

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2012

**Note:
Special meeting day,
place, and time.
See below.**

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

January Meeting

Annual Potluck and Business Meeting

Don't miss this look at the new year's opportunities, a bit of business, whatever's on your mind, — and food, too

**Saturday, January 14,
10:00 am - noon**

**The Montessori Academy
of Arlington
3428 W. Arkansas Lane**



**Don't Forget!
Bring Food and Ideas**

Bits & Pieces

Not just a pretty face

It may be cold and gray, but the Eastern mole doesn't care as it swims beneath the topsoil, ceaselessly hunting for earthworms and grubs. Throughout Arlington's sandy soils we may find its meandering ridges.



Today's Inspirational Moment



The system of nature, of which man is a part, tends to be self-balancing, self-adjusting, self-cleansing. Not so with technology.

E.F. Schumacher,
Small is Beautiful, 1973

Environmentalists' plastic nightmare

Every 5 seconds it's estimated that Americans use about 60,000 plastic bags, and the recycling rate is somewhere around 5%. In 2008, Arlington officials considered a plastic bag ban, but we just weren't ready to pursue it. No Metroplex city has banned the bag. Couldn't we be the first?



Dues are due



It's dues time again, and you already know there's a lot to do — and so few of us to do it. So please send in your dues, or better yet, pay them at the annual potluck this Saturday. Your friendly treasurer will be standing by. And as always, thanks.

From the President Jo Ann Duman

PRAIRIE FEST RE-IMAGINED

Many of you have volunteered for the ACC booth at Prairie Fest during the last five years. Started in 2004, the event brought lots of people one Saturday every April to see the natural gem that is Tandy Hills Natural Area in the Meadowbrook section of Fort Worth, just west of the city limits of Arlington near I30 and Oakland Boulevard. ACC friend and fellow activist Don Young and his compadres in Friends of Tandy Hills started this event with a few local musical acts, artist's booths, and vendors of "green" items like Green Mountain to raise awareness – and funds – for the 160-acre prairie where, according to a recent Star-Telegram article by Chris Van Horne, "nothing has ever been built on the land, no cattle grazed there, and you can find 500 different plant species."

Changes are coming to Prairie Fest that will refocus attendees on touring the prairie and provide a more relaxing music

fest. Don and about 6 stalwart volunteers handled the all-day event that grew last year to 150 vendors, required shuttle buses to ferry people from remote parking lots, and hosted crowds that overwhelmed the small streets by the park. Admission to the event was free. Non-profit groups like ACC paid \$25 to \$50 for a booth, and commercial vendors paid much more. The event was run on green energy provided by mobile solar systems, and tours of the prairie were guided by experts from the Fort Worth Nature Center. Proceeds from the event funded improvements at the park and provided field trips and educational materials for students in nearby 4th grade classes. Still, much of the revenue was needed to pay the Fort Worth Police Department for security services, Don said, and this year the cost for police support was set to double.

In 2012, the re-imagined Prairie Fest will occur three times, March 31, April

26, and May 28, from 4 pm until about dusk. There will be no vendors. The Fort Worth Nature Center will have the only booth from which they will run guided tours of the prairie. Tours especially focused for children and families will be led by Heather Foote from 4 to 6 pm. The popular tours for adults led by Suzanne Tuttle and others will be available from 4 pm to near-dusk. From 6 pm to dusk, there will be entertainment. In addition to musicians, Don said there may be other performances such as drama and maybe even a bit of opera.

With the focus on quieter enjoyment of the prairie, the volunteers can concentrate on having other events at Tandy Hills and giving even more school children an introduction to the prairie ecosystem.

In 2011 some activities were the third annual Manly Men and Wild Women Hike in January and the Brush Bash to remove privet and other invasive species

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THE POST OAK

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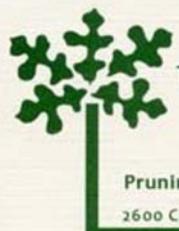
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natural resources.



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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Jan Miller Photos by Wesley Miller



Winter is the dormant season for most of the natural activities that we humans notice, visual creatures that we are. Still there's lots going on: winter birds and other critters are

still eking out a living in the tangle of dried vegetation and rest assured, the root systems of those trees are storing resources and scheming for the next season's invasion plans.



Local Prairie News

Tandy Hills Brush Bash IV – Friends of Tandy Hills
Saturday, February 4, 2012 (rain date is February 18)
9 am - noon and 1 pm - 3 pm
Work one or both shifts
For more information: <http://tandyhills.org/events/brush-bash>

Did you happen to see the WFAA/ Channel 8 feature about Flower Mound's prairie fire? New Year's Eve fireworks apparently caused a fire that burned about 40% of Flower Mound's namesake prairie. The Flower Mound Foundation had tried unsuccessfully for a prescribed burn permit in previous years, so they were actually relieved when the accidental fire removed brush and many years of thatch, luckily without damage to adjacent property owners. Now they're eagerly waiting to see the return of a bumper crop of wildflowers in the burned area this spring.

For more, see the WFAA feature:
<http://www.wfaa.com/news/local/Caretakers-happy-historic-mound-burned-136551533.html>

and:

History of the prairie, from City of Flower Mound website:

http://www.flower-mound.com/comm_info/themound.php

15th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 17 - 20.

This annual citizen science event provides valuable winter bird count data from across the country. Join bird watchers of all ages, counting birds from the comfort of home or at a location of your choice, for as little as 15 minutes or as long as you'd like.

For more information, see:
www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Stay tuned: More details soon on GBBC activities at several local sites.

North Central Texas Communities Alliance (NCTCA)

2nd Anniversary Celebration
and Snack Potluck Strategy Session
Thursday, January 19, 2012

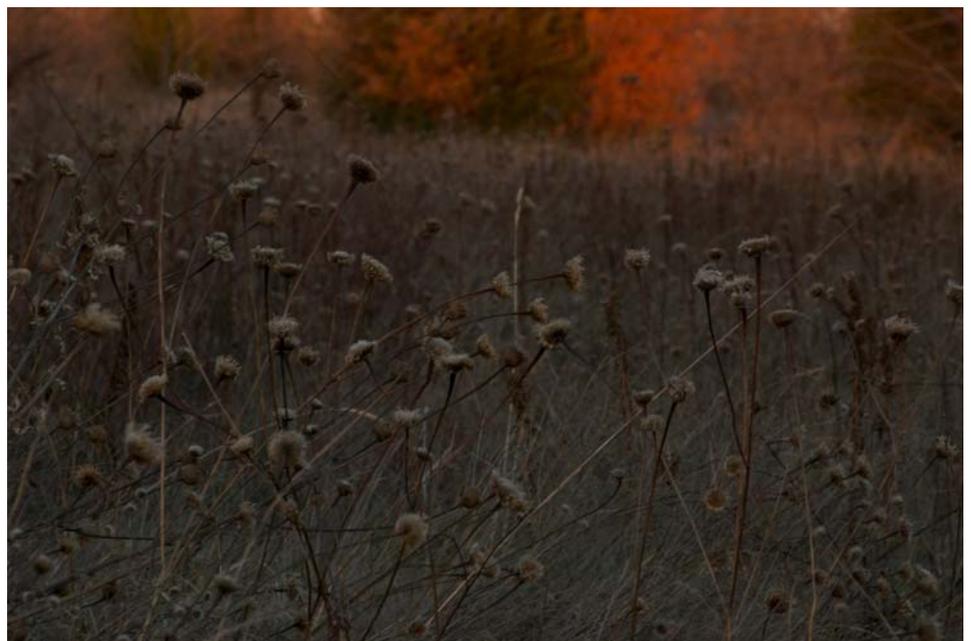
6:30 to 9:00 pm

Hotel Trinity Inn Suites, 2000 Beach St.,
Fort Worth (I-30 @ Beach St.)



NCTCA will celebrate its 2nd anniversary with special awards, reports from area leaders and elected officials, and a strategy session for 2012. This organization was recently awarded Best Barnett Shale Watchdog Group by the Fort Worth Weekly for its work seeking "positive solutions to the problems of natural gas drilling and pipelines" in North Texas and beyond. The celebration will be a snack potluck.

For more information, contact Esther McElfish at nctcalliance@yahoo.com.



From the President

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in February. Over 100 elementary students toured the prairie last year and the intent is to host even more in 2012. Fundraising to support park improvements and educational experiences will concentrate on asking for donations from sponsors instead of putting on an event with large expenses.

Instead of soliciting for volunteers to work one or more hours during the day at an information booth, maybe ACC members can organize ourselves to fix picnic baskets and relax with each other after taking a prairie tour. ACC will continue to support the Friends of Tandy Hills in their efforts for this special place they have worked so hard to preserve.

Diary of a Meataholic Danny Kocurek



My wife began a one-month experiment with eating a vegan diet almost 2 years ago. As a native Texan, raised on an All-American diet, I naturally responded with a combination of horror and shock at the idea. Heck, I'm not only a native Texan, but my heritage is Czech. Since time immemorial, my people have been making sausage out of anything that stood still long enough.

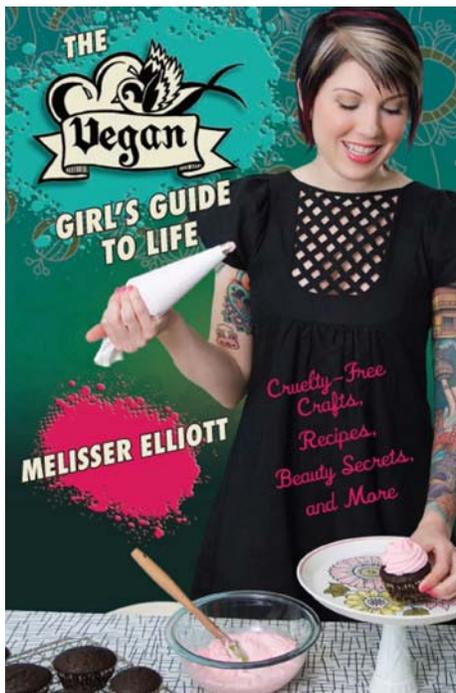
For various reasons including health and morals, my wife has kept her vegan experiment going. I try hard to lead a sustainable existence but have struggled greatly with changing my diet. Eating a vegan diet is estimated to lower a

person's carbon footprint more than any other change they can make. But even knowing that, I just couldn't imagine a life devoid of cheeseburgers.



So what is a weak-willed but well-intended, sustainably-motivated person to do? The answer, compromise and add lots of spices. The thought of eating plain carrots and peas is a non-starter for me. So we started experimenting with spices we never knew existed and that opened up possibilities I never even considered.

A lot of people think of a vegan meal as a couple of raw vegetables and a piece of processed soy in the shape of a pork chop but with the flavor of a shoebox. I am here to tell you how wrong you are. If you have ever eaten at the



Spiral Diner, you know that vegans like to eat and like to eat well. Now armed with a spice drawer that has tripled in size, we have converted our kitchen into a factory for meals exploding with flavors from all over the world. Curry powder, New Mexico chiles, lemongrass, garam masala, adobo chiles, and galangal can turn a pan of sauteed vegetables into an experience that will leave your taste buds exhausted but happy.



So two years into this unintended journey I have successfully conquered my meataholism and can honestly describe myself as a flexitarian with strong vegan tendencies. I know it is still pretty pathetic, but it is an improvement. I wish I could say that I have conquered my weakness for the bleu cheeseburger at Fred's Cafe, but I can report that those trips are few and far between. I can also say with confidence that I have never enjoyed eating more than I do now.

If you are looking for a sustainable New Year's resolution, consider getting a copy of *The Vegan Girl's Guide to Life* or *Vegan's Daily Companion* and give it a try.



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 _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

First-year member \$10.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Supporting \$40.00

Sponsor \$100.00

Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ _____

New member

Renewing member

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. **Please add \$5.00 if you want a paper copy of the newsletter mailed to you.**

Note: If you cannot pay, please let any board member know.

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Don't Forget!

Saturday, January 14
 10:00 am

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 and
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