning Committee.

continued on page 13

Concrete ditch continued from page 12

Honors/Awards

Woman of the Year, *Star-Telegram*, 1996

League of Women Voters Texas Individual Award, Excellence in Environmental Awareness, 1996

Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence, 1995, Clean Texas 2000 Project, Individual Category, Finalist (one of six statewide)

Woman of the Year, 1994, Award from the American Association of University Women, Arlington Branch

Southwest Region of National Recreation and Park Association Award, 1989

Texas Recreation and Parks Society Individual Award, 1989

Arlington Park Department Awards of Appreciation: April 1987, October 1987, May 1991

Arlington City Council Committee Service

Johnson Creek Committee, November 1995-98

Development Issues Committee subcommittee, 1993-94

Stormwater Advisory Committee, 1986-91

List of Supporting Documents

Johnson Creek

"Sales tax vote, waterway plan a culmination of 3 years' planning, passion," Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*, April 26, 1998

"Project was lesson in diligence, advocates say," *Star-Telegram*, March 14, 1997

"Enthusiasm greets creek vote," Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*, March 14, 1997

"City history is made by the efforts of a few," O.K. Carter, *Star-Telegram*, Nov. 2, 1995

"Turning the Tide," Mede Nix and Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*, Oct. 1, 1995

"Arlington City Council report," *Star-Telegram*, Nov. 16, 1995

"Johnson Creek scoured amid divided viewpoints," Robert Cadwallader, *Star-Telegram*

"Activist helps others see the forest," Ashley Cheshire, *Star-Telegram*, Nov. 6, 1995

"Environmental groups enjoy victory as Arlington City Council votes to save Johnson Creek," Todd Nichols and Pam Kerr, *Sierra Club Crier*, December 1995

"Johnson Creek Decision," Julia Burgen, Arlington Conservation Council newsletter



"Developer to seek city's OK for project on sculpture site," Kim Horner, *Arlington Morning News*, Nov. 5, 1996

"There's still time to do the right thing in south Arlington," Julia Burgen, *Star-Telegram*, Nov. 12, 1996

"Don't let development compromise creek corridor vision," Julia Burgen, *Star-Telegram*, Aug. 28, 1996

"Help needed," Julia Burgen, Letters, *Arlington Morning News*, Oct. 29, 1996

"Park priorities to await bond vote," Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*

Tree Preservation

"A growing tree split, Arlington considers forcing builders to save foliage," Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*, Nov. 18, 1993

"City's landscape ordinance sows seeds of disagreement," Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*

"Builders save few large trees, city finds," Mary Doclar, *Star-Telegram*, March 19, 1996

"Park Master Plan Revisions," Julia Burgen, Arlington Conservation Council newsletter

"Landscape Ordinance and Substitute Plans," Julia Burgen, Arlington Conservation Council newsletter

"Background Information flyer" [landscape ordinance], Julia Burgen

Crystal Canyon Preservation

"Zoning officials could determine Arlington woodland's fate this week," Steve McLinden and Jan Jarvis, *Star-Telegram*

"Park land deal approved, Company to trade Crystal Canyon to city," Mary Doclar, *Star-Telegram*, Dec. 19, 1996

"Save the creek," Julia Burgen, Dec. 30, 1996

Other Documentation

"Group to city: Save Blackland Prairie," Amy Norris, *Arlington Morning News*, July 13-15, 1995

"Arlington's top volunteers get day in spotlight," John Austin, *Star-Telegram*

"Arbor Day should be every day in Arlington," Julia Burgen, *Arlington Morning News*, June 7, 1996

"Civic leader runs for council seat, says District 5's needs to come first," Mary Doclar, *Star-Telegram*, 1997

In case you missed it Grace Darling

California's Poor Deserve Clean Water Too:

The lead-poisoned drinking water crisis in Flint, Mich., has gotten all the headlines, but California has a water contamination problem that endangers far more people and has existed for decades. The biggest danger is arsenic, which like uranium, another contaminant, occurs naturally in the soil in some parts of the state. Drink enough arsenic-contaminated water and you may contract cancer or other grave diseases. The state's bad water is concentrated in the mostly Latino farm-worker communities of the San Joaquin Valley, but nearly all of California's 58 counties include small, rural communities with tainted water.



Farmers bear responsibility for nitrate, the second-biggest contamination source, which enters the water supply from agricultural runoff and manure. Nitrate can cause "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal disorder in infants, and other serious ailments in pregnant women and children.

Racism plays a part in the contamination crisis, but so do poverty, patchwork water systems, and, until recently, an overestimation of the quantity of contaminants required to trigger illness.

In 2012, Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation making California the first state to recognize that "every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible water." A recent poll found that 72% of Californians are willing to pay as much as an extra dollar per month on their water bills to fix the contaminated systems. This is a powerful indication that Californians want to make good on the state's groundbreaking 2012 proclamation: Clean drinking water is a human right, and providing it is an act of simple human decency. (Jacques Leslie, *Los Angeles Times*, 5/4/17)

Waco Worries: (Texas Standard, May 3, 2017) Using data from the Texas Department of State Health Services, the *Waco Tribune-Herald* found that nearly 17% of children in the area who were tested had elevated levels of lead in their blood — nearly double the state average.

J. B. Smith, a reporter with the *Waco Tribune-Herald*, wrote about elevated lead levels in North Waco. He says lead levels are highest in Waco zip code 76707, where two-thirds of the houses were built before 1960. Unlike Flint, where lead was delivered to residents via their water pipes after the city began using a more acidic water source, Smith says the data indicate that lead in Waco comes from the paint used on older homes. When lead risk is high, Smith says the EPA and Centers for Disease Control recommend wet mopping frequently, and not scraping or cutting into



lead paint without a certified lead contractor. "You should call before you scrape," Smith says.



Kaput Is Kaput in Texas:

"Scimetrix Ltd. Corp. has withdrawn its registration of Kaput Feral Hog Bait in the state of Texas. . . Under the threat of many lawsuits, our family owned company cannot at this time risk the disruption of our business and continue to compete with special interests in Texas that have larger resources to sustain a lengthy legal battle." (Wellington CO, April 24, 2017 /PRNewswire)

I guess by "special interests" they mean all sane people who were concerned about the effects of warfarin on wildlife, livestock, and the environment. This ill-advised approach to feral hog control had multiple shortcomings: According to the manufacturer's instructions, the warfarin poison cannot be used near water sources; Kaput-baited pastures must be free of other livestock; hogs may take 4 to 17 days to die gruesome, bloody deaths; the separate pasturing must continue for 90 days after the last use of the bait; and poisoned hogs must be buried — with unknown residual effects on the soil. You may well wonder how anyone, let alone an agriculture commissioner, would think this method of feral pig control had any merit.

Want to learn more? [Read this from Sierra Club.](#)

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

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, May 3
Fielder Museum
7 pm

Erik L. Orsak

***Challenges with water quality monitoring
and implications for endangered species in Central and North Texas***