



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 42 No. 3 MARCH 2008

Carbon Free, Nuclear Free

The Sierra Club was one of three sponsors of a talk on energy alternatives given by Arjun Makhijani, Ph.D., at the Witte Museum on February 12. Makhijani, a nuclear engineer whose latest book is called *Carbon Free, Nuclear Free: A Roadmap to U.S. Energy Policy*, spoke to a crowd of 150 people about what can be done to achieve a zero CO2 U.S. economy within the next 30-50 years without the use of new coal or nuclear plants.

Makhijani identified the three parts of the current energy crisis as climate disruption, insecurity of oil supply and

Continued on Page 2

CPS Hearing on Nuke, Rate Increases

It is important that as many citizens as possible go to the CPS Energy hearing that will take place **Tuesday, March 25, 6-8 PM at La Villita Assembly Hall**, Presa and Villita Streets. CPS board members will be present to hear citizen concerns. CPS has already committed \$206 million for design work on two proposed nuclear units at Bay City, on the site of the South Texas Nuclear Project. The more money committed, the more likely CPS will be to give a final yes to new nuclear generation that is unsafe, expensive, high in water consumption and unnecessary, given all the ready-to-go alternatives available. Sierrans are urged to attend the hearing and to sign up to speak. For more info, please call Loretta Van Copenolle at 492-4620.

A Word from the Chair by Loyd Cortez

It is a great honor to have been chosen by your ExCom to serve as Chair. I will strive to have our Group achieve the following simple goals: to provide our children with the opportunity to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and have a shade tree to sit under. With your help, we can and will meet these needs.

We have over 2000 members, so we have the clout to get our elected leaders to listen to our demands on any issue. But our leaders will not listen or take action unless they hear from the membership. So how can this be accomplished? Just sign up for our Action Alerts. Whenever an important issue arises, your Group will alert you by email. You can respond via a simple phone call or by sending an email to the appropriate decision maker. Sign up for Action Alerts by sending an email to loydcortez@earthlink.net.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I want to thank Jerry for his leadership, dedication, and commitment to his work on the many conservation issues facing the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club. Jerry made the decision to step down as Chair because he wanted to dedicate more time to direct action within the political arena to achieve conservation goals.

We have four new ExCom members, so let me introduce them to you. Jane Ward, Scott Wolfe, Sandy Redmond, who will also take over as Membership Chair, and Ellen Clegg, who will also take over as Secretary. Returning ExCom members are Fred Wills, Hector Gonzales, Jerry Morrissey, who will also become our Volunteer

Coordinator, and Paula Stone, who will also become our Fundraising Chair. Sharon Dukes (non-voting) will remain as Treasurer. The ExCom acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the following outgoing ExCom members: Carolyn Wells, Eloise Stoker and Tom Dukes.

I especially want to thank one of our past chairs, Tom Dukes, for all his hard work in creating an outstanding website for us. Richard Alles will now be taking over the duties of maintaining the website and the ExCom is grateful to Richard for volunteering to become the new webmaster.

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.

March 18, 2008: Green Is the New Red, White and Blue

Watch a DVD on NY Times columnist Thomas Friedman's ideas for combating global warming and helping the U.S. economy. Then participate in what we hope will be a lively discussion about his ideas and what needs to be done nationally/globally to stem climate change. **Please note EARLIER start time: 6:40 PM.**

April 15, 2008: 70 Days on the Rio Grande

Praised by Texas Monthly, San Antonio Express-News, Dallas Morning News and other publications, *The Tecate Journals: Seventy Days on the Rio Grande* is the chronicle of Laredoan Keith Bowden's trip down the Rio Grande from El Paso to the Gulf of Mexico. The author will share his photos, experiences and border insights.

Political News

The party primaries are over and Texas has had its say in the national presidential primaries. Hopefully, the excitement from participation in that election will continue through to the November 7th general election. The political committee will be working hard between now and then. Our next meeting is scheduled for March 13th. We made a decision not to endorse in primaries this year. Locally, we will be looking at county commissioner races, the sheriff race (this office is charged with the enforcement

Continued on Page 2

Political News Continued

of environmental laws), and other local races and issues. Nationally, the Alamo Group political committee and the Lone Star Chapter political committee initiate an endorsement of candidates for U.S. Congress which will then be taken up by the Sierra Club's national political committee. The committee looks forward to getting input from other Alamo Group members. You are the eyes and ears of our neighborhoods. Please contact any member of the political committee to offer your input or express concerns. Our endorsements are only useful if our approximately 2000 members actually get involved in campaigns and vote. Please remember we are a bipartisan organization that looks for candidates who demonstrate strong environmental concern and who will keep the door open for the Sierra Club's input as new issues arise. In upcoming newsletters, I will be discussing "GOTV" (Get Out The Vote). John Ela, Sierra Club national political chair, has said, "Politics used to be what the Sierra Club did. Now, politics is what the Sierra Club IS."

Russell Seal

Carbon Free Nuke Free Continued

nuclear proliferation. To address the climate problem, we have to reduce CO2 emissions by 65-85% in order to keep temperature rises below 2 to 2.4 degrees C. Nuclear, stated Makhijani, is not the answer because of cost, waste disposal, proliferation, terrorism, accident, water and other environmental issues. He pointed out that the new units proposed for the South Texas Nuclear Project are not the "standard" design NRG, the project manager, claims them to be because of novel changes in the software controlling the reactors. Thus, there are unknown, untested factors involved in the application.

Makhijani cited several most critical policies needed to achieve a zero CO2 emissions scenario, including a hard cap for large CO2 emitters going steadily to zero by mid-century, the selling of all allowances which would raise money for implementation of efficiency/conservation/renewable energy policies, new efficiency standards for all buildings and vehicles, no subsidies for nuclear, fossil fuels or biofuels from food products, the banning of coal plants without carbon capture and storage,

large-scale government purchases of renewable fuels and electricity, plug-in hybrid vehicles as standard government transportation by 2015, combining of aquatic plants for wastewater treatment and biofuels production, federal contracting preferences for low CO2-emitting companies, and vigorous research and development, including for direct solar hydrogen production. He stated that parking lots and rooftops can be sources of abundant solar energy for cities, with solar panels over parking areas simultaneously providing shade to cars beneath them. As a city grows, so grow the number of parking lots and rooftops, keeping supply in pace with the growth in demand for energy.

The entire text of Makhijani's book is available online at www.ieer.org.

**Christmas Mountains:
The Saga Continues**

On February 5, the School Land Board voted to reject the two private bids for the 9269-acre Christmas Mountains tract. The mountains are almost completely surrounded by private parcels of the Terlingua Ranch subdivision, but do share a 1-mile boundary with Big Bend National Park (BBNP). This fact makes adding the land to the national park both logical and somewhat problematic in terms of public access (5 miles from the highway in BBNP). An excellent proposal submitted by the National Park Service (NPS) on January 31 makes it clear that the Christmas Mountains could be managed as part of BBNP, assuring public access via off-trail travel or a new trail. NPS believes the land should be donated by the state to the federal government. The Conservation Foundation is so serious about its stand on proper disposition of the land it donated that it has offered to purchase the mountains a second time from the General Land Office and donate it directly to NPS. State Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson is now planning the following steps, pending final action on the property: 1) filing an easement for public access to the property from BBNP, 2) determining other means of access such as private roads on Terlingua Ranch, 3) urging Congress to appropriate funds for purchase of the Christmas Mountains and to allow public hunting, and 4)

opening the area for quail and dove hunting by September 1. For a variety of reasons, including cost, safety and limited access, NPS does not support hunting on the area.

Fred Wills

**Book Review: The Last
Season by Eric Blehm**

Eric Blehm's *The Last Season* tells the story of Randy Morgenson, arguably the greatest and most devoted backcountry ranger the South Sierra has ever known. Having been raised on nature writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Aldo Leopold and Henry David Thoreau, having had Ansel Adams as a family friend, and having grown up in the Northern Sierra's "Granite Womb" only enhanced Randy's credentials and passion. "Protect the people from the park, and the park from the people," was Randy's mantra.

The Last Season can be read or interpreted on different levels. Whatever path the reader takes should not disappoint. The framework centers on the mystery surrounding Randy's disappearance while on patrol in 1996 (his 28th season). Nobody was more skilled in this wild terrain than he. Couple that with his "heavy heart," and a 1994 quote in his journal from McClure Meadow, "the least I owe these mountains is my body." An intense search began with much speculation. On another level, the story provides a voyeuristic look at life within this subculture of ranger "brothers" from their outposts in legendary spots like McClure Meadow, LeConte Canyon and Lake Basin. This was my favorite level. Any backpacker should be drawn to this place after reading the book. On yet another level, the text serves as a backcountry "minimum impact" ethics handbook. (Try to ignore the fact that in 1920 the Sierra Club brought 100 mules into Lakes Basin and almost destroyed the place. [Editor's note: the impact of animal and human feet was not well understood then.])

Towards the end of the book, I was reminded of the beginning and end of a Randy Morgenson quote from Rae Lakes 30 years earlier, "Fall has definitely come to the High Country...Tis a beautiful time of year, but a somewhat sad one, for it brings the end of the Sierra season."

Scott Wolfe

Trip Report: Government Canyon Day Hike

On February 9, 2008, some new faces, Fred, Linda and Michael, joined some regulars, John, Christine and Catherine, on another of our long-distance day hikes. The weather was ideal as we ascended the Wildcat Creek drainage toward the "Protected Area." Unseasonably warm temperatures reminded all that spring is almost upon us. A medley of at least 3 distinct bird songs from within a thicket reinforced that feeling. "I regret that I didn't research the song of the golden-cheeked warbler," I lamented. [Editor's note: the warbler arrives the first week of March] We descended the Cave Creek drainage, detoured around Caroline's Loop, and then crisscrossed the Government Creek drainage coming out. Total for the day: 11.28 satisfying, calorie-burning miles.

Scott Wolfe



SAT-SUN, MAR 22-23: EASTER AT CHAPARRAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Join us for spring flowers and fragrant blooming shrubs in this South Texas wildlife area. The brushy environment is home to a variety of birds, mammals, and reptiles, including roadrunner and Harris' hawk, javelina and whitetail deer, and Texas horned lizard and Texas tortoise. Trails include a 2.5-mile nature trail, an 8.5-mile road loop, and a wheelchair-accessible 0.5-mile nature trail. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: donations accepted. Camping is free. Leaders: Fred Wills, fredwills@att.net or 673-9566 and Jerry Morrissey, jlmorrissey@aol.com or 382-2614.

SAT, MAR 29: TOUR OF BAMBERGER RANCH ("SELAH")

On this 3 1/2-hour tour of the ranch (located near Johnson City, about 60 miles north of San Antonio) you will see the results of 37 years of habitat restoration, projects that demonstrate principles of good stewardship. You may also see dinosaur tracks, fossil beds, a herd of endangered Scimitar-horned Oryx, and the "Chiroptorium." You'll walk the nature trail and then enjoy Madrone Lake as you watch "The Rain Machine." Transportation is

on the Bluebonnet, an open-air trailer with a shade bonnet. Dress for the weather, and don't forget a hat! Difficulty: EASY. Cost: \$15 for ranch; donations to Sierra Club also accepted. Contact leaders for reservations, which are limited. Leaders: Peter Allen, 682-0612 or pallen76@gmail.com and Lee Dodge, 647-0216 or LSG999@earthlink.net.

SAT, APR 5: GOVERNMENT CANYON SNA WILDFLOWER WALK

We'll start early and hike 7-13 miles, weaving in and out of small canyons and dry creeks typical of the eastern boundary of the Balcones Escarpment. The rocky terrain is not very steep but requires sturdy hiking shoes (lots of limestone rocks and small boulders in the drainages). Exiting the drainages provides the welcome contrast of typical Hill Country woodland and an occasional meadow. A brief picnic with snacks might be in order about halfway through. Entrance fees are the responsibility of each hiker (limit of six hikers). Children 12 and over welcome with parent. Difficulty: MODERATE to DIFFICULT. For information and reservations, contact Scott Wolfe, papawolfe@sbcglobal.net or 724-2707, or Peter Allen, pallen76@gmail.com or 682-0612.

SAT, APR 12: SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE AT MCKINNEY ROUGHS

Enjoy the wildflowers on a 5-7 mile day hike at McKinney Roughs on the Colorado River north of Bastrop. This park has trails in diverse habitats on the bluffs and along the river. Hike starts at 10:30 AM at the park. 70+ mile trip each way. Participants can make carpool arrangements. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: donations accepted. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, jlmorrissey@aol.com or 382-2614.

SUN, APR 20: MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE

This bike ride is on paved trails and roads that are along the San Antonio River and that lead from mission to mission in the SE part of San Antonio. Wildflowers should be out. We will stop to take quick walks through some of the missions along the way. Distance may be up to 18 miles round-trip, depending on participants. Pace will be "no riders left behind." Minimum age is 12. Helmets are required. Be ready to ride by 9 AM in the grass parking lot SE of the paved parking lot in front of Mission Concepción on Mission Road. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: donations accepted. Leader: Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net or 647-0216.

Spring Events Calendar

Well, it's time to get out of the house, enjoy the sunshine, and mingle. Here are some upcoming events that the Alamo Group will participate in. We are asking for volunteers to help out. Come join us by calling or emailing Loyd Cortez at loydcortez@earthlink.net or 674-9489 for more details.

Basura Bash river cleanup

Mar 29th, Sat, 8:30am to 11:30am

NW Vista Earth Day
interact with college students
April 10, Thu, 9:00am to 2:00 pm

Woodlawn Lake Earth Day
walk along the lake
April 19, Sat, 10:00am to 4:00pm

UTSA Earth Day
interact with college students
April 22, Tues, 11:00am to 2:00pm
at the 1604 campus

King William Parade
walk in the parade
April 26, Sat, starts at 7:30am

Solar Fest
May 3, Sat, Maverick Park at
Broadway & 10th Street

THE ALAMO SIERRAN is available FASTER by e-mail

Save time and resources
Subscribe electronically
Contact Loyd Cortez at
loydcortez@earthlink.net

clothesline
CLEANERS

dry cleaning
EVOLVED

The future is here.

404.0026
www.ClotheslineSA.com

MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting:	3rd Tuesday 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Executive Committee:	4th Friday, 7 p.m.	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Newsletter Submissions deadline	3rd Thursday (Thursday before ExCom) ...	Fred Wills	fredwills@att.net
Newsletter Mail Party:	2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Outings Committee Meeting:	1st Wednesday every 2 months, 7 p.m.	Lee Dodge	647-0216
Conservation Committee Meeting:	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620

-ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Loyd Cortez	Chair Person	674-9489
Ellen Clegg	Secretary	488-7787
Jerry Morrissey		497-5470
Sandy Redmond		872-5390
Jane Ward		829-5575
Hector Gonzalez		226-6069
Paula Stone		393-7351
Fred Wills		673-9566
Scott Wolfe		724-2707
Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer		828-3721

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs	Eloise Stoker	828-0919
Fundraising	Paula Stone	393-7351
Membership	Sandy Redmond	872-5390
Publicity	Linda Higby.....(585)	330-1890
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Newsletter	Fred Wills	673-9566
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair	Lee Dodge	647-0216
Political Committee	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach & Education ..	Carolyn Wells	271-0640

CONSERVATION CONTACTS

Conservation Co-Chair ..	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Co-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	Patricia Martinez	454-5920
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coordinator ...	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
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: Phil Hardberger; 207-7060;	mayor@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 1: Mary Alice P. Cisneros; 207-7279;	district1@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 2: Sheila McNeil; 207-7278;	district2@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 3: Jennifer V. Ramos; 207-7064;	district3@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 4: Phillip A. Cortez; 207-7281;	district4@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 5: Lourdes Galvan; 207-7043;	district5@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 6: Delicia Herrera; 207-7065;	district6@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 7: Justin Rodriguez; 207-7044;	district7@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 8: Diane G. Cibrian; 207-7086;	district8@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 9: Louis E. Rowe; 207-7325;	district9@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 10: John G. Clamp; 207-7276;	district10@sanantonio.gov

The Alamo Sierran published monthly (except July) by the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, 615 Willow, San Antonio, TX 78202. Members support the Sierran and receive the publication as part of membership. Nonmember subscriptions \$10.00/year. Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, Texas. Publication No. 018475

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sierra Club Member Services, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322 or email to address.changes@sierraclub.org

Alamo Group website address
www.alamosierraclub.org

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

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

PERIODICAL

Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Mastercard Visa Exp Date ____/____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Contributions, gifts and dues to the 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 \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
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"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

F94Q **W 1913** -1 **SIERRA CLUB**
 FOUNDED 1892
Sierra Club
 P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968

Join Online!

Join online today and receive a free Expedition Pack! Just go to our website at <http://alamosierraclub.org> and click

Join the Sierra Club

Travel and Outdoor Outfitters since 1970

• Climbing, Camping & Expedition Gear
 • Remarkable Clothing and Footwear
 • Luggage, Packs
 • Travel and Hiking Guides
 • Beautiful & Unusual Gifts and Toys

Whole Earth Provision Company

ALAMO QUARRY MARKET
 255 East Base, 210-629-8888
www.WholeEarthProvision.com