

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., June 21: Large Scale Solar Energy

Mark Kapner, Senior Strategy Engineer with Austin Energy, will discuss large scale solar in the Southwest.

Austin Energy is the city of Austin's municipal electrical power utility.

Tues., July 19: Pot Luck Social

Bring your favorite dish to share with your fellow Sierrans. We will provide reusable plates and cups and some recycled utensils, or bring your own. Loyd, as customary, is supplying the ice tea. We will provide juice, water, and ice.

Tues., Aug. 16: Vegetarianism

Hear local president of SA Vegetarian Society, Kaz Sephton, discuss what it means to be a vegetarian

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., June 24: Chris Madrids, 1900 Blanco Road, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., July 22: Candlelight Coffeehouse, 3011 N. Saint Marys Street.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

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JUNE-JULY 2011



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Combined Heat and Power = Efficiency

More than two-thirds of the energy used to produce most electricity is wasted, according to Rich Herweck, president of the Texas Combined Heat and Power Initiative. But, says Herweck, the process of cogeneration – or combined heat and power (CHP) – can increase power plant efficiency from 30 percent to 90 percent.

Speaking at the Alamo Group's May 17 meeting, Herweck described the cogeneration process as relatively simple, and one that

has been around since the time of Thomas Edison. It involves capturing the heat created when electricity is generated and using that "waste" heat to (1) heat buildings in cold weather, (2) drive a "steam chiller" that will chill water for air conditioning and refrigeration, or (3) generate additional electricity.

A CHP system is most successful when installed in hotels, schools, prisons, colleges – any large facility that needs to operate round the clock, Herweck said. When used

in this kind of facility, cogeneration offers a 33 percent savings over the conventional arrangement of taking electricity from a municipal grid and installing a boiler to produce heat.

Herweck added that a cogeneration plant makes a facility energy independent in times of natural disaster. As an example, Herweck cited a hospital in Jackson, MS, that "kept the lights burning" during and after a hurricane, while the power grid for the surrounding city went down. In such an instance, a CHP plant functions as

(Story Continued, Top of Page 2)



Alamo Group members gathered at the Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne on Saturday, May 28, to help the center celebrate the Cibolo Corridor Initiative's recent winning of the Evelyn R. Eden Award for River Protection. The award was given by the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

At top left, Alamo Group Chair Margaret "Peggy" Day (dressed in white) addresses the crowd.

Below, Executive Committee Member Mary Ellen Garcia (second from right) enjoys the evening's events.



No July Newsletter

Please note that this newsletter is a June-July edition. You will not receive a July newsletter and there will be no speaker program at our General Meeting at the Witte in July—it's our annual pot luck dinner!

Our Worthy Causes: Please Contribute

It's that time again.....our annual conservation fund appeal. Much of the environmental work we do entails some cost, which is often borne by those of us who also volunteer our time to administrate and act on conservation issues.

We have contributed to local projects and plans for sustainability including protections for wildlife, water and air quality, clean energy, education, land use, the built environment, trans-

(Story Continued, Bottom Page 3)

(Combined Heat and Power, or Cogeneration, Boosts Efficiency: Article on Meeting Presentation Continued from Page One)

an emergency power backup unit, said Herweck.

Because CHP has not become the standard way of constructing new buildings and power plants in the United States, said Herweck, this country wastes two thirds of the energy used to generate our electricity. The wasted heat is exhausted through stacks or dumped into cooling ponds.

Facilities that do install CHP plants realize tremendous efficiencies, said Herweck. The University of Texas at Austin, for instance, uses a cogeneration system to provide power, heat, and air conditioning for the entire campus, said Herweck, and claims a 90 percent efficiency.

Herweck's organization is trying to change state and local

laws to encourage planners and builders to include more CHP systems in new construction. These plants save money, Herweck said, and they benefit the environment. Currently, twenty percent of Texas energy is produced by cogeneration. An increase in this figure to 35 percent would drop carbon dioxide pollution by 50 million tons per year, he said.

Sierra Club Outings: Hike the Canyon and More

"Come join us as we float down the San Marcos River in our rented canoes or kayaks."

Saturday, July 9: 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 of the hike will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on the group.

Open to ages 13 and over; minors must be accompanied by an adult; no pets please. Dress appropriately and wear sturdy shoes for hiking over rough terrain; bring two liters of water and a snack.

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 rainwater harvesting tower by 7:45 am for an 8:00 am departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Platt (695-9570) if you require additional information.

Saturday, July 16: Summer Canoe and Kayak Excursion

Come join us as we float down the San Marcos River in our rented canoes or kayaks. Summer is generally hot here in South Texas so we

will enjoy the cool water and overhead cover on most of the river. We can watch for the different types of birds and wildlife that likes to be near the river while we lazily make our way. At a point along the way we will beach the watercraft and enjoy a nice cool swim in the river.

Canoes, kayaks, PFDs (life jackets) and paddles can be rented on the river from a livery. Adults and children over 12 with a parent are encouraged to participate. Participants are responsible for making reservations with the livery and renting the equipment. You may use your own equipment but PFDs are required. As we get closer to the date, more information will be posted. Contact Terry Platt if you would like to participate.

Saturday, Aug. 13: 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 of the hike will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on the group.

Open to ages 13 and over; minors must be accompanied by an adult; no pets please. Dress appropriately

and wear sturdy shoes for hiking over rough terrain; bring two liters of water and a snack. 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 rainwater harvesting tower by 7:45 am for an 8:00 am departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader and Texas Master Naturalist Stan Drezek (493-0939) if you require additional information.

Saturday, September 10th: 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 of the hike will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on the group.

Open to ages 13 and over; minors must be accompanied by an adult; no pets please. Dress appropriately and wear sturdy shoes for hiking over rough terrain; bring two liters of water and a snack.

See previous GCSNA hiking dates for location, time, and contact person.

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

From a single plastic bag marring an otherwise beautiful natural scene, to a mansion demolished and dumped in a landfill to make way for a newer model, or our loads of toxics searching for convenient disposal in the Third World, the silent scourge of our wasteful habits demands action. And, there is a flood of energy, creativity and economy directed at resolving this problem.

Artists and inventors the world over delight us with their magical solutions. Georgia Swartjes' award-winning recycled paper hat (see photo below) is one. This clever, useful object brought forth memories of all the wonderful recycled products out there. Now, in addition to the flood of one of a kind and small-time productions, there are many efforts by major manufacturers for large scale recycling production of high quality durable items.

While we have lots of individual creativity locally, like that of Swartjes, our region lags in scaled up production. The Alamo Area could benefit in many ways by marrying this creativity in waste stream diversion to local economic development initiatives.

For example, I don't use bottled water often, but when I do, I wonder, why do we still import from places half way around the world, like Fiji, where a large part of its population doesn't even have access to drinking water. Then there is the extra handling and fuel to consider. Right here in Texas we have alternatives. Years ago Donald Judd dreamed up an elegant idea that sits idly by, a water bottle designed as a glass building block to market Texas artesian water. Think of how efficient and effective it would be to resurrect this viable idea to recycle volumes of glass waste, market local water on the run, create jobs, and supply an energy saving building material.

Then, as just one other example, San Antonio touts its new 2030 Net Zero Energy building code, but there is no deconstruction regulation that is considered a big component elsewhere, which helps divert a large segment of the waste stream back into the local resource base, keeping limited funds invested locally, instead of sending money out across the globe in a hunt for ever diminishing resources. In other developed areas buildings must be carefully deconstructed and reused. Califor-

nia, a US leader, has had mandates for decades, which fuels industry and a great system to connect buyers and sellers of materials and products.

The growing of collaboration of industry and innovators, often united through competitions, is an important driver for products from waste. These products are filling every niche. There are clothes, appliances, buildings, furniture, lighting, and more. One outstanding building is the EcoARK, a beautiful, three-story amphitheater pavilion made up entirely of plastic bottles diverted from Taiwan's waste stream. Another is a classic chair design coming out this year, initiated by the Coca Cola Company in collaboration with the furniture manufacturer Emeco, that recycles large volumes of plastic bottles.

The recycling design prize could be a way to marry local innovators with investors to attract manufacturers, since we have little manufacturing here. It would be reassuring if, as the local government, chambers of commerce, and think tanks busy themselves with future plans that appear to include enterprise zones, they keep in mind the tremendous waste of our design innovators and our waste's potential as integral resources in that planning.

"Artists and inventors the world over delight us with their magical solutions."



This recycled paper hat was on display recently at the San Antonio Fiber Artists runway show. See the "Word" article above for its significance.

(Fund Raising: Continued From Page One)

portation, health, and much more.

We always need funds for fees, food and materials. Out of concern for children and future generations, we are strengthening our education committee. The Alamo Group hopes to continue building our Sierra Student Coalition and offer Campus Green Fund trainings.

To help us, we will have an official unpaid intern this summer and we dream of generous support to offer an intern stipend for the fall. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and have enclosed an envelope for your donations. Make your check payable to Alamo Group of the Sierra Club or Alamo Sierra Club

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	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

Committee Contacts

Outings	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Co-Chair	Stan Drezek	493-0939
Political	Russell Seal	289-9008
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	495-2148
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coord.	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614

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: Justin Rodriguez	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: M. A. Cisneros	207-7279

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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 **F94Q W** 1

**Alamo Group website address
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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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