

## ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

General membership meets 6:30 p.m., third Tuesday each month, Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway.

### Tues., Dec. 13: Our Annual Holiday Party

Our annual Alamo Group Holiday Party will be held at the Lions Field clubhouse, Mulberry and Broadway. As in years past, we will have a silent auction as part of the festivities. See page three for details.

### Tues., Jan. 17: SAWS Plans

Come learn about plans, new technologies, and other information from a representative of the San Antonio Water System.

### Tues., Feb. 15: VIA's Future

Learn about VIA's clean, green streetcar plans, plus future multimodal expansion plans from CEO Keith Parker.

## SIERRA SOCIALS

*Drinks, food, fun. If planning to attend, contact Loyd Cortez, 674-9489, loydcortez@earthlink.net.*

**Fri., Jan 27:** Candlelight Coffeehouse, 301 N. St. Mary's, 6-8 p.m.

**Fri., Feb 24:** Little Italy, 824 Afterglow Street, 6-8 p.m.

**Fri., Mar 23:** Hsiu Yu Chinese, 8338 Broadway, 6-8 p.m.

# The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 45, NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 2011



SIERRA CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## GCSNA Questions Answered at Nov. Meeting

John Koepke of the Government Canyon State Natural Area treated club members to an in-depth question and answer session about the area at our monthly meeting Nov. 15 in the Witte Museum. Koepke spent the better part of an hour providing us with information about GCSNA's history, mission, staffing and budget challenges, and long-range plans.

GCSNA is feeling the effects of the current drought. "We've already seen an impact on the insect population, which affects other populations," Koepke said. In particular, he noted the number of monarch butterflies migrating through the area is down over previous years.

Koepke explained that the mission of a state natural area differs from that of a state park. A natural area's top goals are resource protection and public education. The mission of GCSNA is to protect the karst recharge area of the

Edward's Aquifer, he said, and to educate the public about the need to protect this resource. Karst is a porous limestone topography that allows water to percolate down into a fast recharge aquifer, and the quality of the water can be adversely affected by development over the recharge zone.

Government Canyon is one of the nation's largest karst preserves, Koepke said. In addition, he added, GCSNA provides vital habitat protection for the endangered golden cheeked warbler and for a number of "karst invertebrates," meaning cave dwelling bugs and spiders.

GCSNA currently maintains numerous hiking trails, but does not allow overnight camping. "We will see camping in my lifetime," Koepke joked, "but you would be surprised what it takes to put in camping." He went on to describe the difficulty of bal-

ancing the public's desire for camping facilities with GCSNA's mission to protect the natural habitat.

GCSNA's more than 12,000 acres also contains over 100 significant archaeological sites, some of them dating back to the Hill Country's earliest human occupation. "Many of the sites have been heavily looted over the years," Koepke said. He added that the destructive rooting up of the ground by an exploding population of feral hogs now presents a serious threat to the sites.

And, amidst all these requirements to protect the land, endangered species, archaeological sites, and to educate the public, GCSNA, like all state organizations, has suffered budget restrictions. "Our staff has been cut in half," Koepke said, indicating projects like archaeological site analysis, and a new master plan may have to be placed on hold.

## ExCom Candidates: Bios for Alamo Group Election

Please send in your vote for our annual election (ballot on Page 3). We have five positions open on our Executive Committee. Two positions are for vacated, unexpired terms of two years, and three positions are for full, three-year terms. Six candidates for these positions have submitted the following biographies.

**Alyssa Burgin.** Throughout my lifetime, I have worked to bring together like-minded groups, so that they might share resources. My background in media--not just from a master's degree, but from candidate advance in national-

level politics, NGO hostage-crisis communications, and statewide marketing--is a strength I can share.

My assembly of networks, from political organizations, issue advocacy, peace centers and progressive activities--from San Antonio to the Valley to East and North Texas--gives me a powerful list of potential helpmates. Additionally, I am in-demand as a public speaker and writer.

The world is a giant game of "Concentration," and I know the game board well.

**Peggy Day.** I have an M.A. in environmental planning, specializing in education for sustainability.

A Club member since 2002, I first served as a Puerto Rico Chapter founding director and now serve on the Alamo Group ExCom, serving as chair for the last two years. As well, I have tried to hold down the chairs of publicity, fundraising, tabling, some events, and participated fully in the political, conservation, outings, newsletter, and education committees.

*(Story Continued on Page Two)*

**We encourage members to review the Executive Committee candidates' qualifications, clip out the ballot on page three, and submit their votes.**

## (Continued from Page 1: Ex-Com Candidate Biographies)

My focus has been on building the group through strategic planning and training and helping to bring in new blood. I hope to continue this line of service to the Alamo Group.

**George Rice.** I joined Sierra Club in 1993. I am a hydrologist. Hence, my primary interest is water, particularly water quality.

I have been active in efforts to protect the quality of water in the Edwards Aquifer. My activities in this regard have included: working with citizens' groups opposed to projects that threaten water quality (e.g., PGA Village, Hills of Castle Rock), speaking at City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, and serving on the board of the Edwards Aquifer Authority.

Most recently, I have participated in the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program. I hope you will consider supporting me. Thank you.

**Mobi Warren.** I would like to join current board members to address environmental issues at the local and regional levels. I bring a special concern for climate change, an issue I am engaged with as a voluntary coordinator for 350.org (as the founder/facilitator of San Antonio 350.)

Protecting natural areas and wildlife habitat is also a passionate interest. I have completed Master Naturalist training and as a Friend of Government Canyon lead monthly Haiku Hikes in the Canyon.

As a fifth grade teacher, I want our children to receive environmental education that is grounded in science and compassion. I would love to help the Sierra Club build local and regional alliances and increase our base to be the most effective

voice possible for the environment.

**Gay Wright.** I would like to serve on the executive committee. The Sierra Club activities I have participated in are as follows: tabling at many events, helping prepare the newsletter for mailing, helping with Lone Star Action Alerts, and attending the Leadership workshop. I have attended environmental meetings: CPS, NPR (transportation), and TCEQ in Schertz. I went on the San Antonio solar bus tour to learn about solar. I weeded, watered, and mulched for San Antonio Parks and Recreation at some parks. (Star of the month for July.)

**MaryEllen Garcia.** I am a firm believer in conserving the resources that we have on this planet in every way possible. Not only does this mean reducing, reusing and recycling in our own households, but also advocating for public measures that will help to sustain us without further depleting the earth's limited stores.

## Outings: Winter Hikes Beckon

**General Requirements:** *Wear clothes and shoes appropriate for hiking. Bring water and a snack. Minors allowed only when accompanied by parent/guardian or with Consent Form and Medical Authorization. Dogs not allowed unless specified, and must be leashed and socialized. Donations to Sierra Club always welcomed.*

### Sat., Jan. 14: Hike the Canyon

Join the Friends of Government Canyon and the Sierra Club for a jointly-led guided hike on one of the many trails at Government Canyon State Natural Area. Length will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on group.

GCSNA is located at 12861 Galm Rd (Take FM 1560 west from Helotes to Galm Rd). There is a \$6

entrance fee (\$3 seniors). Meet at the Visitors Center by the rain-water harvesting tower by 8:15 am for an 8:30 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Jermolajevs (830) 980-4183 if you require additional information.

### Sat., Feb. 11: Hike the Canyon

See Dec. 10 outing. But, contact Sierra Club co-leader Chris Anderson, (210) 838-1952, if you require additional information.

### Sun., Feb. 12: Heart Healthy Beginner's Valentine Walk (Dog Friendly)

It's a twofer—get ready for your valentine with a beginner's walk on the beautiful Salado Creek

I have served as recording secretary of the Executive Committee of the Alamo Sierra Club for the past three years. I have spearheaded the ASC's entry in the King William Parade in 2010 and 2011. Professionally, I teach Spanish linguistics as faculty in UTSA's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

Greenway, 1021 Voelcker Lane.

Meet 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot by the doggie bag dispenser. Join us on the shady scenic trail of this beautiful park. We will walk about 4 miles on a flat, paved path. Take 1604, 410 or Wurzbach Parkway to Blanco

(Story Continued on Page 3.)

# A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

The holidays are a time for celebration, family, community, spirituality and reflection. Alas, over-commercialization and consumerism is so bad that I often feel we would be better off without these traditions. Ideally we can regain the best of traditions with a growing awareness of sustainable practices.

For instance, I revere trees and we reuse potted trees. In New Mexico a pinon pine served for years before it was planted and is alive and well. In Puerto Rico, which imports 1 million Christmas trees annually, we settled for a potted ficus that served for seven years before we sold it.

Many of our families have too much and lack for little, so de-materializing the holidays is important. Celebrate the season instead by getting outdoors with coworkers, neighbors, family and

friends. Plan now to join the annual bird count, go for a hike, have a solstice outing, work on a nature restoration project, or decorate a tree for the birds with seeds, fruit

Excessive consumption contrasted by dire poverty is more visible and has evoked new relevance and initiatives for local and global sharing.

"Alternative gifting" means making a donation to a worthy cause in a recipient's name, ideally something of symbolic importance to the receiver. A few of the many global programs are Oxfam America, Alternative Gifts International, African Wildlife Foundation, and Heifer International. The Center for a New American Dream is a great clearing house of gift ideas.

The Alamo Sierra Club welcomes your gifts of time and skills to help with administration and conservation. Please contact me if you would like to pledge a last-

minute gift for the auction or a New Year's resolution of your time as a volunteer.

On behalf of the club, best wishes for Happy Holidays and Peace in the New Year.

## My Sierra Club contribution of:

\$10  \$25  \$50  \$100  
 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible. They support the Sierra Club's advocacy and lobbying efforts.

## Executive Committee Ballot

Please vote for five (5) candidates. If you have a joint membership, both you and your spouse may vote.

	Individual	2nd (Joint) Member
Gay Wright	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobi Warren	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
George Rice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mary Ellen Garcia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Margaret (Peggy) Day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alyssa Burgin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

and suet. Join together to make recycled decorations, wrapping and cards. Use those cards to offer to house sit, baby sit, pet sit, teach a skill, or build, wash or maintain something, as a more thoughtful, sustainable form of gift.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

and Longfield—(one light north of Wurzbach Parkway). Turn onto Longfield and left at the first stop sign and follow Voelcker Lane past Hardberger Park into the parking lot. Call Leader Wendy Drezek (493-0939) to reserve a place on this popular hike. Assistant Leader Stan Drezek.

### Sat., Mar. 10: Hike the Canyon

See Dec. 10 outing. But, Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Platt (210) 695-9570 if you require additional information.

## Holiday Party and Potluck Supper Features Music and Silent Auction

Come celebrate the Alamo Group's very successful Year of 2011 at our annual Holiday Party & Potluck Dinner, Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 6:00 p.m. Our party will feature the always-fabulous scratch-made food our members are known for and Celtic Music by *Sally's Garden*.

The party will be held at the Lion's Field Adult Center, Mulberry and Broadway. (Please note that this event will NOT be held at the Witte Museum.) As in years past, the party

will feature a silent auction of unique crafts, plants, merchandise certificates and gifts for environmentalists provided by local businesses and craftspeople.

The auction items are posted on our Website, <http://texas.sierraclub.org/alamo/>, and you can bid on them via email in case you can't make it to the party. So be sure to go on line and bid on some goods. All proceeds go to a worthwhile cause: our Alamo Group.

# Meeting Dates and Contact Information

General Meeting	3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Executive Committee Mtg.	3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Newsletter Submissions	Deadline, 8th of each month	Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Political Committee Mtg.	2d Thursday, 7 p.m.	Dave Wells	271-0640
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 7 p.m.		
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125

**Alamo Group of the Sierra Club  
Executive Committee Officers & Members**

Margaret (Peggy) Day, Chair Person	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person	674-9489
Mary Ellen Garcia, Secretary	344-1581
Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells	271-0640
Vacant	
Karen Dalglish Seal	226-8101
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer	828-3721

**Administrative Contacts**

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Vacant	
Membership	Vacant	
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

**Committee Contacts**

Outings Co-Chairs	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
	Stan Drezek	493-0939
Political	Dave Wells	271-0640
Outreach & Education	Carolyn Wells	271-0640

**Conservation Contacts**

Conservation Chair	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Assistant Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Endangered Species	Fred Wills	673-9566
Flouridation	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	485-6880
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coord.	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Climate Change	Mobi Warren	496-4942

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**U.S. Congresspersons**

Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195
Lamar Smith	821-5024
Henry Cuellar	271-2851
Francisco Canseco	561-8855

**City Council (Continued)**

Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor	207-7278
Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos	207-7064
Dist. 4: Rey Saldana	207-7281
Dist. 5: David Medina, Jr.	207-7043
Dist. 6: Ray Lopez	207-7065
Dist. 7: Cris Medina	207-7044
Dist. 8: W. Reed Williams	207-7086
Dist. 9: Elisa Chan	207-7325
Dist. 10: Carlton Soules	207-7276

**City Council**

Mayor Julian Castro	207-7060
Dist. 1: Diego Bernal	207-7279

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**Alamo Group of the Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 6443  
San Antonio, Texas 78209**

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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Our Facebook site** is up and running again. Check it out and "like" us at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Alamo-Group/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Alamo-Group/)

Check enclosed. Please make payable to Sierra Club.  
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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org) **F94Q W** 1


**Alamo Group website address  
[www.alamosierraclub.org](http://www.alamosierraclub.org)**

Thanks to Dave Hammeren of The Printed Word, 6502 Bandera Rd., Suite 205, San Antonio, Texas, Telephone 520-5700 for our nominal newsletter cost

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 Join online today and receive a **free Weekender Bag**  
 Go to our website at <http://Alamosierraclub.org> and click **Join the Sierra Club**

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