

## ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

### Tues., May 17: Combined Heat and Power

Learn about efficient, clean and reliable energy generation called combined heat and power (CHP) from Rich Herweck, CEO of RobustEnergy. Prior to his talk, you can view a new report on CHP at this website: <http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications>.

### 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.

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## SIERRA SOCIALS

Drinks, food, fun. If planning to attend, contact Loyd Cortez, 674-9489, [loydcor-tez@earthlink.net](mailto:loydcor-tez@earthlink.net).

**Fri., May 27:** La Tuna, 100 Probandt, 6-8 p.m.

**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

VOLUME 45, NUMBER 5

MAY 2011



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## Fluoride in Our Water Supplies: Too Risky

Former Environmental Protection Agency senior scientist Robert Carton calls fluoride the greatest case of scientific fraud of the 20th century. Carton and other EPA scientists oppose the practice of adding fluoride to municipal water supplies, which puts them in agreement with the national Sierra Club's own policy to oppose fluoridation.

Loretta Van Coppenolle, vice chair of the Alamo Group's Conservation Committee, outlined the case against fluoride at our April 17 meeting with a presentation

entitled *Water Fluoridation: Its Risks Outweigh Its Benefits*. She began by tracing the history of America's desire to add a toxic substance to its drinking water.

In the early 1900s, Van Coppenolle said, dentists began associating low cavity rates with naturally fluoridated water supplies. Some 40 years later the American Dental Association endorsed adding fluoride to municipal water supplies. At about the same time, the United States began manufacturing atomic bombs and generating, as a byproduct, large quanti-

ties of fluoride. Cities began buying the leftover fluoride to add to their water supplies to prevent cavities. Today, 66 percent of cities have fluoridated water.

But fluoridation has a serious down side, said Van Coppenolle. Fluoride is highly toxic and corrosive. It must be added to the water in very minute proportions, a process which may be difficult to control with accuracy. And, it requires careful handling. A spill can eat through concrete.

As an example of the risk of an "overfeed" of fluoride into a water supply, Van Coppenolle cited a 1992 incident in Hooper Bay, Alaska, where an excess of fluoride caused one person to die and most of the population to sicken.

In 2004, San Antonio also experienced an overfeed incident. Van Coppenolle said guests at several downtown hotels complained that their water had a strange color and odor. City water officials found the fluoride level was far greater than that found in the Alaskan overfeed. Fortunately, no illnesses or deaths were reported.

But, adding this risky substance to a water supply has *not* been proven to help prevent tooth decay. Van Coppenolle says cavity rates among the poor have stayed pretty much the same, despite widespread fluoridation. She added there has been no study to compare the effect of increased brushing and flossing with the effect of fluoridating water.

Fluoridation of a water supply is supposed to be beneficial for children ranging in age from six months to twelve years (or older) said Van Coppenolle. However,

(Story Continued on Page Two)



A number of Alamo Group members "took home the gold" at the April 9 Lone Star Chapter Awards banquet in Austin. Winners of the 2010 Evelyn R. Edens Award for Rivers Protection are Brent Evans and Carolyn Chipman-Evans of the Cibolo Conservation Corridor Initiative, Cibolo Nature Center.

Winners of the 2010 Chapter Service Award are Russell Seal and Karen Dalglish Seal. The award goes to a Sierra Club member or members who contributed significantly to the administrative activities of the Chapter or Group, including fundraising, membership, etc.

Shown left to right are Alamo Group member Loretta Van Coppenolle, Karen and Russell Seal, Lanny Sinkin of Solar San Antonio, Carolyn Chipman-Evans and Brent Evans, and Margaret "Peggy" Day, Alamo Group Chair.

**“Fluoride...is the only drug in America given without consent and which has never been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.”**

## *(Fluoride - Cont'd from Page One)*

the majority of households do not contain people this age, so the effect of fluoride in these households is all risk and no benefit.

In 2006, a government mandated report did examine the body of collective evidence on fluoride. The National Research Council's Committee on Fluoride in Drinking Water concluded that the maximum allowable level of fluoride in municipal water supplies was too high, that fluoride had reproductive and developmental effects, and had possible effects on fertility, diabetes, kidneys, and the immune system.

In January, 2011, Van Coppenolle said, the Department of Health and Human Services "finally came out with a rule lowering the permissible fluoride level in municipal water supplies to .7 parts per million, which is still too much for young



*The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club celebrated Fiesta at this year's King William Parade on April 16. Left to right are Mary Ellen Garcia, Jon Butchkosky, Loyd Cortez, Angela Garcia, and Alamo Group Chair Person Margaret "Peggy" Day.*

children, the elderly, people with certain mineral deficiencies, and people with heart disease and cardiovascular and kidney problems.

Fluoride, said Van Coppenolle, is the only drug in America given without consent and which has never been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

**“We must question what fuels the proliferation of single use food containers and equipment.”**

## *(Word from the Chair - Continued from Page Three)*

How could this happen? When even hard core Sierrans and net zero energy enthusiasts are insensitive to reusable dishes, one begins to fathom the extent of our waste problems. In hindsight, one inadvertent problem was that our dishes may have looked cheap and resembled disposables. Now that everything has been marked "Alamo Sierra Club—Reuse," we hope the remaining dishes will see many more years of use.

We need to question what fuels the proliferation of single use food containers and equipment (think of all the throwaways in the medical field). One driver, ironically, is the popular demand for

sanitary measures. Increasing health department regulations make it more difficult to meet sanitation rules, which push the use of disposables that play a central role in our culture of waste. This waste makes us less healthy, in the long run, because it consumes and defiles so many natural resources. Ultimately we harm ourselves.

We must question these drivers and our responses, like the short-sightedness of our insistence on some sanitation rules. What about our over indulgence in convenience and our over dependence on throwaways and built in obsolescence? How can we assure that reuse and reduction become more commonplace?

San Antonio has a long way to go. According to the *Express News* (4/22/11, McDonald) 82 tons of trash were sent to landfills from Fiesta parades alone. 11.96 tons of Fiesta waste was recycled — mostly food and beverage containers. When the number of reusable, or washable, containers is the measure, then we will be making some real progress.

We've got our work cut out for us. Consider stepping up to help the Alamo Group tackle reduction, reuse and recycling. Join us as the conscience of the people and as a watch dog, to craft, model and monitor solutions to waste.

# A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

*Americans use 100 million steel cans a day. We throw away enough steel every year to build all the new cars made in America.*

*An estimated 2 to 3 billion tires are currently stockpiled in the United States.*

*The junk mail Americans receive every day could produce enough energy to heat 250,000 homes for one day.*

*In one year Americans use enough kraft paper for a person to take a brown bag lunch to school or work for 64 million years.*

*Americans discard enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial air fleet every three months.*

*(Data from <http://museumca.org/helloagain/hello.htm>, Hello Again: A New Wave of Recycled Art and Design, a 1997 Oakland Museum of California exhibition).*

I can't vouch for the accuracy of these claims, but they help communicate the huge waste in our system and how much work we have before us. For the last year or so I've tried to manage our group's vacant "recycling" portfolio, which I prefer to label as the Reduce-Reuse-Recycle, or RRR, portfolio, because of the need to prioritize reduction and then reuse over recycling.

Within the Alamo Group's activities we are aware of room for improvements and the need to be a model. As an example, Loretta Van Coppenolle had taken charge of reusing disposable cups and plates, but they are short lived and hard to clean. In order to lead by better example, we invested in non-disposable cups and plates for club events.

Imagine our surprise when it was discovered that the 44 cups we started with in December dwindled to 26 after the holiday party. Then the number dropped to just 18 after the Zero Net Energy talk in January. We found plates and cups in the trash!

*(Story Continued on Page Two)*

**"Americans discard enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial air fleet every three months."**

## Alamo Group Outings: the "Canyon" and Others

### Saturday, May 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 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 a.m. for an 8:00 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459, if you require additional information.

### Saturday, June 4: Friedrich Wilderness Park in the Summer

Want to escape the heat but still enjoy the outdoors? Join us on the shady and scenic trails of this beautiful wilderness park, just outside of Loop 1604. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Park parking lot, near the trailhead.

We will hike about 3.5 miles, over varied terrain that is mostly level but with some steep rocky climbs/descents. We should finish by 10:30 a.m. Those who are interested can gather at a nearby friendly restaurant for breakfast/lunch.

Bring water and wear sturdy ankle-supporting shoes. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian unless Liability Waiver and Medical Treatment Authorization forms are provided.

Directions: Friedrich Wilderness Park is at 21935 Milsa Rd. Take I-10 N to Exit 552 (Dominion Dr.), go one mile N on access road, then turn around S on access road to Oak and turn W to Milsa.

No charge, but donations to the Alamo Sierra Club are welcome. For further information and to sign up for this beautiful hike, contact the leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459. Assistant leader: Terry Platt.

### Saturday, June 11: 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 a.m. for an 8:00 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Stan Drezek, 493-0939, if you require additional information

### Saturday, July 16: Summer Canoe and Kayak River Excursion

Come join us as we float down the San Marcos River in our rented canoes or kayaks. At a point along the way we will beach the watercraft and enjoy a nice cool swim in the river. Canoes, kayaks, 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.

# 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	289-9088
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 7 p.m.		
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.		

**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	289-9008
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	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
Fluoridation	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

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<b>U.S. Congresspersons</b>		<b>City Council (Continued)</b>	
Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195	Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor	207-7278
Lamar Smith	821-5024	Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos	207-7064
Henry Cuellar	271-2851	Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez	207-7281
Francisco Canseco	561-8855	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
<b>City Council</b>		Dist. 9: Elisa Chan	207-7325
Mayor Julian Castro	207-7060	Dist. 10: John G. Clamp	207-7276
Dist. 1: M. A. Cisneros	207-7279		

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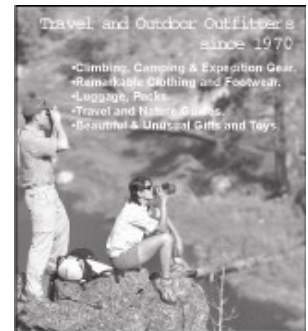
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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
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Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<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.

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

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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