

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2019



Southwest Nature Preserve • Photo by Bob Brennan

**Special Day,
Time, &
Place**

January Meeting Annual Potluck & Business Meeting

**Special Day,
Time,
& Place**



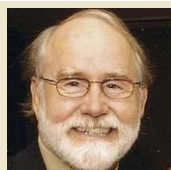
**Saturday, January 19, 10 am – noon
The Montessori Academy of Arlington,
3428 W Arkansas Lane, Arlington TX 76016**



Somehow, it's already time again to prepare (or pick up) a little food, do some sitting around, eat and talk, review our last environmental year, and elect new officers. And of course, it's also time to express your biggest local environmental concerns, share your interests, and be sure your ACC knows what you think it should be doing in 2019. See you there.

Contents

- 3 From the President**
- 4 Bits & Pieces**
- 5 Question Corner**
- 7 Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve**
- 8 More Bits**
- 9 Cease the Grease**
- 10 Educational Opportunity**
- 11 Molly Hollar Wildscape Update**
- 13 Step Right Up**
- 14 In Case You Missed It**
- 16 Southwest Nature Preserve**



From the President

Dick Schoech

Start the New Year Off Right

We have all made new year's resolutions like exercise more, lose weight, eat healthier, etc. Too often these resolutions are forgotten after a few months. I recently listened to a great podcast that could help us improve our resolutions from a neuroscience perspective. The podcast explained that feelings of pleasure and happiness (well-being) are the result of stimulation by different neurotransmitters on different parts of our brains. Pleasure stimulations from the neurotransmitter dopamine tell us "this feels good, I want or need more." Excess dopamine leads to addiction such as a runner's high or Facebook interactions. Happiness stimulations from the neurotransmitter serotonin tell us "this feels good, I don't want or need any more," such as when we feel content after meditation or helping others.

The key point is that brain research demonstrates that as serotonin increases, dopamine decreases and vice versa. **That is, the more we do things that stimulate the pleasurable brain receptors, the unhappier we become.** So, our new year's resolutions should help us avoid pleasurable activities that are short term addictive while encouraging things that over the long term make us happy. Our society, especially corporations, use neuro-marketing principles to get us to use things that enhance pleasure and stimulate us to do them over and over, like eating fast foods even though they are making us unhealthy. Thus, the addictive qualities of dopamine are used to keep us repeating pleasurable behaviors just to improve corporate profits. This happens even though society's happiness indicators, such as our suicide and depression rates, continue to rise. The table on page 6 is a simplified list of activities based on this complex brain science. As you look at the table, think of your new year's resolutions and whether they will produce short term pleasure or long-term happiness.

continued on page 6



ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service, and advocacy for a sustainable future

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15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
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Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Just a clump of ugly weeds? Natives? Don't know, but eight or so dark-eyed juncos want to be there. Food? Shelter? They like it, and that's good enough.



One Square Meter

Have you been reading [The Prairie Ecologist](#)? Always good stuff, well written and often important for prairie people everywhere. A year ago Chris Helzer began [a project to photograph everything](#) he could find in one square meter of prairie. His discussion and photos are well worth your time.



Whataburger Trees

Okay, they're not in Arlington, but these strangely trimmed live oaks should be documented somewhere, so here they are. Let's not do this any more.



Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org

Home is Where You Find It

On a cold, gray day last week your editor was digging out an old pile of decomposed mulch when it became clear that even here some of our local residents are finding a winter home. Five flat-headed snakes in under an hour, and the next day, another snake and a young Gulf Coast toad. All relocated, of course.



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Do I have to rake my leaves?

A: Neil Sperry, our local expert, says yes: You may choose to rake or blow them or even mow and bag them. The critical issue is to avoid leaving them where they fell — on top of your lawn. Leaves pack down to form a shinglelike layer that traps moisture, and this stops the good movement of air through the grass. Diseases love cool, dark and damp places. So, between our seemingly weekly rain events, schedule time to get those leaves picked up.



So the real answer must be no. Or maybe a qualified no. Thick fallen leaves can hurt grass, and I've done that — on purpose. If you love your grass, I suppose you might rake the thickest leaves into planting beds for mulch or move them to the compost pile. But for me the importance of fallen leaves is habitat, sort of a theme in two of the bits on the preceding page. The answer I like best comes from the [National Wildlife Federation](#), where the emphasis is firmly on habitat.

continued on page 12

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Arlington, TX 76012
(817) 275-1000
www.wbu.com/arlingtontx
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
9 - 6 Sat, 12 - 5 Sun



GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

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conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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From the President continued from page 3

Activities to avoid because they produce short-term pleasure and can become addictive	Activities to do because they tend to produce long-term happiness (well-being) and are not addictive
Online interactions with others such as interacting in computer games or on Facebook	Face-to-face interactions in communal groups, such as visiting the sick or volunteering at the wildscape
Doing things that make you alone feel good, e.g., shopping alone, binge eating, abusing substances, or accumulating more money than needed to survive	Volunteerism that helps others or the earth, e.g., altruism, submitting a photo or short article to the <i>Post Oak</i> , or pulling privet (which is definitely not pleasurable)
Sleeping less than 8 hours each night or trying to multitask (only 2.5% of the population can multitask successfully)	Getting at least 8 hours of restful sleep, being mindful when doing things like gardening and exercise, such as walking in nature
Eating processed foods like burgers and fries, and drinking sugary drinks	Eating fresh fruits and vegetables
For more activities, Google “how to increase serotonin” or “how to get the right amount of dopamine”	

This quick description is an oversimplification of complex brain science, but it helps us understand why societies where marketing emphasizes pleasure tend to have unhappy citizens. It also helps explain why organizations like ACC, which support activities that increase serotonin, tend to improve our well-being and remain over time.

References

Read “The Hacking of the American Mind: The Science Behind the Corporate Takeover of Our Bodies and Brains by Dr. Robert Lustig, <https://www.amazon.com/Hacking-American-Mind-Corporate-Takeover/dp/1101982586>

Download the free 50-minute podcast that explains the corporate neuromarketing that is destroying our well-being by robbing our serotonin (happiness) and increasing our dopamine (pleasure) brain functions. <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/381444414/the-people-s-pharmacy-radio-program>

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



People from a planet without flowers would think we must be mad with joy the whole time to have such things about us.

Iris Murdoch



More Bits

MIGRATION John Blair

Of course the flying flocks
Fleeing cold extinction
Are in deepest earnest.

But we below,
Snug in jackets, autos, dwellings,
Just see beauty, strength, aspiration.

This yearly journey from death to life
Has inspired prophets, philosophers
And poets for generations.

We wax rhapsodic, wise, metaphysical,
And don't much care
What the birds are really feeling.

They're feeling passion, yes,
Enough to soar; but also pain, exhaustion,
Sometimes animal despair.

And while it is not necessary
To understand the birds' reality,
A little empathy might temper ours.

©2003 John I. Blair



Thanks to Our Last Speaker



November speaker Gary Gene Olp with ACC president Dick Schoech.

It's been a while since our November meeting, and there have been at least a few holiday distractions, but it's not too late be grateful to Gary Gene Olp, LEED Fellow Environmental Architect (among many other things), who took the time to speak to us then on sustainable building.

Mr Olp's talk was an inspiring mix of projects, practical matters, philosophical concepts, and environmental awareness, all based on his years of creativity and experience as head of the first green architectural practice in Dallas. How wonderful it was that he found time to speak to us, and we're glad he did.



Ashes to Ashes

A recent [Star-Telegram story](#) contains very bad news: The emerald ash borer, an exotic beetle that kills ash trees in great numbers has been confirmed in Tarrant County. All we can do is watch for signs of infestation and contact Texas A&M Forest Service if we notice anything.



Cease the Grease



Para leer este folleto en Español, por favor visite www.arlingtontx.gov/water/fog.html.

On December 1, a couple of guys were happily collecting used kitchen grease at Tierra Verde Golf Club in southwestern Arlington. All those greasy bottles stood out sharply in that setting, but it made sense because that environmentally certified golf course has a machine to convert the kitchen waste into bio-diesel they use to power their mowers.

Kalan Howell (*left*) from Arlington Water Utilities and Hanh Tong from Tierra Verde were there as part of a program to keep oils, grease, and other contaminants from clogging pipes. And residents smart enough to care were taking the trouble to protect our drains as Tierra Verde turns harmful trash into an environmentally worthwhile treasure. [More information here.](#)



The Arlington Environmental Hall of Shame

Thrown in the street last week in front of the editor's house. Who? Why? No complete answers, but [try this](#) and [this](#) for some insight.



Educational Opportunity Annabelle Corboy



The Senior Education program at Tarrant County College is a partnership between the College and citizen volunteers. The program is open to citizens 55 and older. Other than the age requirement, there are no other requirements to enroll.

Registration is available at the Registrar's office at any of the TCC Campuses. For the Northeast campus, you can register in the Administration Building (NADM).

There is a \$20 registration fee, paid at the time of sign-up.

For more information...

www.tccd.edu/academics/cie/li/felong-learning/senior-education/



Using Smart Phone Apps to Explore Nature

**Senior Education Class at TCC
Northeast Campus
Spring 2019
March 18, 20, 22
1 – 5 pm**

The class is a hands-on workshop where the student will download and learn to use free Smartphone Apps that can help them explore and document the natural world. With the current interest in Citizen Science, we will focus on iNaturalist, which is used internationally to record the living organisms around us. We will use iNaturalist to post our observations and utilize its features to help us identify them. And we will spend time understanding the role these tools serve in our communities. Some of the most powerful aspects of iNaturalist are only available through the website, so we will take a look at those features as well.

We will also look at Merlin Bird ID and AllTrails, two more apps that enhance our experience with nature, appealing especially to birders and hikers. If time and weather permit, the last class will include a field trip to a nearby park.

Students must have a Smartphone. Both Androids and iPhones will be supported. This class will be of value to anyone who wants to use their Smartphone to better understand and appreciate the natural world.

Sign up for CSCX-1027-23005 ASC: Smartphone Apps for Nature



Instructors:

Annabelle Corboy

Martha Siegel

If you have questions, you may contact
Annabelle at 817-683-1739

Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason and Jim Domke

A while ago Jim Domke came to the wildscape with an idea for a Nature Crawl as an alternative to Black Friday shopping. It started with his email:

“Hello everyone,
Working on getting the word out about a Nature Crawl starting at O.S. Gray Natural Area, then the wildscape, Southwest Nature Preserve, and ending up at River Legacy. Goal is to bring awareness of these special places to residents, get volunteers and promote networking.”

Promotion for this first-time project started in early November 1 for a November 23rd event. Friends groups at the first three parks talked to contact groups and put up flyers.

On the day, 10 people showed up at the wildscape, two families and a

father and with his 10-year-old daughter who enjoyed taking pictures at all the venues with her iPad. Hester Schwarzer, Josephine and Frank Keeney, and Marylee Thomason represented the wildscape volunteers. Josephine and Marylee gave tours.

Jim’s analysis tells a promising story:

“Fourteen showed at the first stop, O.S. Gray, but at the end I had 25 names of people to put on the mailing list. I was disappointed in the turnout, but all the volunteer groups thought it a success, telling me not to worry about this first effort.

Few showed up at River Legacy. After 3:00 it was past time for lunch, and besides, everyone already knows about River Legacy. We conclude that future crawls



Jim Frisinger gets ready at Southwest Nature Preserve

would be long enough with only the three natural areas that have volunteer Friends groups.

People we talked to who didn't know about the crawl, but enjoyed and frequently visited one particular spot were very interested in discovering others, especially the easy-access natural areas in Arlington. Some of those living in Fort Worth find that coming to Arlington is easier than going to the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge.

Talking to people doing the crawl and others simply getting out and visiting one of the natural areas, I came to the conclusion that the most crowded park was River Legacy and that nobody knew the other natural areas existed. Canvassing River Legacy and handing out a flyer there might get better results than a crawl. On the other hand, having volunteers out on a beautiful day was a great way to reach out and bring awareness about the Friends groups to those who like one area in particular and might want to get more involved.”

by J.G. Domke, Arlington, Texas
www.jimdomke.com/



Fort Worth father and daughter who visited all four of the natural areas. The young daughter had fun taking photos with her iPad.

Yes, it's time again Marian Hiler

It's Time to Pay Your Dues

Please make us bigger so we can be better. ACC's size is important when voicing members' environmental interests and concerns to municipal policymakers on issues such as new gas wells.

It will just make you feel better to increase ACC's environmental voice in Arlington.

See the last page of this newsletter for information on submitting your 2019 dues. Or you can bring them to our January 19 meeting.

The Trees Will Thank You

V

John Blair

Each November and December as by plan
No matter what the weather they do
come;
So I suppose there's nothing special
I should see a V of birds today
Flapping above a corner store
Excepting they've been coming
Every year since we remember,
Every year since way before
We were here to be amazed,
Before our bit of time began.

©2014 John I. Blair

Question Corner continued from page 5

They encourage homeowners to skip raking or blowing leaves entirely and suggest that they let them be. The reason? "A leaf layer several inches deep is actually a natural thing in any area where trees naturally grow." They also point out that many animal species rely on leaf layers as micro-ecosystems. Further, these animals need leaf litter for food, shelter, and nesting material. Many moth and butterfly caterpillars overwinter in fallen leaves before emerging in spring. And there's a huge group that is often overlooked: invaluable microorganisms crucial to soil health.

Another negative aspect of raking is the amazing waste from petroleum-based bags stuffed with leaves and hauled to the landfill where they can only generate methane. This is important: We have an estimated 40 million acres of turf grass; that's a lot of lost habitat with every raking. So let's not, or maybe not so much.

And now, a word from our sponsor



Step right Up **Marian Hiler**

Have you been pining for your very own ACC t-shirt? Or is the one you've been lovingly wearing becoming thread-bare? Well, fret no more. Opportunity awaits. You can now order one for only \$15. The t-shirts will be Electric Green, which goes quite well with the existing classic treefrog green ACC shirts. See photos.

An order will be placed on Jan 31. You can order by emailing Marian Hiler mernhome@sbcglobal.net and pay when you receive the shirt(s).

Sizes available:

Youth – YS, YM, YL, YXL

Adult – S, M, L, XL, XXL, and XXXL

Gildan brand t-shirts feature:

5.3 oz. 100% pre-shrunk cotton, true to size

Breathable, lightweight fabric

Double-needle stitched for durability



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling



Fire debris removal. Disaster officials are scrambling to secure a place to sort and process the remnants of nearly 19,000 structures destroyed in the Camp wildfire that began on Nov. 8 and killed 86 people in and around the town of Paradise. The mammoth undertaking has been slowed by staunch opposition in nearby communities eyed as potential sites for a temporary scrapyard, which would receive 250 to 400 truckloads of concrete and metal each day.

In both Chico and Oroville, environmental concerns have trumped all others, including noise and traffic. Though only non-toxic concrete and metal would be processed at the site — hazardous waste such as car batteries, electronics and asbestos will be sent to designated landfills in California and Nevada — residents worry that toxic dust could blow off the debris and compromise air quality.

The debris can't be processed in Paradise itself, officials say, because such a large operation could impede

swift reconstruction efforts there. And time is of the essence: The sooner the rubble is removed, the sooner residents can begin to rebuild or, at the very least, move trailers onto their properties. Most of the non-hazardous concrete and metals recovered from the mas-

sive wildfire will be recycled and used in reconstruction efforts.



Organic farming is on the rise in the U.S. There were more than 14,000 certified organic farms in the United States in 2016, according to the latest available data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#). This represents a 56% increase from 2011, the earliest comparable year. And while California remains king when it comes to the number of organic farms, several other states saw dramatic growth in organic farming over this time, particularly in the South.

Still, organic farming makes up a small share of U.S. farmland overall. There were 5 million certified organic acres of farmland in 2016, representing less than 1% of the 911 million acres of total farmland nationwide. Some states, however, had relatively large shares of organic farmland. Vermont's 134,000 certified organic acres accounted for 11% of its total 1.25 million farm acres. California, Maine and New York followed in largest shares of organic acreage — in each, certified organic acres made up 4% of total farmland. California had by far the most certified organic farms in 2016, with 2,713. Its nearly 1.1 million acres of organic farms represented 21% of all U.S. certified organic land.

Coal no, wind and sun yes.

Texas might have the perfect environment to quit coal for good, say researchers from Rice University. Scientists found that between wind energy from West Texas and the Gulf Coast, and solar energy across the state, Texas could meet a significant portion of its electricity

continued on page 15



In Case You Missed It continued from page 14

demand from renewable power without extensive battery storage. The reason: These sources generate power at different times of day, meaning that coordinating them could replace production from coal-fired plants.

Texas is the **largest producer of wind energy** in the United States, generating about 18% percent of its electricity from wind. Most of the state's wind turbines are in West Texas, where the wind blows the strongest at night and in the early spring, when demand is low. The West Texas wind power can be complemented by turbines on the Gulf Coast, where wind produces the most electricity on late afternoons in the summer, when power demand is the highest. Solar energy, a small but rapidly growing segment of the state's energy mix, also has the advantage of generating power when it is needed most — in hot, sunny summer afternoons.

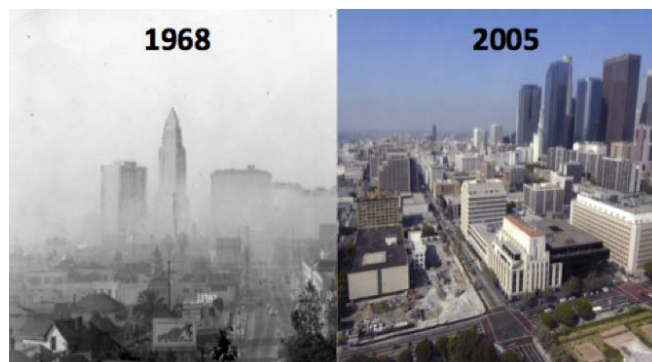
Weather, however, remains unpredictable. Texas would still need battery storage and natural gas-fired power plants to fill in gaps when, for example, winds might slacken earlier than expected. Coal still generates about 25% of the state's power, but its share is shrinking.

Clean energy for all? California set a goal of 100% clean energy, and now other states may follow its lead. It's been less than four months since California committed to getting all its electricity from climate-friendly sources by 2045. But the idea is

already catching on in other states.

At least nine governors taking their oaths of office this month, from Nevada to Michigan to New York, campaigned on 100% clean energy, or have endorsed the target since it was enshrined in California law. The District of Columbia also set a 100% clean energy goal last month. So did Xcel Energy, a Minneapolis-based utility that serves 3.6 million electricity customers across eight Western and Midwestern states.

The policy's growing popularity is driven in part by market trends and technological advances that make it easier to envision a future in which fossil fuels are no longer burned for electricity. But experts say California's **recent passage** of Senate Bill 100 is also playing a role. As the world's fifth-largest economy, California wields enormous power to influence environmental policy nationally and even globally. The state's actions have reshaped how industries do business, changed people's habits and set the agenda for other states and countries. Automakers, for instance, have been forced to build increasingly fuel-efficient cars for decades because of California's **authority to set tail-pipe-emission rules** stricter than those of the federal government. The Golden State's aggressive policies can also prompt a backlash. In



the four-plus years since California lawmakers voted to **ban single-use plastic bags** at most stores, nine states have passed laws blocking local governments from enacting such bans.

California's role as a global leader was front of mind of then-state Sen. Kevin de León as he crafted the 100% climate-friendly energy legislation. The Los Angeles Democrat had previously written a bill raising the state's clean energy target to 50% by 2030. But within a few years, it had become clear the state could meet that goal far sooner than expected, without the massive economic disruption opponents had predicted.

"California has long shown the rest of the nation how to protect the environment while growing the economy," De León said. "If California can do it, everyone else can." But the state has made far less progress transitioning from oil-fired transportation. "It's relatively easy to switch from coal to gas and from gas to renewables. Getting rid of the internal combustion engine is a whole 'nother thing," cautions a pundit.

Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Free and open to the public

No Tuesday Meeting This Month

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve and to sign up for email updates, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org.

Friends of SWNP events and programs are free and open to the public.

Coming Up

Saturday, January 19

Beginner Bird ID Workshop and Walk

Join master birder Walter Berk for this quarterly beginners' class that will show you which birds are in our area now, what they're up to, where to look for them, and more!

8:00 am Optional classroom instruction

City Hall Conference Room, 405 Municipal Drive, Kennedale (4 miles south of the preserve)

Classroom topics include:

- Bird anatomy as it pertains to field identification
- Types of birds common to this region during this season
- Basic ecology, habitat associations, and behaviors

8:30 – 10:00 am Bird walk open to all

Southwest Nature Preserve, 5201 Bowman Springs Road, Arlington

Please **RSVP for the optional workshop at 8:00 am** (required due to limited space) or **join the group at SWNP at 8:30 am** for the birding practice session. Everyone's welcome, beginner to advanced. See www.swnp.org for more details.

Saturday, February 16

Great Backyard Bird Count

8:00 am - 10:00 am

Help us count birds for two hours as part of the nationwide bird census. Meet in the preserve parking lot. Southwest Nature Preserve, 5201 Bowman Springs Road, Arlington

Tuesday, March 19

Program TBD

Please see www.swnp.org for more details on these events.

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 ☐
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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.

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**SPECIAL
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& TIME**

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**SPECIAL
PLACE
& TIME**

January Meeting

Saturday, January 19, 10 am – noon

**The Montessori Academy of Arlington,
 3428 W Arkansas Lane, Arlington TX 76016**



Annual Potluck & Business Meeting