

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 7

JULY-AUGUST 2019



**Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve
Photo by Wes Miller**

**Fielder
Museum**

June
**August Meeting
Water 101 Plus**

**Fielder
Museum**



Craig Cummings
Director, Arlington Water Utilities Department

Wednesday, August 7, 7 pm

Fielder House Museum

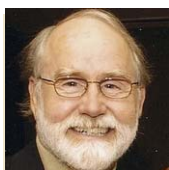
1616 W. Abram Street (corner of Fielder and Abram)



Craig Cummings became Arlington Water Utilities Director in August 2018. With decades of experience in the water utilities industry, he had served as the assistant director of water treatment for Arlington since 2014. After a nationwide search, Cummings' extensive experience and record of innovation and operational improvements made him the clear choice to lead The American Dream City's award-winning Water Utilities Department. "Water, they say, is life, and for nearly 40 years it has been my passion, my career and my life," Cummings said. "I have been blessed with a career of incredible challenges and experiences that have provided me a remarkable skill set readily able to meet the challenges of Arlington's water utility business."

Contents

- 3 From the President
- 4 Bits & Pieces
- 5 Question Corner
- 7 Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve
- 8 More Bits
- 9 Gypsy Moths, Environmental Hall of Fame/Shame
- 10 Molly Hollar Wildscape Update
- 13 July 4th Parade
- 15 Butterflies at Fielder Museum
- 16 In Case You Missed It



From the President

Dick Schoech

Wayne Halliburton and I would like to use this message to summarize the Friends of the Parks presentations at our June 5th meeting and to speculate on future actions. The June presentations were the first action that addressed ACC members' top 2019 priority, which was to connect, enhance, and advocate for Friends of the Parks and similar groups. Representatives from the Blackland Prairie, Crystal Canyon, O.S. Gray, Randol Mill Park, River Legacy, Southwest Nature Preserve, and the Molly Hollar Wildscape contributed to this lively discussion before a capacity crowd at the Fielder Museum.

Issues raised in rough priority order

- Eradicating invasive plants seems to be the greatest issue facing Friends of the Parks groups. While some parks had invasives like privet, ligustrum, bastard cabbage (aka *Rapistrum rugosum*) under control, most did not. And, keeping invasives under control required constant vigilance and work from volunteers. Some parks also want to limit native plants such as poison ivy and greenbriar from trails and other areas that people frequent. Given the city's inaction on invasives and the difficulty of getting enough volunteers for eradication efforts, invasives are winning the battle in most parks. Considering the extent of this issue, it seems that each Friends group needs to document the extent of the invasives problem and develop an eradication plan.
- The second issue frequently mentioned, which relates to the first, was increasing the number of volunteers, especially to remove invasives such as privet. It seems that a core group of volunteers for each park does the bulk of the work to keep the park in shape. Most Friends groups did not think their volunteer recruitment efforts were adequate, but they also did not see easy ways to recruit new volunteers.
- Given all the flooding from unusually heavy rains this spring, erosion control was another issue frequently mentioned. This is partly the result of many Arlington parks existing in hard-to-develop land in floodplain areas or along major creeks that are now flooding due to extensive development. This issue is predicted to get worse with the impacts of climate change and future developments.
- Trash was another frequently mentioned issue keeping the limited number of volunteers busy.

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

Published 10 times a year by
Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216, Arlington, TX
76004-0216.

John Darling, Editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Grace Darling,
John Darling, Marian Hiler,
Ann Knudsen, Paul Knudsen,
Carol Marcotte, Wesley Miller,
Dick Schoech, Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Pecan near UTA just getting ready for new sidewalks that neighbors don't really want.

Also had to cut down a big post oak.

Okay, walking is good, but fewer trees and more concrete are not.

Box Turtles by the Yard

Another three-toed box turtle showed up recently in the editor's chaotic yard and it was different from the last one here. (See that big black spot.) Box turtles are said to have tremendous site fidelity and a small home range, so we can hope it's happy here and STAYS OUT OF THE STREET!
Please.



National Moth Week Just Ended



It was July 20 - 28 and it turns out that there's a lot to learn about these creatures that outnumber butterflies almost 10 to 1. To see the big picture, try the [National Moth Week](#) site, and you can find local species [here](#). Or just hang up a sheet, shine a light on it, take a cell phone photo, and send it to iNaturalist for identification suggestions.

Left, editor's current favorite, possibly an exposed bird dropping moth in Harlingen.

Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org

HAWK AT MY WINDOW John Blair

The window, look!
A tawny shape,
A beak, a hawk.

She fakes repose,
Pretends at ease;
But silence cold
Holds memories
Of clutching claws
And hacking hook.

My sunny deck,
Where feeders full
Lull scolding wrens
And pudgy doves –
Her dining nook.

©2008 John I. Blair

**Join us and act locally.
Use the application form
on the back page.**



Question Corner John Darling

Q: You used to say some rather negative things about the Garden Guru, Neil Sperry, but not for a while. Has he gotten better?

A: No he hasn't but there are so many things to worry about that he just got lost for a while. But now that you mention it, on August 1, Mr Sperry devoted a column to the changes he's witnessed during his career. Mostly he covered the growth of plastic plant pots, the advent of string trimmers, helping with herbicide testing, and shifts in the popularity of exotic trees and shrubs. And the wonderful expansion of crepe myrtle varieties.

What was missing? Just what you might expect: No mention of native plants, no consideration of drought tolerance, nothing about pollinators and their nectar and host plants. And the growth of organic gardening? Nope.

There's a mindset at work here, and it appears to reflect the dominant mainstream approach. Will it ever change? Maybe only when we can't casually throw water and chemicals at our self-induced gardening messes.

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.



Wild Birds Unlimited
1660 W. Randol Mill Rd.
Arlington, TX 76012
(817) 275-1000
www.wbu.com/arlintonx
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
9 - 6 Sat, 12 - 5 Sun

Remodeling

General Contracting

SCHWETTMANN CONSTRUCTION CO.

Marvin Schwettmann Cell 817-229-6688
Brian Schwettmann Cell 817-475-9201
Lynn Schwettmann Cell 817-988-7078

Shop 3646 Garner
Pantego, TX 76013
817-460-3856

Mailing Address
1813 W. Tucker
Arlington, TX 76013

Fax 817-583-6266 E-mail: schwettmamrvin@sbcglobal.net



From the President continued from page 3



Suggestions made

Some good suggestions were made to help address these park issues. Among them were the following:

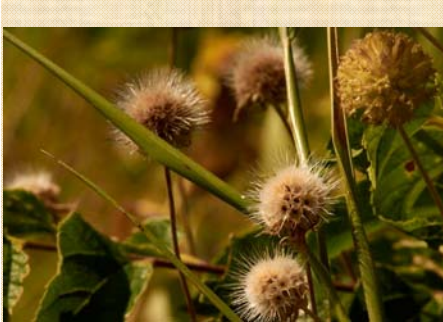
- The parks department should appoint a resource manager who would be the contact person for friends of the park groups. Currently, each group has developed its own communication pattern with parks department staff. While communications for some groups is adequate, most are not.
- The city views parks as revenue generators for the city through golf fees, rentals of ball park fields, pavilions, etc. However, unlike parks that can charge fees, natural areas have no way to generate money for the city so they are not valued as highly as parks that produce revenue. Natural areas need a way to quantify their value to the city. Maybe using Google Analytics, iNaturalist, and other tools to collect people's experience in natural areas and a web site to present this information to the city and public would be helpful. Could this be something the experts at the parks department could do for friends of the parks groups?
- Big issues are often addressed outside of the parks department, e.g., bond issues for dredging and creek erosion. City departments involved with big issues typically do not coordinate with other departments especially if funds from different departments are not involved. Friends of the parks are the only groups that look at their park as a whole, yet they typically have limited input on big issues.
- A key problem in the past has been follow-up on any plans made. It seems many previous planned efforts were not followed up by any actions or plan implementation.
- Friends of the parks groups should form a coalition and meet periodically so they can present a united front when advocating for the needs of their park or natural area. A coalition of friends groups is not a new proposal but a coalition seems not to be valued enough by the parks department to make it a high priority. ACC could take on the task of bringing groups together to form this coalition.

In summary, while our June meeting was a good first start, much more work needs to be done. We welcome your input. Send it to us at

info@acctexas.org.

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve

photos by Wes Miller



More Bits



Thanks to Our Last Speakers



From left to right, Wes Miller, Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve; Paula Harbour, OS Gray Natural Area; Carol Marcotte, Randol Mill Park; Ann Knudsen, Molly Hollar Wildscape; Ellen Ravkind and Anne Alderfer, River Legacy Parks; David Hopman, Crystal Canyon Natural Area; Jim Frisinger, Southwest Nature Preserve.

Our June ACC meeting was quite a change from the usual programs, and very well received. A packed house heard reports from volunteers representing concerned individuals and friends groups for our natural areas.

They covered a number of issues, some tied to specific needs of their areas, but these seemed outnumbered by issues shared by all the areas and the people who work in them. See the president's message on page 3 for details.

This meeting looked like a good opportunity for all those committed volunteers to communicate to us — and to each other — and we can hope that the groups will join one way or another to accomplish more in their dealings with the public and with the parks department.

Bad Bee Houses?

Something else to worry about: We want to help with the bee crisis, but apparently it's not as easy as we'd like. At least some commercial bee houses are just wrong for the job, and we must commit to maintenance if we really want to help. [Visit this crudely named site](#) if you can stand to learn a lot more.

Gypsy Moth Trap in Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte



The Texas Department of Agriculture has placed a gypsy moth trap in Randol Mill Park according to Tina Smith, TDA Plant Quality Program Specialist.

Following sightings in Texas, the TDA has trapped for gypsy moths since at least 1987. The moths (especially the Asian variety) are invasive pests that, if established in Texas, will have a negative impact on the environment as they defoliate large numbers of trees. Gypsy moths are most likely to be found in heavily trafficked areas, like parks, as they lay their eggs on cars, boats, and moving trucks which can then relocate them to Texas. The traps in question

are unobtrusive and not harmful to humans or pets. They are usually nailed to a tree 7' off the ground. Find below images of gypsy moths.

Left: adults, pale female above with dark male below

Center: egg masses

Right: caterpillar



The Arlington Environmental Hall of Fame

Looks like our university is adding islands to the big parking lot by the stadium, and we can see that it's no small job. No details yet, but we believe that those very long trenches will hold pipes that carry water to badly needed trees. Someday a bit of shade and oxygen in that asphalt desert. Bravo!



Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



First Saturday mini classes are always a happy adventure. You never know what you will learn. Like this tidbit of erudition from Suzanne Tuttle, who presented on “Wondrous Purple Martins” in July. “Purple martin boxes were so common in the 1800s that John James Audubon used them to choose his lodging for the night. He wrote in 1831, “Almost every country tavern has a martin box on the upper part of its sign-board, and I have observed that the handsomer the box, the better does the inn generally prove to be.”

Once you have impressed your audience, you might want to back up your claim to knowledge. Here are some facts to enhance your reputation. The Texas purple martin is the Desert Southwest subspecies, which nests in provided boxes or tree cavities in our area. These exclusive insectivores eat, drink and bathe almost entirely on the wing.

Isn't that equal to “I heard it on NPR” for gravitas?

At the June mini class Jo Ann Collins stunned everyone with a simple ball of string when she talked about the importance of vanishing prairies. Attendees were



For her mini-class Jo Ann Collins presented “NPAT: The Missing Link” (NPAT - Native Prairies Association of Texas)

asked to cut a length of twine they thought represented the depth of the roots of a common prairie flower. Most said they felt generous estimating 12 inches and were amazed when Joann rolled and rolled until her length was 8 feet. Many prairie plants have similar root systems. Grass roots often go down 15-18 feet.

These deep-rooted plants are as important as trees for carbon sequestration. They are crucial in restoring aquifers and absorbing water, which prevents flooding. Maybe the Tour de France should

consider planting a few prairie grasses on the hillsides along the route.

The Boy Scouts can't stop loving on our Molly Hollar Wildscape. It seems that we express a need and some young man from Troop 396 is ready to make it his Eagle project. Angel Garza, 17, enlisted the help of Eagles Aiden Gonzales and Ethan Tackenberg and working-their-way-up scouts, Austin Garza and Chris Estell, both 14, to build a new bridge in the wetland area near the pavilion to replace the one that had washed out. It took them six hours of vigorous construction work to complete it. The result is an engineering masterpiece that will last for years.

A special post-construction request was made to get ramps at each end of the bridge so that it could be used easily with wheelbarrows. Four scout leaders spent an industrious hour adding ramps at both ends. The wildscape thanks you, and the boys of Troop 396 thank you, Bill Bonefus, Joe Carpenter, Ed Lightner and Chris Martin, for making the modification.



continued on page 11

Wildscape Update continued from page 10

Carol Marcotte has supplied extra coverage of the Molly Hollar Wildscape miniclass on June 1, 2019 that was presented by Jo Ann Collins, Native Prairies Association of Texas, "NPAT: The Missing Link."

In her discussion Jo Ann said:

"Part of the problem with prairie conservation is that people just don't understand what services our prairies provide for us. Scientists have recently discovered the carbon sequestration service that prairies provide. Carbon storage is an important service since it helps keep our air cleaner.

Another important service is water conservation. Rain falling on a prairie has direct spigots to the water table through the roots of prairie plants that can stretch down as much as 15 feet. A prairie can soak up over 8 inches of rain an hour. We noticed this when we went out to the prairie after one of our recent gully washers.

Prairies are also not just vacant lots. The ecosystem of a good remnant prairie can have over 250 species within it. One important thing to consider to help our pollinators is to support replacing lawns with native plants and to reduce mowing which allows all plants to complete their life cycle."

She discussed what our dwindling native prairies do for us and the importance of preserving what is still left of the less than 2% that remains.

Jo Ann also mentioned the plant rescue at the Jewish Federation where FWISD is building a new school and a recent nature hike at Stella Rowan Prairie (*below*) in Fort Worth.



continued on page 12

Wildscape Update continued from page 11



Jo Ann Kolanko



*Three-year-old Lydia and her mother
Katherine*



Brenda Townsend



*Chris Rouhier and Donna Felton with Joe
Martinez*



Here's a little bonus from Carol Marcotte: Wednesday, June 12, was the perfect day to work in the wildscape. Not only were the volunteers happy to be there, our wildlife friends were happy to see the volunteers. *Left to right: snowberry clearwing moth, eastern cottontail, Gulf Coast toad.*



Another Fourth, another win, and a swan song

Marian Hiler says it all below, except that her last inspired creation won the Directors Award. Thanks, Marian, and everyone else who has helped so much for so long. And thanks also to Paul Knudsen for the use of his photos.



From Marian Hiler, ACC parade queen: "It's been a great run. I wouldn't take anything for it." Mike Kolanko said as he and I were looking back on all the July Fourth ACC floats. All 16 of them. Results from the last 11 years show ACC's float team obviously mastered float building, earning a trophy every year since 2009 — save the one when the float didn't leave the parking lot due to a dead battery. (I just know it would have been a winner, too.) Yes, it's been hard work, but it has always been fun working with a terrific group of dedicated folks. I greatly appreciate how they worked into the night to get the floats ready. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Mike is right. It has been quite a run. However, Mike and I are ready to pass the baton to the next person who's willing to take on the 2020 float. I have a lot of bottle caps, straws and aluminum cans for him or her.

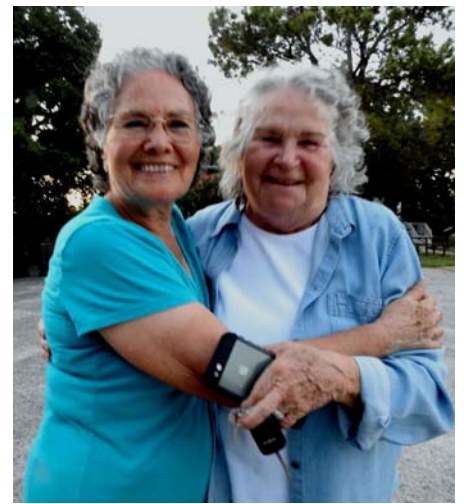


Another Fourth — hard work behind the scenes continued from page 13



Butterflies and Their Plants at Fielder Museum

We had a treat on July 11 when Master Naturalists Josephine Keeney, Jane Oosterhuis, Charley Amos and other volunteers presented a garden tour followed by a plant and butterfly presentation to an overflow crowd at the Fielder Museum. As the flyer said, "Special plants invite special butterflies to your garden." The message was beautifully delivered by talented messengers. Their enthusiasm was infectious. Thanks to them, we can hope for more native plants and happy butterflies all over town.



Josephine Keeney, left, with Geraldine Mills, Executive Director of the Arlington Historical Society



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

Russian Fires Threaten the Planet - This year's blazes in Yakutia, Krasnoyarsk, and Siberia have reached an exceptional level, with fears of a long-term impact on the environment. More than 7.9 million acres were in the grip of fires today, triggered by dry thunderstorms in temperatures above 86°F and spread by strong winds. According to Greenpeace, almost 12 million hectares [1 hectare = 2.47105 acre] were burnt this year, causing significant CO₂ emissions and reducing the future capacity of forest to absorb the carbon dioxide. "Then there is the added problem that soot falling on ice or snow melts darkens it, thus reducing the reflectiveness of the surface and trapping more heat," the World Meteorological Organization reported. The soot and ashes accelerate the melting of the Arctic ice and permafrost — the permanently frozen layer that has begun melting — releasing gases that reinforce global warming. (CBS News, July 30, 2019.)



Eastern Russia forest fires

(Almost 12 million hectares have been swept by wildfires this year, according to the Russian branch of Greenpeace)



... While in Alaska ... -



During the ongoing 2019 fire season, over 2 million acres have burned — an area roughly equivalent to that of Yellowstone National Park and larger than ALL fires in California during 2018, the year of the devastating Camp, Woolsey, and Carr fires. Although boreal forests are fire adapted, the more frequent and intense fires of recent years have altered the historic timetable of these ecosystems, allowing more fires that burn a larger area. In addition to the carbon emitted from the burning of trees and foliage

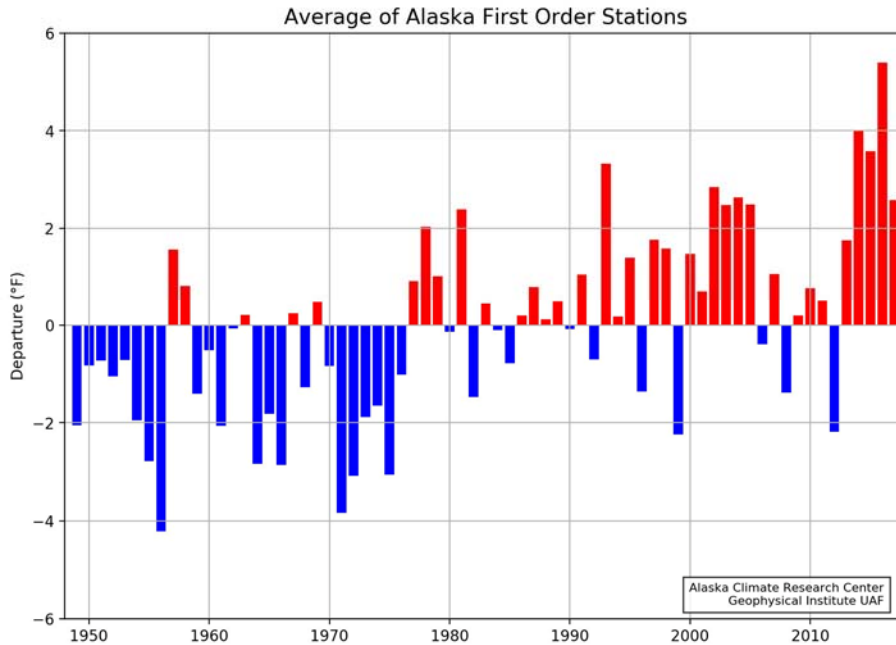
during a wildfire, carbon stored within the soil and below ground can also be released. Alaska's ecosystems store huge quantities of carbon both as permafrost and soil that has accumulated over millennia. Wildfires destabilize these stores of carbon by combusting soil and accelerating permafrost thaw, both of which release heat-trapping gases to the atmosphere. (*Union of Concerned Scientists blog, July 31, 2019.*)

(*The Washington Post, July 31, 2019*) The nation's 49th state is warming faster than any other, having heated up more than 2°C (3.6°F) over the past century — double the global average. Temperatures have been above average across Alaska every day since April 25. On Independence

continued on page 17

In Case You Missed It continued from page 16

Mean annual air temperature, departure from normal (base: 1949-2017)



Day, the temperature at Anchorage International Airport hit 90 degrees for the first time on record. Atop the permafrost sits an insulating layer of moss and lichen a few inches thick. In the summer, unusually warm temperatures and scant rainfall have made it a breeding ground for blazes. “The weather has been impacting fire behavior a lot,” said Alan Hickford, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Fairbanks. “The fires start easier and spread easier.”

The entire Arctic is suffering under extreme temperatures. Siberia's wildfires are sending smoke thousands of miles away and lofting dark soot particles onto the vulnerable Arctic ice cover. Arctic sea ice is melting at

an alarming pace. In addition, the weather system that caused last week's heat wave in Western Europe has now settled above the Atlantic side of the Arctic, accelerating surface-ice melting in Greenland. The disappearing Greenland ice sheet will raise global sea levels higher and faster than first thought.

In Alaska, the early retreat of sea ice from the Bering and Chukchi seas has led to a jump in sea surface temperatures, altering weather patterns and upending the lives of residents who typically depend on the ice cover for hunting and fishing. According to NOAA, Alaska produces more than 50% of the fish caught in U.S. waters, employing more people than any other industry and with an average wholesale

value of nearly \$4.5 billion a year. The record warmth is also affecting native species. For example, the summer's high temperatures in the Bering Sea have been devastating for a colony of black guillemots on Alaska's Cooper Island under study for 45 years. The spike in water temperatures has made it difficult for them to find the cod and zooplankton they depend on. “In the first week after hatching, half of the 120 chicks that hatched had starved to death,” said a researcher. “Many of the chicks that remain are not growing, and we expect most of them to die.”



(Facebook post by a traveler in Alaska, August 2, 2019): We did see a lot of dying spruce trees being killed by a beetle which is flourishing in higher temperatures. They mention the glaciers are mostly receding. They mention the permafrost is melting, which is going to be of major impact to their ecosystem. They told us the average temperature has increased at twice the rate of the rest of the world. While we were here, it was amazing weather and beautiful scenery. I was continually in awe.

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 tax-deductible. ACC is a nonprofit, tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization. If you cannot pay, 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 Dick Schoech
Vice President Wayne Halliburton
Interim Secretary Grace Darling

Treasurer Marian Hiler
Program Coordinator Grace Darling
Webmaster Frank Keeney

Editor John Darling
Board Members Danny Kocurek
Mike Kolanko

POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

August Meeting
Wednesday, August 7, 7 pm

Fielder House Museum
1616 W. Abram Street

Water 101 Plus
Craig Cummings, Director
Arlington Water Utilities