

THE ARCH CREEK CHRONICLE

BRIDGING GENERATIONS



THE ARCH CREEK CHRONICLE

*A publication of the Arch Creek Trust, Inc.,
a not-for-profit corporation.*

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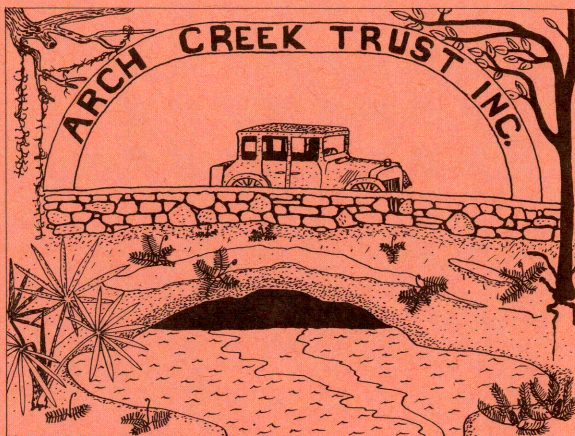
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The Arch Creek Chronicle is published three times annually by the Arch Creek Trust, Inc., on behalf of its members. Membership dues and structure is as follows; regular, single membership is \$10.00 per calendar year as is a family membership covering husband, wife and dependants under 18 years of age. Individual life membership is \$300.00 once. Corporate endowment is available for \$1000.00 per calendar year.

Business card advertising in the Arch Creek Chronicle is offered for \$10.00 per volume issued. Suitable donations of equal value will be considered as compensation for some advertisers.

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THE ARCH CREEK CHRONICLE

Volume II, Number 1

The purpose of the Arch Creek Trust, a not for profit organization, is to preserve, protect and defend the natural flora, fauna, archeological artifacts and natural character of the Arch Creek Area; To advise the State of Florida, Metro-Dade County and/or the City of North Miami as to how best preserve, protect and defend the natural flora, fauna, archeological artifacts and natural character of the Arch Creek Area; and to bring to attention of the public the needs of the area and support to those working to preserve it.

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THE LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by J. Dallas Love

With the new year upon us it is my resolution to turn our attention and resources toward building the membership of the Arch Creek Trust. Last year our dues paying census was forty-nine members. The November Art and Craft Sale yielded four new members bringing the total mailing for this issue of The Chronicle to fifty-three. This represents a maintenance membership which just covers the expenses for a publication such as ours. Your renewals are vital to continue the success of the Arch Creek Trust.

But dollars did not contribute nearly as much to our gains as members did. For every penny collected in 1986, ten dollars of effort was freely given by members and supporters. This is why membership must be the top priority of any group whose goals are to preserve. It is people who make a corporation not bank accounts. The dues paid out by our membership are more than returned by two sources of information exchange: our guest speakers and now The Arch Creek Chronicle.

Reflecting on the past year there have been many triumphs. For many, the field trip to the Deering Estate archeological site was the highlight of the entire year. Others are harvesting years of effort in seeing the reconstruction of the Arch Creek Bridge become a reality. Then there is the grand effort to place that site on the National Historic Register. And for me, our reasoned arguments to prevent wholesale use of herbicides in Arch Creek to control the growth of pestilent weeds produced valuable relationships between the Trust and The South Florida Water Management District.

Looking at our treasury it becomes apparent that those accomplishments were not bought but earned. These human assets of the Trust are the essential ingredients which make it a living entity. Let's keep it that way by ensuring that our dues structure gives a return that is proportional to our numbers. Let's challenge ourselves to recruit one disciple to take a place in our human bridge into the future. That is what membership is all about.

BOOK REVIEWS
by Susan Weiss

It's not really necessary to know more than your senses can tell you in order to enjoy Arch Creek Park. By taking in the sights, sounds and smells as you walk the trail (ignoring for the moment the sound of the traffic on Biscayne Boulevard), you can fully appreciate what valuable resources are found in the park. During my frequent visits I find myself looking up at the live oaks and gumbo limbos, at the spider webs spanning the spaces between the branches, at the variety of birds and plants, and saying, "This is truly an amazing place."

But, if you do want to know more about the area to increase your understanding of circumstances and events, here are some suggestions.

For a good history of Miami and North Dade, there are two books by Thelma Peters: "Biscayne Country 1870-1926" and "Lemon City: Pioneering on Biscayne Bay 1850-1925." These works cover the early settlement, development and growth of the region. Mrs. Peters writes about the subject using her personal knowledge of the period, people and places. From these books you will learn about the communities of Biscayne, Lemon City, Fulford, and Arch Creek, which became Miami Shores, and eventually, North Miami.

"The Commodore's Story" by Ralph Munroe presents a picture of the early years of Coconut Grove. Munroe came to the Miami area from Staten Island, NY in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He was an early resident of the Grove, along with the Peacocks and their hotel, and Brickell's trading post. His story tells of his life and his love of photography, boats and Biscayne Bay. He designed and built boats suitable for the Bay's shallow waters. These designs are still popular; a boat which Munroe built in 1891 can be seen at his house, "The Barnacle," a Florida State Park in Coconut Grove.

Other examples of Munroe's work can be enjoyed in "The Forgotten Frontier: Florida through the lens of Ralph Middleton Munroe" by Arva Moore Parks. This selection of photographs features South Florida from Key West to Arch Creek, from Miami Beach to the Everglades. With-

in this collection you will see the Miami River rapids, the 15-foot crocodile Munroe killed at Arch Creek, the Northern tourists (known as "swells") staying at the Peacock Hotel, the early black settlers in the Grove, and the Seminole Indians who came in from the Everglades to trade at the settlement.

All of these books will be enjoyed by anyone with even a minor interest in the subject. You'll discover that the more you learn about our local history, the more you'll want to know.

These books are in most local libraries and available in many local bookstores.

Susan Weiss is a librarian at the Bay Vista Campus of Florida International University and serves on the Arch Creek Trust Board of Directors.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 5, 1987, Monday night at 7:30 PM the Board of Directors will meet to select a nominating committee for the election of new Officers and Board Members. Public is welcome to attend at the Museum.

January 7, 1987, Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 PM the Park Liaison Committee will meet at the Greynolds Park office to discuss ways to improve Arch Creek Park.

January 19, 1987, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day/ Observed Holiday. Monday night at 7:30 PM will be the Regular Meeting of the Arch Creek Trust. Our guest speaker will be Mr. Joe Podgor, local environmentalist, just back from Washington, D.C. He will speak on a current topic of concern to our area at the Museum.

February 2, 1987, Ground Hog Day, Monday night at 7:30 PM the Board of Directors will meet to cast ballots to elect new Officers and Board Members to serve terms of one year each. Each member of the Arch Creek Trust may vote, so let's pack the hall. (Museum)

February 4, 1987, Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 PM the Park Liaison Committee will meet at the Greynolds Park office to discuss topics of mutual concern.

- February 16, 1987, Washington's Birthday/ President's Day Holiday. Monday night at 7:30 PM there will be a presentation by Paddi Cunningham, Arch Creek Park Naturalist, "Arch Creek Then and Now," featuring slides taken when the Park first opened. This is the Regular Meeting of the Arch Creek Trust at the Park Museum. As usual refreshments will be served after the program.
- March 2, 1987, Monday night at 7:30 PM at the Museum. The Arch Creek Trust Board of Directors meets to discuss business including setting a date for the Bridge Dedication.
- March 4, 1987, Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 PM the Park Liaison Committee will meet at the Greynolds Park office to discuss topics of mutual concern.
- March 16, 1987, Monday night at 7:30 PM at the Museum. This month's guest speaker is Mr. Alex Stone from The American Littoral Society. His topic will be Biscayne Bay and his group's purpose with respect to enhancing one of Dade's water treasures.
- April 6, 1987, Monday night at 7:30 PM at the Museum. The Board of Directors meets to discuss Trust business. The public is welcome.
- April 8, 1987, Wednesday afternoon at 4:30 PM the Park Liaison Committee will meet at the Greynolds Park office to discuss topics of mutual concern.
- April 16, 1987, Thursday afternoon at 5:30 PM at Arch Creek Park. Tentative date for a members' canoe trip up Arch Creek. Due to availability the Greynolds Park canoes will only be usable on a weekday for our excursion.

PARK UPDATE

Mr. Wesley Wilson, founding member and past President of the Arch Creek Trust, will be conducting his gardening class at the Arch Creek Museum, sponsored by the Dade County Parks and Recreation Department. An item of current use in the garden will be presented in each session. Two five-week courses, one session each

week, are available to the public at \$10.00 per course. The classes are from 7:00 to 9:00 PM on Thursdays beginning on January 8, 1987. For further information and reservations call the Arch Creek Park office at 944-6111.

The authenticating finish work on the Bridge reconstruction is 2/3 completed at this time. Mr. Louis Van DerCar, Miami's noted sculptor, will be applying his final touches in January, 1987. Mr. Paul Carey is preparing the landscape plan, so that the Arch Creek Trust can make its plans for the dedication when the job is completed.

In keeping with the tradition of Arch Creek's Natural Bridge as a boating destination, you are invited to join the Arch Creek Boat Club. This is an informal group whose central interest is sailing and paddling in the spirit of the pioneers to Arch Creek and Biscayne Bay. There are no fees or dues. Meetings can be scheduled if there is sufficient interest. If you wish to become involved or simply share an interest in reviving this part of our South Florida heritage, call Charlie Easton at: 945-0498 or Burnham Neill at: 758-1184.

Mr. Elmore Kerkela met with Margaret Yansura and other representatives of the South Florida Water Management District and received their approval on the Trust's efforts at removing duckweed from Arch Creek. However the District expressed a desire to begin routine spraying of Diquat to prevent recurrent blooms. Your continued assistance is needed to convince the South Florida Water Management District that some duckweed is necessary in Arch Creek as a food source for numerous native and transient wildlife. Even though our contractual obligations have been executed, our offer to assist has not been rescinded. On behalf of the leadership of the Arch Creek Trust we would like to thank the members, Park staff and especially the South Florida Water Management District unit that made mechanical weed removal in Arch Creek a reality. You all made the difference.

PLANT PROFILE
Showy Goldenrod

The South Florida Goldenrod season is skewed from the rest of the Country. Species that bloom in late summer in the temperate areas of the United States may appear in December or January in the Arch Creek basin. Such is the case of the Showy Goldenrod, Solidago speciosa. This plant emerges quickly, forming clumps that send up several flower bracs each. The smooth, lancelet leaves cover the stems profusely and are evenly distributed. Erect golden spikes sit atop the foliage like icing on the cake. One "spike" is actually hundreds of fragrant flowers.

Examples of the Showy Goldenrod may be seen along Arch Creek where the South Florida Water Management District has mowed the right of way. If one enters the Enchanted Forest Park, crossing Arch Creek at the pedestrian bridge and walk north toward Courttree Apartments, you will see clumps of golden yellow flowers standing two to three feet above dark green leaves. The Showy Goldenrod differs from others that may be present in that the flower brac does not branch out but rather it holds it's flowers in close in a single spray of color.

The leaves emit a licorice-like scent when rubbed between your fingers. Both the leaves and the flowers can be dried and used for a fine tea. The tea is said to aid digestion according to folklore and looks and tastes similar to Chamomile tea.

Being from the daisy family, the seeds may be found tightly packed in the center of the flowerettes. As the dry season progresses, the yellow tops give way to white, fuzzy lint that carries the seed away with the wind. The tiny seed requires very little in the way of a "sail" to disperse them over a wide area.

The Goldenrod heralds the fall and winter at Arch Creek. The bright flowers make a welcome replacement for the diminutive sunlight we receive at this time of year. Nature has given us this quirk of bright color at our most sparse season. And so the Showy Goldenrod really lives up to it's name.

January is renewal month for membership to the Arch Creek Trust. This is the only formal notice that you will receive that your dues may have expired. Please check your records to determine if you have paid your dues for 1987. Any dues paid after November 1, 1986 cover you for 1987, but since our memberships are processed by the calendar year, those that are received through November 1, 1987 will count for 1987 only rather than 12 full months. You get the most for your money by renewing early.

Your membership to the Arch Creek Trust now returns more to you than ever. Susan Weiss, the Programs Director, diligently seeks out quality guest speakers for your enjoyment each month. The Publications Committee turns out three issues of The Arch Creek Chronicle per year as well as other reports and notices. The Park Liaison Committee lobbies your concerns before the Dade County Parks and Recreation Department management. We could go on and on.

To receive all the benefits of membership to the Arch Creek Trust please send your check or money order to: The Arch Creek Trust, Inc., 1855 N.E. 135th St., North Miami, FL 33161. You can use the form that folds out of your copy of The Chronicle for your convenience.

FOCAL POINT
Blue Tailed Skink

A most striking contrast against the earth tones of Arch Creek Park is the electric brilliance of the common Blue Tailed Skink. This reptile is native to open woods from Maryland to Arch Creek on the Eastern seaboard. The habitat it prefers includes sandy soils with plenty of logs, rocks and other debris in which it can burrow.

Like all lizards, the Skink must regulate its body temperature by positioning itself to receive or dissipate heat. One purpose of the burrowing instinct is to get out of the hot sunlight in midafternoon or to prevent heat from radiating into the cool night air. The same behavior benefits the Blue Tail's cousins in the north who must hibernate through cold weather. Skinks seek out the moderating temperature of rocks or earth when the mercury plummets. In South Florida the burrow can also protect the Skink from torrential rains. Even though the rain is not necessarily "cold," it can nevertheless take away heat and energy that may be needed to escape enemies. Most of us have seen the American Anole or other lizard drowsy after a night of rain. That can be fatal to the Skink whose bright coloration may give it away.

In addition, the burrow offers physical protection to enhance survivability from predators and is used for nesting. Unlike the imported Caribbean lizards that drop a single egg here and there, the Skink will deposit a number in one spot to defend them through incubation.

The fence that lines the driveway to the Park is one area that Blue Tailed Skinks frequent. They may be seen sunning themselves on the rails of the fence or on rocks when the days are cool. This area offers many nooks and crannies to call home. The preferred location seems to be the old oak stump that is on top of the limestone creek bank. This is the time of year that the casual observer can sight them best. Clear, cool days that make the Skink seek out a warm spot in the sun are numerous. In just a few months, summer and its dog days will send them to the cool of the hammock.

FEATURE ARTICLE
The Natural Thing to Do

In a place such as Arch Creek Park it is difficult to keep it natural. Our cultural and social roots are locked into an industrial mindset. Humankind is nothing if it is not at work. Somehow, as soon as the word "natural" is used in a sentence, a mental image of a specific time frame is forced on us. As natural as what or when? The last one billion years of evolution have seen constant change. But even that period does not represent the "average of naturalness" at Arch Creek. The Earth has been in existence for some four to five billion years; scientists tell us South Florida has been a submarine environment much of that time. Thus it would seem to us that Arch Creek Park should be occupied by sealife if one takes the idea too seriously.

If we are honest with ourselves, what is meant when we use the word "natural" is that we wish to change the nature of things today to what they were at some other time. In that way the term "natural" has been a disruptive force within the Arch Creek Trust and the Dade County Parks and Recreation Department. Anyone can argue with deep conviction that their vision of nature is the correct one. After all nobody sees the Park in exactly the same way.

If we discard the word "natural" for a moment, perhaps we can say what we really mean. A better description of the sentiments of Arch Creek Trust members is that Arch Creek Park should represent a walk through time. The idea that the Park should be a native South Florida hammock is too narrow a view to fit the purpose of the Arch Creek Trust. A hammock does not represent the march of time, which is inevitable if not natural, but is merely a snapshot of time. Our experiences tell us that this is a fact.

One can stand on the corner of Biscayne Boulevard and Northeast 135th Street and be up to one's ears into the 21st century. One can enter the gates of Arch Creek Park and be confronted with a late 20th century saltwater intrusion dam. Then look beyond to the Museum whose lines are circa 1920. From the Museum one can gaze across Arch Creek and see where slaves carved the Coontie Mill sluice

run out of the creek bank in the nineteenth century. The largest live oak trees around the Museum span an era when Ponce De Leon explored Florida in search of the "Fountain of Youth" in the sixteenth century. Had he crossed Arch Creek, he no doubt would have met Indians. Indians whose folklore may have portrayed their ancestors' vision of Arch Creek thousands of years ago. A visit to Arch Creek Park is really an experience of time and timelessness.

Another example of time as it relates to the word "natural," is that of timely-ness. Too often the priorities of both the members of the Arch Creek Trust and the Dade County Parks and Recreation Department staff ignore the seasonal and timely progression of activities. A case in point is that not a month goes by without the planting of trees in the Park, whereas seeds fall only periodically and in a way that places them in optimum condition for the next growing season. In the same way the pruning and removal of plants has been a year round endeavor. Observation would show that there are times when cutting to kill and pruning to correct should never be confused. In fact to be a naturalist one must be observant to see the "nature of things." In its truest form "natural" infers no action at all.

The charter of the Arch Creek Trust requires that we preserve, protect and defend. These are actions to be performed by human intervention. By injecting the prerequisite "natural" in defining what it is that we defend; the flora, fauna and ... character of the Arch Creek area, we confuse the human aspect of the Trust's obligations. Taken literally, we could not introduce or remove anything from the Park. Only seeds that sprout and grow on nature's terms could be defended, protected and preserved. Certainly to dig up a tree from another location and place it in Arch Creek Park is an offensive gesture that displaces the nature of things as they exist.

Thus what we envision as our role at Arch Creek and what our written mandate is are divergent ideals. The habit of humankind is to dominate its surroundings. To define the human ego requires that we assume that every situation is in need of our wisdom and perfection. Sometimes we overlook the fact that in order to put a feather in one's bonnet we must first kill an eagle.

It is not necessary that the Arch Creek Trust take

on a whole new direction for us to be true to our charter. We all must simply be honest with ourselves and see the world through an undistorted lens. We must not underestimate the self-corrective abilities of our environment. We must see the condition of Arch Creek Park not as problems but as symptoms of problems. We must not overestimate the worth of ourselves in the workings of nature. In that way the goals of the Trust are greatly simplified.

However, not to follow the Trust's charter presents liabilities. The written mandate of our articles of incorporation give us guidance, direction and strength. They are to be followed and consulted or amended to fit reality. Each February the Trust members may confirm or deny the direction of the leadership through the election of new Officers and/or amending the charter and by-laws. For this reason the subject of what is natural at Arch Creek Park places an unfair burden on those elected to uphold the charter. Under some unforeseen circumstance they may be civilly liable for deviating from the reasonable public perception of "natural."

To preserve, protect and defend is the proper road for the Arch Creek Trust to follow. It is the minimalist version of human nature. Add to that public education of the history and existing ecology of Arch Creek Park and we truly live up to our non-profit goals. Once we accept the idea that certain tinkering is required to improve Arch Creek Park, we are married to the responsibility, financing and manpower to achieve that vision on a day to day basis. If the Trust must intervene, it should be in defense of the Park, rather than to alter or determine its nature. That is the one practical way to reconcile what the Trust is required to do and still allow human input into the final product.

The level of participation and enthusiasm is not unusually diffused for a non-profit organization such as the Arch Creek Trust. But without a well defined purpose, there will be misunderstandings between the members and the leadership. Our priority must be to reduce the unfounded or unclear directives that are portrayed to the public. Perhaps more citizens would participate if our agenda were more specific. It is easy enough to tax our

elected officers out of existence since they serve on a volunteer basis without spreading their attention too thinly. With an approach such as the clarifying of goals and following our charter, greater unity and enthusiasm will follow in its own good time. In other words, ... naturally.

THE ARCH CREEK TRUST
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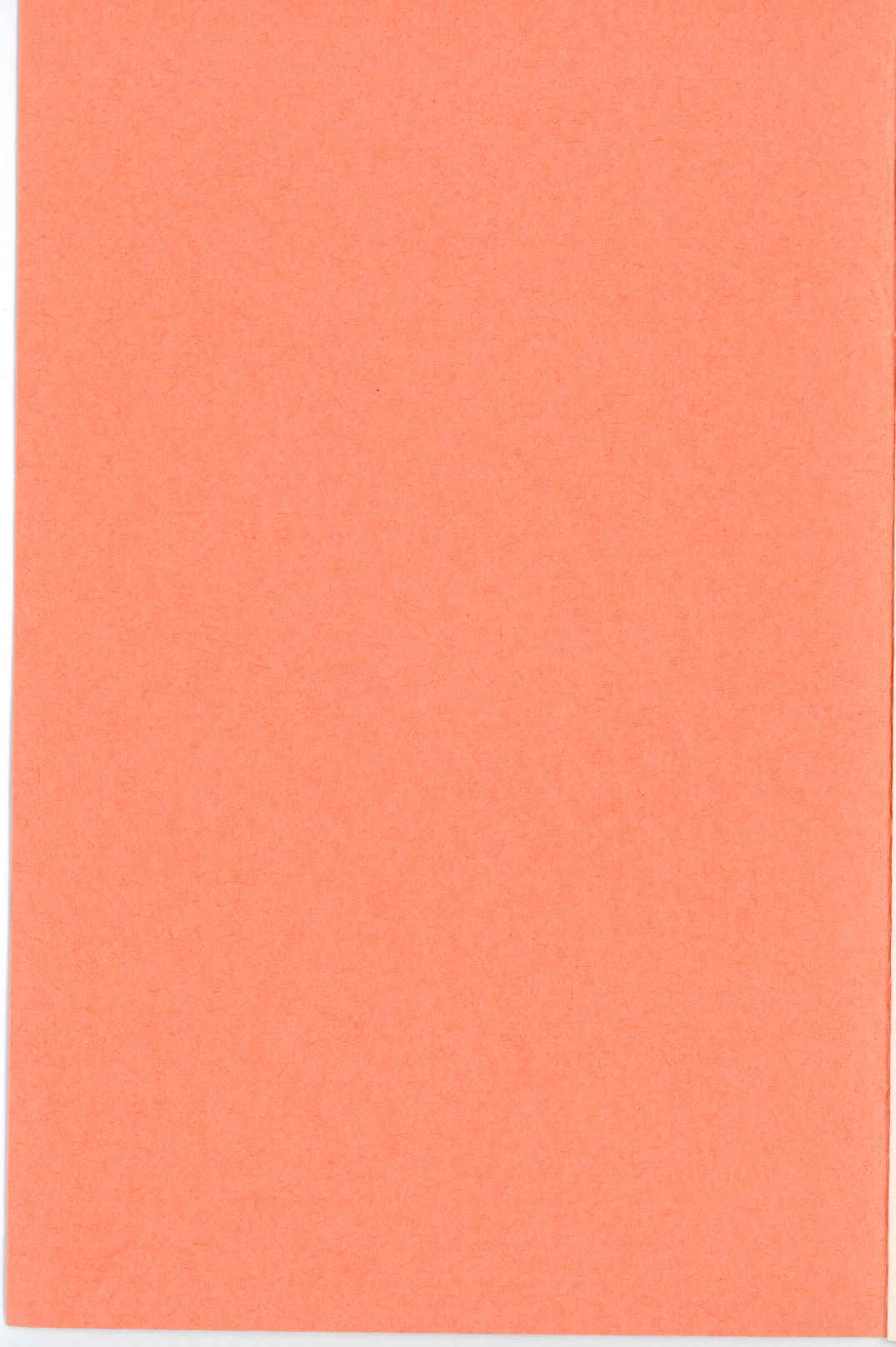
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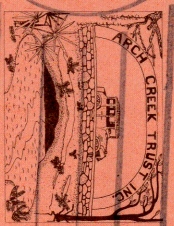
* Denotes Chairpersons.

NEW MEMBERS

Rex Scott and Linda DiGennero
Ben and Brenda Gooden
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hodus
Robert L. Jones
Sophia and John LaRoche

Additional copies of The Arch Creek Chronicle may be purchased for \$1.00, payable to the Arch Creek Trust, Inc., 1855 N.E. 135th St., North Miami, FL 33161.





ARCH CREEK TRUST, INC.

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North-Miami, Florida 33181

