

**ARLINGTON  
CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL**

# POSTOAK

**WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES**  
VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

**JANUARY 2008**

**Special meeting day,  
time, & place**

[www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org](http://www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org)

## **January Meeting Annual Potluck and Business Meeting**

**Don't miss this review of last year,  
a bit of business,  
whatever's on your mind  
— and food, too**

**Saturday, January 19, 10:00 am - noon  
The Montessori Academy of Arlington  
3428 W. Arkansas Lane**



**Bring food!**

**We'll supply the drinks**

## **Bits & Pieces**

**Happy  
New  
Year!**

**It's  
Gonna  
Be a  
Gas  
(Well)**



## From the President John Darling



This month's column ought to be a snap. Just a happy look back at our achievements last year followed by inspirational remarks about

the challenges ahead and our constantly increasing need to work harder. It's just boilerplate; practically writes itself.

But no, our little house just received a form letter from a gas driller and it's been nonstop philosophical turmoil around here. It all comes down to this: The villains want to give us money for something we're against in the strongest terms short of sugar in their gas tanks.

They're already drilling anyway — it's the very well I see from the kitchen window and cuss every day — so what do we do?

Our first reaction was entirely virtuous: The heck with those darn gas guys! As if we'd touch their filthy money! Hah! We'll show 'em a thing or two, by gosh.

But then questions raised their ugly heads. What exactly would we show 'em? Would we accomplish anything other than keeping a wobbly grip on our environmental virtue?

Okay, but I'm on record as an ineffective but implacable foe of urban drilling, so how would it look if we

profited? "Hypocrite" comes readily to mind. (Now I've sunk to fretting about appearances.)

At last we arrived at rationalization; it oozed in like a yellow-bellied water snake and smiled. What if we put every cent into a worthy cause? Surely that would make it all okay.

That was it. There's no big climax, just a dull thud as we shoved our principles into the back of the closet and signed up. We couldn't make ourselves be nice to the gas people, and they must have wondered why folks getting free money were so unhappy. The rest of 2008 has just got to be better.

**Notice of Annual Meeting and Election of ACC Board Members for 2008: The ACC Annual Meeting will be held at The Montessori Academy of Arlington, 3428 W. Arkansas Lane, Arlington, TX, at 10:00 am on January 19, 2008. During the meeting, ACC members will vote for the slate of nominated officers and board members as follows: President (and Newsletter Editor) – John Darling; First Vice President (and Program Director) – Jo Ann Duman; Second Vice President – Roy Miliner; Treasurer – Marian Hiler; Secretary – Jo Briggs, At-Large Board Members – Grace Darling, Dale Denton (Web Master), John Dycus, Marianne Herrmann, Molly Hollar, Danny Kocurek, Jan Miller, Stephen Smith.**

## THE POST OAK

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## New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Jan Miller



As Wesley Miller's photos show, there's scant evidence of clover this time of year, or bees either. Just a red-tailed hawk surveying the intricately textured cover

for its next meal. There's still lots of color, just really subdued. And the reverie, well, it's always there...it's a prairie, after all.



Mark your calendar for prairie-related events:

### WORKDAY AT NYABP!

Saturday, January 26

9:00 am – noon

This will be one of our major tree cutting/removal events of the year, with Arlington Parks personnel who will be operating the chain saws. Please bring

loppers, hand saws, etc. Gloves, boots (or sturdy-soled shoes), long sleeves and pants are recommended. Water will be provided for refills, but please bring your own container. RSVP to [jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net) if you wish, for late info on weather, etc.

We'll adjourn for lunch afterwards, with the location to be determined.

Directions: Exit I-20 at Collins St. Take the access road east and turn right (south) onto New York Avenue. The prairie will be on your left, about half a mile; it's marked by an Arlington Parks sign. Continue past the park, take the



next U-turn at Highbank Dr. and park along the south boundary on L-shaped "Old New York Av."

**February 23, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Native Plant Spring Symposium – Habitat Conservation, Citizen by Citizen** at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the Native Plant Society of Texas will review habitat preservation, plant conservation and invasive species management programs in Texas, exploring resources that can make a positive difference toward ecological sustainability in your region. The symposium will include a plenary session followed by in-depth afternoon breakout sessions. See [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org) for details and registration.

**Annual Master Composter class: When:** Friday, February 22, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm and Saturday, February 23, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

**Where:** UTA Environmental Health & Safety, 500 Summit Ave. **Fee:** Free for Arlington residents, \$20 for non-residents.

To learn more, contact Lorrie Anderle, City of Arlington Recycling Coordinator, 817-459-6778 or [anderlel@ci.arlington.tx.us](mailto:anderlel@ci.arlington.tx.us). **To register online, fill out the form at [http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/environment/composting\\_register.html](http://www.ci.arlington.tx.us/environment/composting_register.html).**

**We're sending the newsletter this month to pretty much everybody in the database who has an e-mail. Saves trees and postage. But if you would rather receive the print version (or continue receiving it), just say so, and you will. We want you happy.**

## Giving to ACC While You Shop

ACC is a participant in the Tom Thumb "Good Neighbor" program, which enables you to support ACC while you save on your grocery purchases. If you shop at Tom Thumb remember to link your Reward Card to ACC's "Good Neighbor" account number 5468. A percentage of the total purchases made under these programs will be donated to ACC each quarter. Every little bit helps!

# Wildscape Update Molly Hollar



Saturday afternoon, Dec. 29, was warm and sunny and wonderful after our Christmas cold spell. While enjoying spreading some

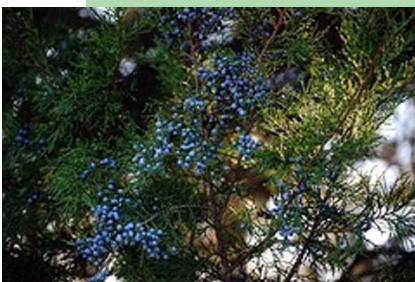
there wasn't much going on this time of year. There might be a few berries and possibly a lizard to photograph, but things come alive with a dazzling burst of blooms in February, if he could come back then.

Then these fabulous photos arrived in my e-mail the next day, and I was in awe of the beauty on display. We are sur-

rounded by nature's glory, if we only have eyes to see it! Though more subtle than spring's explosion of color, nature's cool-weather persona is equally a joy to behold.

Thank you, Jason Cargill of Rio Vista, Texas, for revealing the beauty and wonder of nature in wintertime.

seed in the wildscape, I saw a young man taking pictures. I commented that



**Save Cents and Trash, Please** Jo Ann Duman

The next day after John Dycus reported at a Board meeting that Kroger stores would deduct 5 cents for each bag of your own that you used at the store, I tried it at my nearby grocery. I took two canvas bags with me and loaded my purchases in them. The very young clerk, unasked, took 10 cents off my bill. If you're like me and forget the canvas bags, you can keep a ball of plastic bags in your car and re-use them at Kroger's. I did that and got the same discount for having my own bags. Marian Hiler reassured me that it took a while for her to develop her canvas bag habit, so I'm confident that all of us can save cents (and trash) this new year if we try.

Marian reports that Whole Foods also gives the 5 cents discount per bag.

Marian and I both have requests for you to save trash (and give it to us). Marian is collecting twist-off bottle caps from plastic bottles for ACC's 4th of July parade float. All caps are needed, but since colored ones are scarce please save any that you can. I even resorted to collecting the bottles after a recent conference to get the red and blue caps and put the bottles in my recycling bin. I am still collecting egg cartons for my friends in Leonard and their neighbors who raise chickens. They are very happy to have them and thank all of you for caring.

**The Smart Shopper**



TCEA is promoting environmental shopping this year by selling organic canvas shopping bags. Each bag has a snap closure on the top of the bag, a small pocket, and the

TCEA logo and a reminder that we use them to protect and celebrate our earth. They're available to ACC members through Jo Ann Duman ([jduman@juno.com](mailto:jduman@juno.com)) for \$10. Please let her know how many you would like.

**Memberships Expired at the End of December**  
**If you haven't renewed, this is your last issue. You know how much we need you, so please renew or join today. Help us bring out the best in Arlington. Thanks.**

**See Lucy Harrell**

Organic Garden Club of Fort Worth  
 Deborah Beggs Moncrief Garden Center  
 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd., Redbud Hall

January 22, 7:00 pm  
 Speaker: Lucy Harrell speaks on Growing Perennials & Native Plants in Containers.

Lucy Harrell is a specialist in demanding landscape environments. She and her husband, George, live on a two-acre organic property in southwest Arlington where she gives workshops and classes on Organic Gardening, Landscape Design, and Crafting With Herbs and Flowers. She is an Organic Consultant, Landscape Designer, Lecturer and Author. To learn more about free lectures and class schedules, visit her website at [www.organicgardeningtx.com](http://www.organicgardeningtx.com)



**Our November Speaker**

We're indebted to Dottie Hyatt and her assistant, Jessilyn Laney, for the program on their work with bat rehabilitation and education.



**Some Companies Go Green**

Kohl's Corp.: Working to complete one of the largest rooftop solar projects in U.S. history, with installations at 63 of its 80 California stores.

United Parcel Service: The operator of the largest low-emission fleet in the industry, it has streamlined delivery routes to eliminate more than 28.5 million miles of driving.

Timberland Co.: Recently introduced "green" index tags on its products, which rate environmental factors such as use of solvents and organic content. The company recently changed all packaging for its footwear to 100 percent recycled boxes and soy inks.

Target Corp.: Reduces waste through food-donation programs, giving away nearly 7 million pounds of food last year. It is also developing on-site solar electricity at stores.

— *The Associated Press*

## Audubon Comes to Arlington

On Thursday, February 14, Fort Worth Audubon Society will meet at River Legacy Living Science Center in Arlington at 7:30 pm. Everyone's encouraged to bring the kids, neighbors, and grandkids for a live Raptor Presentation from Blackland Prairie Raptor Rehab.

In August 2004, Blackland Prairie Raptor Center was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a small but determined group of individuals and a common goal — to create a place where the people of North Texas could learn, experience and appreciate birds of prey and understand their importance in the environment as a whole.

## Green Cement

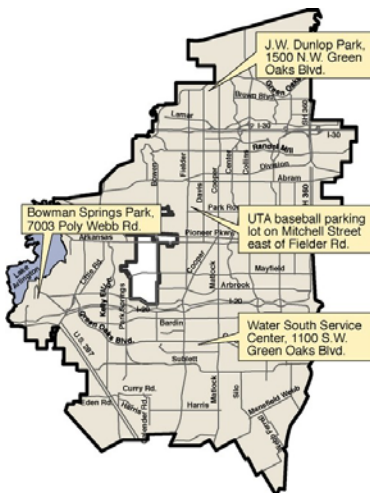
Congratulations to our city council members who voted unanimously in favor of an ordinance that will require the city to purchase cement only from relatively clean producers. Now the three biggest metroplex cities have taken essentially the same position, and we can hope that many others will follow. How about it, AISD? Tarrant County? TxDoT?

## Don't Waste Those Leaves

Here's the plan for all those leaves:

1. Mulch them into whatever lawn you haven't yet converted to natives.
2. Use them as mulch in your planting beds.
3. Put them into your compost pile.

Or, if none of that works out for you, bag those leaves and take them to any one of the four dropoff sites to be made into compost. The city's doing this until February 29. You're on your own when the live oaks get going.



## Bits & Pieces

### Yellow-bellied water snake

No particular reason for this snake, just seems appropriate for this issue. (See presidential navel-gazing column.) It gets killed all the time because people think it's a cotton-mouth. It doesn't look like one but that doesn't matter to folks who want to kill snakes. It does have an ugly disposition and will bite like crazy, but all you get is a lot of pain and maybe a little infection or something.



### Today's Inspirational Moment

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it."

Dan Quayle, former U.S. Vice President

### Pay Those Dues (Please)

Yes, it's unbelievable but another year has passed and so has the yearly ACC dues deadline. Check the handy form on the back page, or if you're reading this online, just send your check to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216.

Thanks. You know we couldn't exist without you.

### Today's Bonus Inspirational Moment

"There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it all."

Robert Orben

### From the TCEA newsletter:

(That's Tarrant Coalition for Environmental Awareness)

Why recycle? Consider the life span of the following typical household items:

- Glass bottle: 1 million years
- Plastic soda bottle: 1,000 years
- Plastic 6 pack ring: 450 years
- Aluminum can: 200-500 years
- Tin Can: 80-100 years
- Leather boot: 50 years
- Disposable diaper: 10-20 years
- Plastic bag: 10-20 years
- Cigarette butt: 1-5 years
- Apple core: 2 months
- Newspaper: 6 weeks

# Our Newest Gas Well, Update John Darling

In November it was a grassy field that lost 32 trees one day and got a big fence around two acres. In December that land received a gas well, and now it's hardly noticeable except for a kind of constant white noise, a low vibration in our front room, and brilliant lights all night.



The site contains two trenches, one just inside the silt fence (below) and the other right around the rig. We are told that the murky liquid in them is benign and is constantly being pumped out for disposal along with other liquid from the well itself. The trenches are not lined, but that's okay because we are told that there's nothing there that would hurt the groundwater.



Moonrise from battered Pecan Street (right). Apartments going up in the foreground, gas well in the distance, moon toward the right. Trees mark Johnson and Trading House Creeks.

YWCA Child Development Center (lower left). It's well beyond the legal limit, so everything's okay here.

One of the few messy places (below) contains a couple of drums of muriatic acid, which is apparently dilute hydrochloric acid. So that's okay too, except that the label says "Danger: Causes severe burns."



### 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**

Please circle membership category.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Individual/Family \$24.00

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Student \$12.00

New member

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting \$36.00

Renewing member

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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. *I want to save trees; send my newsletter to my email address.*

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## Don't Forget!

Saturday, January 19,  
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Annual Potluck  
and Business Meeting

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Be sure to visit us at  
[arlingtonconservationcouncil.org](http://arlingtonconservationcouncil.org)