



# THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 41 No. 8 SEPTEMBER 2007

## A Word from the Chair by Jerry Morrissey

One of the major hurdles to creating a more sustainable future is the development of more efficient transportation. The San Antonio region as well as the rest of the nation is consuming excessive amounts of oil to drive wasteful personal and commercial vehicles many extra miles due to suburban sprawl and the inefficient design of communities.

I believe that the solutions are going to depend on individuals and businesses demanding more efficient and cleaner vehicles and making choices to drive fewer miles per person. There is a tremendous amount of inertia that needs to be overcome. Change can start with more individual awareness but will ultimately be driven by economic necessity as oil prices continue to rise and public roads are converted to toll roads due to the anti-tax mantra.

I urge Sierra Club members to commit to reducing their own personal fuel consumption and to supporting more effective mass transit. Choose a significantly higher mileage vehicle for your next purchase. Reduce your miles driven by living closer to work, by driving fewer miles for shopping, by looking for opportunities to carpool, by using mass transit if possible, and by walking or bicycling on short trips. The latter exercise can improve your health while saving dollars.

In the public policy arena, Sierra Club members can advocate for higher fuel economy standards for vehicles, bus rapid transit, a light rail system, better bike routes, higher density housing with adequate green space, urban renovation and infill, and new communities that are designed for walking and bicycling to parks, schools and shopping.

More efficient transportation will lead to less greenhouse gas emissions per person and less destruction and pollution of the natural world here and abroad.

## Plug It In, Plug It In!

San Antonians don't always like to be reminded that nearby Austin is ahead of the curve when it comes to environmental initiatives, but SA can often benefit from their lead. A case in point is Austin's plug-in hybrid program.

Sponsored by the City of Austin and Austin Energy, the Plug-In Partners national campaign focuses on an outstanding, easy way to save energy, clean our air, use less oil,

*Continued on Page 2*

## Alamo Group Energy Plan Takes Shape

At the CPS Energy Summit in June, CPS officials expressed their desire for public opinion on the various energy sources available. After the summit, they sent questionnaires to those of us who attended, wanting to know which energy sources we favored and what percentage of each source we considered acceptable.

While we answered the questionnaires individually, this seems a perfect time for the Alamo Group to

*Continued on Page 2*

**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.**

### September 18 - Film - Who Killed the Electric Car?

In the mid-1990's, electric vehicles began to appear on California's highways. They were quiet, fast, produced no exhaust, and ran without gasoline. Ten years later they were gone. This excellent 2006 documentary explores the murder mystery with insight and wit.

### October 16 - The Trinity Aquifer

Austin hydrologist John Ashworth will discuss this lesser known local aquifer, facing increased stress as metropolitan San Antonio grows into the Hill Country.

## Test Drive Our Electronic Newsletter save resources and money

Our new electronic newsletter is an easy way to save trees and resources. The paper Alamo Sierran is our Group's major expense: 70% of the budget. It demands lots of fundraising effort and limits the time available for more important things.

But there is an easier way. Sign up to "test drive" our electronic newsletter. It has all the same articles, but uses no paper and costs nothing to print and mail. You can read it on your computer or even print your own exact copy of the familiar "paper" version whenever you like. If electronic delivery suits your needs, let us know and we can discontinue your paper copy. You'll be saving resources and making the Alamo Group a more sustainable and effective

*Continued on Page 2*

## String Bags for Sale paper or plastic? neither!

The Alamo Group has excellent string mesh shopping bags for sale at the general meetings. These bags are made of expandable cotton mesh, and comfortably carry up to 40 pounds. They hold more than canvas bags because they stretch, and they are durable, too. I have used these bags for the last ten years, and I love 'em. Our bags cost only \$7, tax included, and can be picked up during monthly meetings.

We also have Sierra Club t-shirts and caps for sale, and all your purchases support our local conservation activities. So next time you head for the grocery store, wear your Sierra Club t-shirt, grab your string bags, and support the Alamo Group while you shop in style.

*Tom Dukess*

**Plug It In - Continued**

and save the consumer money all at once: replace current vehicles with plug-in hybrids.

Plug-ins are like today's hybrids, but with a bigger battery pack... and a plug. Batteries power the vehicle for the first few miles on electricity alone, then a gasoline or flex-fuel engine takes over. The batteries are recharged by plugging into a standard electric outlet. Plug-ins can get up to 100 miles per gallon of gasoline as compared to about 50 miles per gallon for a conventional Prius hybrid.

Because plug-ins would normally be recharged at night, when electricity rates are lower, the cost per "gallon" is less than \$1.00 at current rates. Charged vehicles can go between 20 and 60 miles without gasoline. This is the amount of daily driving most motorists do, and this includes many local business fleets. Plug-ins, even if fueled by electricity generated by coal, appear to be cleaner than conventional vehicles.

While plug-in hybrids are not currently commercially produced, Austin's campaign seeks to convince automakers - and the public - that the time for plug-ins is now. Austin and its utility have made \$1 million in rebates available to utility customers who buy plug-in hybrids when they become available, and they urge other utilities to do the same. San Antonio would do well to follow Austin's lead and press for plug-in hybrids. An interest expressed by the U.S.'s seventh largest city for a future fleet of plug-ins would be a great incentive for automakers to begin production.

For more information on the Plug-in Partners campaign, go to the website at [pluginpartners.com](http://pluginpartners.com).

*Loretta Van Coppenolle*

**Alamo Group Plan - Continued**

encourage CPS to reduce energy consumption city-wide. For that purpose, the Conservation Committee has undertaken to produce an Alamo Group Energy Plan for San Antonio.

The committee has been working diligently on this document at regularly scheduled and special meetings. With fourteen members actively participating we have made great progress. We have compiled a list of practical ideas that can be used to greatly reduce our energy consumption. The first part of the plan

addresses things that can be done by CPS to reduce energy consumption. The second part addresses what the City can do.

Our draft plan contains many innovative ideas that have proven successful across the nation. We provide statistics to verify the energy and dollars saved and list web addresses and other documentation so officials can easily see the complete stories we have cited. We felt that such documentation was vital to convincing CPS and City leaders that these things are not only possible, but actually successful in other cities. We will share more details in coming months as we complete our plan.

It is our hope that CPS can change its pro-coal and -nuclear ways and become a leader in the field of energy conservation. Twenty years ago, San Antonio was a water wasting city; now we are a model of water conservation. The Sierra Club was a driving force in the turnaround that SAWS made. With your help, we can do the same for CPS.

*Paula D. Stone*

**Electronic Newsletter - Continued**

organization. If you find that electronic delivery isn't your style, you can simply continue your paper newsletter as always.

To sign up for a trial period, email Loyd Cortez at [loydcortez@earthlink.net](mailto:loydcortez@earthlink.net). Provide your name as it appears on your mailing label and the email address you wish to use. We'll do the rest. Thanks.

*Tom Dukes*

**Thanks for the Boost**

Thank you to the almost 100 Sierrans who generously donated to our Summer Fund Drive. We couldn't do it without you. Our special thanks to Mary Bradshaw, Leslie Butterworth, John and Beth Callaghan, Ann Morris Cockrell, Mary DiGiacomo, Eleanor Dillon, Sharon Dukes, Freda Hur, Michael and Juliana Hutchinson, William Kever, William Larson, William MacAulay, John J.B. Miller, Jerry Morrissey, Donald Potts, Armando Quintanilla, George Rice, Jann Rodriguez-Carter, Margaret Sanchez, Catherine Schneider, Yvonne Starr, Paula Stone, Heather Sullivan, Roger White, Fred Wills, and all those who chose to remain anonymous. Thanks for being such a vital part of the team.

**San Antonio Conservation Conference**

On August 4th, several Alamo Group members participated in an all day conservation conference sponsored by Bexar Audubon Society. Activists from throughout our region representing environmental, government and community groups discussed issues including protecting human health, preserving nature and managing the economy and development. Participants created a "to do" list of environmental initiatives. At the end of the day, everyone felt energized and agreed to meet regularly throughout the year. Our goal is to make the San Antonio community more environmentally aware while we work together on common concerns such as energy conservation and efficiency programs, water conservation and native landscaping. Thanks go out to Loretta van Coppenolle, Barbara McMillin and David Klar for their enthusiastic participation in the conference.

*David Klar*

**Renewable Energy Roundup**

The eighth annual Renewable Energy Roundup and Green Living Fair will be held in Fredericksburg, Texas the weekend of September 28-30. There will be exhibits, demonstrations, speakers, workshops, music, and even kids' activities. Topics include solar, wind, and geothermal energy, water use and reuse, rainwater harvesting, green and sustainable building, and organic growing.

As one local Sierran raved about last year's fair, "It was one of the best events I have ever attended."

The fair is organized by the Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association, the Texas Solar Energy Society, and the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. The entry fee is \$10 for Friday or Sunday, \$12 for Saturday or \$20 for a 3-day pass, with children under 12 free. If you would like to carpool to the Roundup or help at the Sierra Club booth, contact Jerry Morrissey at 493-3553 or [jlmorrissey@aol.com](mailto:jlmorrissey@aol.com).

## Social Gathering

Prepare for the Autumnal Equinox by joining us on Friday, Sept. 21 from 5-7 at the Candlelight Coffee House, 3011 N. St. Mary's. Wonderful food and drink in a refined, relaxing place to chat. Contact Melody Krumdieck at melkrum@gmail.com, or 655-9607.

## Comal River Tubing Trip

We met in San Antonio on a warm, bright Saturday in August for our tubing trip down the Comal River in New Braunfels. The tube rental had advised us to arrive early, so we quickly carpooled northward. We were the first group to rent that day and were soon afloat. The 2.5 mile Comal River flows 72 degrees year around, making for a pleasant trip in the summer heat. There were only a handful of other tubers on the river. We all managed to make it through the tubing chute and finish the trip without falling out of our tubes. Towards the end we were startled by a trail of air bubbles passing nearby. All were much relieved to find out it was not the "Comal River Monster" but a pair of SCUBA divers scouring the bottom for lost items. The divers surfaced with a fistful of sunglasses and a small turtle, which they released after close inspection. We returned the tubes, changed clothes and visited Gruene. Following lunch on a beautiful outside deck, we took a short walk down to the Guadalupe River. The river was in flood stage, flowing rapidly over the submerged road. It was quite impressive. We returned to San Antonio relaxed and anticipating our next adventure.

Terry Platt

## OUTINGS

NOTE: No dogs, radios, recreational drugs, or unescorted children are allowed on Sierra Club outings. Public consumption of alcohol is prohibited during scheduled activities. Outings are usually suitable for the whole family; check with the leaders about details and to verify dates. All fees will go fully to offset trip and administrative costs and to support the conservation efforts of the Alamo Group.

### SEPTEMBER 14-16, FRI-SUN: INKS LAKE STATE PARK CAMPOUT

Eight miles of hiking trails, one of the 10 best swimming holes in Texas, canoes, fishing piers, superb bicycling, and outstanding car camping with Austin and Alamo Group Sierrans. Saturday, we'll hike in the morning and swim in the afternoon. On Sunday, bicyclers will take a 25-mile ride to Buchanan Dam and down to Kingsland. Potluck dinner on Friday; other meals furnished by the club. Fees: \$35 per adult; \$15 for kids 6 - 18 accompanied by an adult; kids under 6, free. Fee includes park entrance, camping fees and Saturday and Sunday meals. Contact Ellen Clegg (210-488-7787) or eclegg@els.edu or Steve Funderburg (210-317-4186) or sfunderburg@rkci.com.

### SEPTEMBER 21-22, FRI-SAT: ADOPT-A-BEACH CLEANUP

What can be more fun than joining with other Sierrans in this international event? We'll camp at Padre Island National Seashore south of Corpus Christi Friday night. Saturday morning we'll spend 3 hours (9-noon) picking up and cataloging debris from a particular section of the beach. After that we'll swim and picnic. Those who want to camp a second night can do so. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: FREE. Contact Marsha Meredith for more information [675-4097; MarshaM@satx.rr.com].

### SEPTEMBER 29, SAT: MUD CREEK PARK DAYHIKE

Explore an undeveloped park inside Hwy. 1604 in the Mud Creek drainage. It has shady trails, open areas, a creek, limestone cliffs, and plants and animals of the Hill Country. This is a moderately difficult hike of 2+ miles. Sturdy hiking shoes required. Meet in the HEB parking lot at the corner of Hwy. 281 and 1604 at 9:15 AM. Cost: suggested donation, \$2 members, \$3 nonmembers. Contact Jerry Morrissey at jlmorrissey@aol.com or 382-2614.

### SEPTEMBER 30, SUN: MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE

Join us for a bike ride on paved trails and roads between the historic missions of San Antonio. Total trip length will range from 18-27 miles, depending on participants. Meet at Mission Concepcion in the grass parking lot SE of the paved parked lot at 9:00 AM. Must bring and wear helmet. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: suggested donation of \$2. Contact leader Lee Dodge at LSG999@earthlink.net or 647-0216.

### OCTOBER 5-7, FRI-SUN - ENCHANTED ROCK SNA CAMPOUT

Camp at Enchanted Rock and enjoy a weekend of hiking and communing with nature on this joint camping trip with the Austin Group. Hiking is the theme of this outing: hiking to the top of Enchanted Rock, climbing the four major park promontories, sunset and stargazing from atop Enchanted Rock, and hiking the 4-mile Loop Trail. Potluck dinner on Friday night; Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner and Sunday breakfast will be furnished by the Club. Fees: \$40 per person includes park entrance, camping fees and Saturday and Sunday meals. Contact Ellen Clegg (210-488-7787) or eclegg@els.edu or Steve Funderburg (210-317-4186) or sfunderburg@rkci.com for info or to reserve your place on the trip.

### OCTOBER 13, SAT: BRACKENRIDGE PARK DAY HIKE

Explore Brackenridge Park, near the heart of San Antonio. Rediscover this urban jewel, with its upgraded trails, fanciful artwork, and fascinating history. Optional brunch at a funky eatery nearby. Meet at 9:00 AM. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: donations accepted. Leader: Sharon Dukes, tdukes@grandecom.net or 828-3721.

### OCTOBER 20-21, SAT-SUN: PEDERNALES FALLS BACKPACK FOR BEGINNERS

Have you ever had the desire to go backpacking but did not know if it really was for you? Our annual beginner's backpacking trip provides novices with instruction from veterans and a first backpacking trip at a state park close to home. This will be a short backpacking trip designed primarily for the novice backpacker, but all are welcome. The leaders will have a required orientation for all inexperienced participants on Friday, October 12, to help those new to backpacking prepare for the trip. The minimum age for participants is 13 with parent. Park entrance and camping fee will be shared by all. Difficulty: MODERATE. Suggested donation: \$6 members/\$8 non-members. Co-leaders: Terry Platt taplatt@earthlink.net and Bill Rogers 830-885-2523 or rogers@uthsca.edu.

### NOVEMBER 16-18, FRI - SUN: LOST MAPLES CAR CAMPING & BACKPACKING

Incomparable fall colors among the bigtooth maples in this beautiful Hill Country gem. Mark your calendars now. Full details to come. Leaders: Car camping - Marsha Meredith, MarshaM@satx.rr.com, Backpacking - Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net.

## Sierra Club Calendars Coming!

2008 Sierra Club engagement and wall calendars will arrive soon. Support the Alamo Group by purchasing your calendars from us!

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# MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting: ..... 3rd Tuesday 7 p.m. .... Jerry Morrissey ..... 497-5470  
 Executive Committee: ..... 4th Monday, 7 p.m. .... Tom Dukes ..... 828-3721  
 Newsletter Submissions deadline ..... 3rd Thursday (Thursday before ExCom) . Fred Wills ..... user261695@aol.com  
 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 Monday, 7 p.m. .... Paula Stone ..... 393-7351

### ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Jerry Morrissey ..... Chair Person ..... 497-5470  
 Loyd Cortez ..... Vice Chair ..... 674-9489  
 Carolyn Wells ..... Secretary ..... 271-0640  
 Tom Dukes ..... 828-3721  
 Hector Gonzalez ..... 226-6069  
 Eloise Stoker ..... 828-0919  
 Paula Stone ..... 393-7351  
 Fred Wills ..... 673-9566  
 Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer ..... 828-3721

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs ..... Eloise Stoker ..... 828-0919  
 Membership ..... Loyd Cortez ..... 674-9489  
 Publicity ..... George Windrow ..... 408-1988  
 Mailings ..... Jim Stewart ..... 692-0727  
 Newsletter ..... Fred Wills ..... 673-9566  
 Website ..... Tom Dukes ..... 828-3721

#### COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair ..... Lee Dodge ..... 647-0216  
 Political Committee ..... Beck Steiner ..... 342-6694  
 Outreach & Education .. Carolyn Wells ..... 271-0640

#### CONSERVATION CONTACTS

Conservation Chair ..... Paula Stone ..... 393-7351  
 Co-Chair ..... Dave Klar ..... 495-2148  
 Endangered Species ..... Fred Wills ..... 673-9566  
 Fluoridation ..... L. Van Coppenolle ..... 492-4620  
 Genetically Modified Organisms Michele Petty 490-4133  
 Organic Gardening ..... Dave Klar ..... 495-2148  
 Recycling ..... L. Van Coppenolle ..... 492-4620  
 Tree Conservation ..... Richard Alles ..... 494-2088  
 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: Roland Gutierrez; 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: Kevin Wolff; 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](http://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.

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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                           |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| 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   |

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