



# THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 44 NO. 3 MAR 2010

## *Cen-Tex Sustainable Communities Partnership*

Alamo Group Chair Peggy Day and Conservation Chair Loretta Van Coppenolle spent three days in Killeen, Texas, to give input into a sustainability plan for the central Texas region. The region includes the communities of Killeen, Fort Hood, Copperas Cove, Gatesville, and Harker Heights.

The January conference was held to develop long-term environmental, economic, and social goals for the region. The conference was the result of a memorandum of understanding signed by the mayors of the cities involved and by the garrison commander of Fort Hood.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Bob Dixon, the mayor of Greensburg, Kansas, whose city was flattened by a tornado in May 2007. Greensburg, under

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## *Electric Car Meeting at GSABA Headquarters*

San Antonio EV Ready held a meeting Feb. 3 to discuss the impact of electric cars on the local building industry. EV Ready is an initiative with representation from the City of San Antonio, AACOG, CPS Energy, the Greater San Antonio Builders Association, Build San Antonio Green, Solar San Antonio, and the San Antonio Medical Foundation.

At the meeting it was revealed that, while electric vehicles can be recharged at standard 120-volt outlets, charging goes much faster using 220-240-volt outlets, and faster still using 480-volt fast charging stations. Builders were alerted to the imminent need for equipping garages and other building sites with 240 volt outlets.

Among those addressing attendees were Bill Barker from San Antonio's Office of

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## *Word From the Chair*

*By Margaret Day*

It is an honor to have been elected to serve as Executive Committee Chair. I am dedicated to strengthening our Alamo Group and the Sierra Club to meet our high needs and expectations. Also, Jerry Morrissey and Carolyn Wells are stepping up as Outings and Recycling Committee Chairs, respectively, to take over from departing Outings Chair Scott Wolfe and Recycling Chair Laurie Posner. On behalf of the Alamo Group, I would like to bless you all for your conviction and leadership and for the dedication of your talents, time and energy. It is a great comfort to have such outstanding volunteers. Thanks.

On the second Saturday morning in February, I again had the curious pleasure of judging at the Jr. Academy of Science Competition, along with other members, Jerry Morrissey, George Rice, and Fred Wills. This is the second year the Alamo Group has awarded prizes to encourage students to pursue environmental science. We were short a few judges, however. Jerry and I joked that there were probably hundreds of scientists among our membership, at least a couple more of whom might value the opportunity to foster budding environmental scientists, serve our Group, get a free lunch, a certificate, and a shawl.

One of the biggest hurdles to a volunteer-run group such as ours is coaxing members to participate. Reading through our newsletter archive in preparation for leading, it was not surprising to find this theme threading through the years. Past Chair Tom Dukes wryly noted if only it were true that ten percent did ninety percent of the work. "We need new blood-energy, enthusiasm, and volunteers," entreated another, Michele Petty. As Sancho Panza to our Conservation Chair, the inimitable

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**General Meeting: 7:00 P.M., 3rd Tuesday each month at the Witte Museum located at 3801 Broadway just south of Hildebrand Ave. Socializing begins at 6:40, program at 7 P.M.**

### **Tues., March 16, 2010 — Big Bend Ranch State Park Update**

Rod Trevizo and other BBRSP staff will present the many changes, including land additions, occurring at Texas's largest state park.

### **Tues., April 20, 2010 — Water Quality of Edwards Aquifer**

Gary Schindel of the Edwards Aquifer Authority will speak on the hydrogeology of the aquifer, emphasizing chemical and biologic water quality. Results from the EAA's research and data collection programs will be used to discuss the conceptualization of groundwater flow in karst aquifers in general and in the Edwards Aquifer in particular. Schindel has been Chief Technical Officer for the EAA in San Antonio since 1999.

## *TRPA Wins One, But the Work Continues*

*By Eloise Stoker*

Under the leadership of the long time president, Tom Goyner of San Marcos, the Texas River Protection Association this year has seen a few victories, with more to come.

The fight to stop the water and air pollution of the Center Point rock crusher on the Guadalupe River has been won. However, the same company that operated the rock crusher continues to strip mine gravel from the river. That part of the Guadalupe looks like a moonscape, with the riverine environment destroyed and polluted. The difficult effort to stop the

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## *Volunteer Opportunities*

Spring is coming, and if you're wanting to get outside and DO SOMETHING, here are some events that will need Sierra Club volunteers. If you would like to help with any of these events, contact Loyd Cortez at 674-9489 or loydcortez@earthlink.net.

\* SAWS Spring Bloom, Sat., Mar. 13. Must be there by 7:45 a.m. to greet guests at 8:30. Event ends at 1 p.m. Call Juan Solos @SAWS Conservation, 233-3689, or Carolyn Wells at 271-0640.

\* Native San Antonio at Eisenhower Park, Sat., Mar. 20, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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### Word from the Chair Continued

Loretta Van Coppenolle, for the last couple of years, it was obvious the group still needed to attract volunteers.

One of the changes I love that attracted me to serve the Sierra Club is its commitment to youth, diversity, and environmental justice, which is also a wellspring of new volunteers. My training and experience in founding and building a Puerto Rican Chapter offers many proven methods. The National Sierra Club is willing to provide financial incentives and resources to further this objective to bring in minority and youth membership.

We need new, young blood and youth wants the opportunities and empowerment we can offer them. In a renewed commitment, and building on some groundwork laid last year, I hope you will consider helping our Alamo Group contribute to a regional student environmental stewardship movement centered on Education for Sustainability. These plans include Sierra Student Coalition leadership training courses and building partnerships.

Outings are key to building membership, according to Club experts. Alamo Group outings leaders have shared many wonderful experiences in nature and I encourage all of you to continue to offer them on a regular basis. It is my hope we can add more variety and attract non-traditional participants as members-outings such as urban/suburban experiences that tie in social and environmental issues and piggyback on offerings of our ally organizations. To do this, together with outings leaders, I hope we can offer regular planning, training and certification that will draw in new members and new experiences and opportunities for you all.

Now I can understand why some shy away from playing the "bad cop" as I have in the challenging, politically charged theater of our conservation issues, but many of our necessary activities are instantly pleasurable and rewarding. Tablings, outings, river and beach cleanups, repairing trails, and trainings are often in beautiful settings, always with interesting people doing great things, and many offer freebies-once Loretta wheeled away a lawnmower and Stacy Berlfein got a cool retro bike!

Since service is the life blood of our group (don't get me wrong, we need and love other resources too), like past leaders I hope to help us all find a way to fit available time, knowledge, and passion into a satisfying level of service to our common purpose.

### Volunteer Opportunities Continued

\* Annual Basura Bash, morning of Sat., Mar. 27. Pick up trash with the Alamo group along Six Mile Creek near the Espada Aquaduct, in cooperation with Missions National Historical Park. Contact Lissa Martinez at olmosbasin@satx.rr.com.

\* University of Texas at San Antonio, United to Serve, Sun., Apr. 4, various locations, schedules flexible.

\* Fresh Air Friday at Main Plaza, Fri., Apr. 9, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

\* History Faire and Culture Fest at Tejeda Middle School, Sat., Apr. 10, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

\* Earth Day at Woodlawn Park, Sat., Apr. 17, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m..

\* SAC Earth Day Celebration, Thur., Apr. 22, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

\* New Branufels Root & Shoots, Sat., Apr. 24, 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

\* Solar Fest at Maverick Park, Sat., May 1, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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### Cen-Tex Sustainable Continued

Dixon's leadership, was rebuilt as a green town, using 100 per cent wind energy. All the city's government buildings have been rebuilt to LEED platinum standards and all other buildings have green features enabling them to withstand future tornadoes.

The conference resulted in defined goals that fell into five categories: sustainable development and land use, services providing a high quality of life, insuring material resources now and into the future; creating efficient transportation systems, and enhancing economic development.

Issues such as water quality and quantity, recycling, LEED construction, outreach, and clean energy were included in discussions that took place at the conference.

In April, interested parties will reconvene to refine objectives and identify new initiatives that support common goals. The partnership may be expanded to include other cities not currently part of the initiative, such as Belton, Nolanville, and Temple.

The sustainable communities partnership was initiated by Fort Hood, which has a mandate to create a strategic energy plan to cut energy consumption 30% by 2016.

A representative of the city of Dallas spoke briefly of Dallas's sustainability plan. Day and Van Coppenolle introduced San Antonio's Mission Verde to the mayors

present at the conference as well as to other interested parties.

At the end of the conference, Mayor Ed Mullen of Harker Heights spoke movingly of his odyssey from one who scorned nature and despised environmental concern to one now dedicated to environmental betterment. He enumerated his city's already achieved ecological initiatives, which were considerable.

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### Electric Car Continued

Environmental Policy and Tracy L. Woodard, Director, Government Affairs, for Nissan, who spoke about the Nissan Leaf, an electric car that will get 100 miles to the charge. Nissan is scouting the U.S. to identify 15-20 cities for early launching of the Leaf, due out in December 2010. San Antonio is hoping to be one of the early-launch cities.

The Leaf, which will have no transmission, internal combustion engine, or tail pipe, will be priced affordably. The first 200,000 Leaf vehicles purchased will be eligible for a \$7,500 tax credit, and installers of home charging stations will be eligible for a \$2000 tax credit.

The U.S. is expected to have one million electric vehicles on the road by 2015. There are today 250 million cars and SUVs on America's roadways but there are only 54 million private garages. The useful life of an electric-car battery is estimated to be 10 years, after which time the battery will take only 70-80% of its original charge.

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## Remembering Nancy Burns By Eloise Stoker

Back in the late 80s, a Sierra Club canoe outing was camped on a large gravel bar beside the Rio Grande in Big Bend's Boquillas Canyon. We had finished our evening meal and camp fire conversation and were retiring to our tents, when Nancy Burns picked up her sleeping bag and announced she was going to look for a good sleeping place up the side canyon behind us. The next morning she reported hearing interesting animal noises and seeing a wonderful night sky. That was the free-spirited, cheerful person we all enjoyed on canoe trips at Caddo Lake and many Texas rivers.

We lost track of Nancy several years ago after she moved to the Hill Country, and were saddened to learn recently of her death in April, 2009. If you knew her, spend some time with your Nancy memories.

The Texas Rivers Protection Association has a Nancy Burns Memorial Fund, which they are considering combining with other memorial funds to contribute to enlarging park land on the San Marcos River near Martindale. Nancy would like more places to put her canoe in and float a river. To make a contribution, contact Texas Rivers Protective Association, 444 Pecan Park Drive, San Marcos, Texas 78666, or [www.txrivers.org](http://www.txrivers.org).

**TRPA Wins One Continued**

madness will continue. (Sierrans may remember our program on the Guadalupe River gravel strip mine and its rock crusher from several years ago.)

Further south, the city of Castroville would like to dump "treated" sewage into the Medina River. TRPA is going through the court system to stop this folly, and Castroville is now considering other methods to solve the problem. It would seem there will be a happy ending here.

Further east, the San Marcos River is under attack from a Houston developer, who wishes to divert huge quantities of water to make lakes on his land, thereby increasing its value. TRPA is mounting a major effort to stop this degradation and will probably win.

**VIA Plans Presented at February Program**

San Antonio is the largest city in the United States without a rail component to its mass transit "mix," according to the new head of VIA Metropolitan Transit. Speaking at the Alamo Group's Feb. 16 monthly meeting, Keith Parker pointed out this and other VIA shortcomings, and outlined his short- and long-range plans to improve our mass transit system.

One of Parker's short term plans is to make bus transportation more attractive to upscale passengers. Starting this year, VIA will be adding busses fueled by natural gas, hybrid busses, and electric busses. Some of the upgraded fleet will include amenities such as reclining seats and access to Wi-Fi. And, just prior to publication of this story, a new "transit mall" for busses is scheduled to have opened at North Star Mall.

Although VIA's long-range plan won't be ready until late this summer, Parker indicated that he would eventually like to see the same mix of transportation components that he initiated as head of public transportation in Charlotte, North Carolina: bus, light rail, and streetcar. Parker

advocates developing transportation routes that encourage commercial growth around centers and along corridors. In Charlotte, Parker said, this strategy saw housing values increase along the routes, and the median income of the system's riders increased by 40 percent.

A significant problem in San Antonio, Parker said, is that VIA is under funded, compared to transportation systems in other major Texas cities. In addition, ridership is predominantly low income. The median income of VIA riders is \$10-\$14,000 per year, Parker said, and less than 7 per cent of riders earn above \$50,000 per year. One of VIA's goals, he said, must be to increase ridership among more affluent San Antonians.

**OUTINGS**

**SAT., MAR. 13. SAN ANTONIO RIVERWALK**

Enjoy a moderate walk 2.5 miles around from the Pearl Brewery towards downtown and back on the new North Reach. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Pre-registration required. Call for details: Chris Anderson, Leader; 1-210-838-1952 or [anchorpt11@yahoo.com](mailto:anchorpt11@yahoo.com).

**SAT., MAR. 27. LOST MAPLES STATE NATURAL AREA DAY HIKE.**

To car pool, meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot that includes a Blockbuster Video just outside Loop 1604 on Bandera Rd. (11820 Bandera Rd.) on the right hand side. You can also meet us at the ranger station at the entrance to the park at 9:50 a.m. This will be about a 5-mile hike taking about 4 1/2 hours (including lunch), with about 3 hours of driving (round trip) from the car pool spot. Difficulty: Moderate. Cost: Park fees plus contribution to Sierra Club. Register with leader: Lee Dodge, [LSG999@earthlink.net](mailto:LSG999@earthlink.net), 210-275-3355.

**SAT., APR. 10, FRIEDRICH IN THE SPRING**

The park is located at 21935 Milsa Rd (take Dominion Drive exit from IH 10 W, one mile north on access road and then turn around south on access road to Oak and west to Milsa). Meet 8 a.m. in the parking lot. Difficulty: Moderate. Length is about 3.5 miles. Donations to Sierra Club accepted. Call leader Stan Drezek, 493-0939.

**SAT., APR. 24, EISENHOWER PARK EVENING HIKE**

Meet at 6:45 p.m. at the main trail entrance for a 3-mile hike that will be completed in the

moonlight by about 9 p.m. Come early at 6:15 if you would like to share a snack. Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous. Leader: Jerry Morrisey, 382-2614 or [jlmorrisey@aol.com](mailto:jlmorrisey@aol.com).

**AUG. 23 THROUGH AUG. 30 OR 31, GRAND TETONS AND YELLOWTONE**

(At press time, this hike was fully booked, but you can add your name to a waiting list.)

This will be a four-day backpack in the Grand Tetons, called Teton Crest, plus one or two days of hiking in Yellowstone. For Information: [papawolfe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:papawolfe@sbcglobal.net)

**APR. 23-24: ADOPT-A-BEACH CLEAN-UP, PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE**

Saturday 9 a.m. to noon, pick up, catalog, and bag debris. Afterwards, swim and picnic. Those who want to camp a second night can do so. Difficulty: Easy. Cost: Free. For more information contact Marsha Meredith at 675-4097, or [MarshaM@satx.rr.com](mailto:MarshaM@satx.rr.com)

**Sierra Socials**

(Contact Loyd Cortez 674-9489 or [loydcortez@earthlink.net](mailto:loydcortez@earthlink.net) if planning to attend.)

**Mar. 26 on Friday, Mad Hatters Tea House, 320 Beaugard, 6-8 PM**

Join us for a good cup of soup and salad or sandwich.

**Apr. 23 on Friday, La Fogata, 2427 Vance Jackson Rd, 6-8 PM**

Join us on the patio for good Mexican food and a margarita.



# MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting: .....	3rd Tuesday 7 p.m. ....	Peggy Day .....	829-5632
Executive Committee Meeting: .....	3rd Thursday, 7 p.m. ....	Peggy Day .....	829-5632
Newsletter Submissions: .....		Wendell Fuqua ....	jaleyd@grandecom.net
Political Committee Meeting: .....	2nd Thursday, 7 p.m. ....	Russell Seal .....	289-9008
Newsletter Mail Party: .....	2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m. ....	Jim Stewart .....	692-0727
Outings Committee Meeting: .....	1st Wednesday every 2 months, 7 p.m. ....	Vacant .....	
Conservation Committee Meeting: .....	1st Thursday, 7 p.m. ....	L. Van Coppenolle .....	492-4620

## ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Margaret (Peggy) Day . Chair Person .....	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person .....	674-9489
Wendell Fuqua .....	373-0748
Hector Gonzalez .....	226-6069
MaryEllen Garcia .....	344-1581
Karen Kimbell .....	365-3174
Dave Wells .....	271-0640
Scott Wolfe .....	724-2707
Teresa Ronquillo .....	844-8720
Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer .....	828-3721

### ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs .....	Barbara McMillin .....	734-4170
Fundraising .....	Vacant	
Publicity .....	Teresa Ronquillo . ....	844-8720
Mailings .....	Jim Stewart .....	692-0727
Membership .....	Vacant	
Newsletter .....	Wendell Fuqua .....	373-0748
Website .....	Richard Alles .....	494-2088

### COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair .....	Vacant	
Political Committee .....	Russell Seal .....	289-9008
Outreach & Education ..	Carolyn Wells .....	271-0640

### CONSERVATION CONTACTS

Conservation Chair .....	L. Van Coppenolle .....	492-4620
Assistant Chair .....	R. Carroll-Bradd .....	216-6125
Endangered Species .....	Fred Wills .....	673-9566
Fluoridation .....	L. Van Coppenolle .....	492-4620
Organic Gardening .....	Dave Klar .....	495-2148
Recycling .....	Vacant	
Tree Conservation .....	Richard Alles .....	494-2088
Volunteer Coordinator ...	Vacant	
Water Issues .....	Jerry Morrissey .....	497-5470

### U.S. CONGRESSPERSONS

Charlie Gonzalez (210) 472-6195  
 Lamar Smith (210) 821-5024  
 Henry Cuellar (210) 271-2851  
 Ciro Rodriguez (210) 922-1874

### CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Julian Castro; 207-7060;	mayor@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 1: Mary Alice P. Cisneros; 207-7279;	district1@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor; 207-7278;	district2@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 3: Jennifer V. Ramos; 207-7064;	district3@sanantonio.gov
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Dist. 5: David Medina, Jr.; 207-7043;	district5@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 6: Ray Lopez; 207-7065;	district6@sanantonio.gov
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Dist. 8: W. Reed Williams; 207-7086;	district8@sanantonio.gov
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Dist. 10: John G. Clamp; 207-7276;	district10@sanantonio.gov

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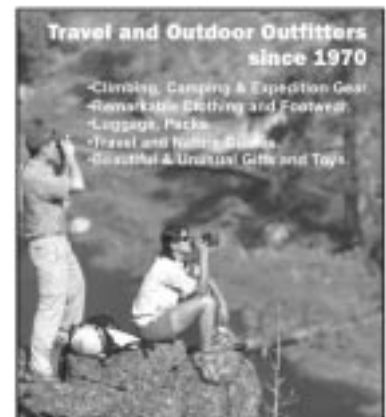
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