



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 40 No. 10 Nov 2006

A Word from the Chair by Tom Dukes

Live within your means. Today such simple advice seems quaint and archaic, but it's the only sustainable path. I write this from a hotel overlooking Las Vegas, the antithesis of sustainability. Business finally brought me to this playground in the Nevada desert, and I must admit, I'm amazed. Vegas embodies much that is out of kilter with the modern American psyche. Here, too much is never enough. Tables groan under loads of food. Night burns bright as day, fueled in part by vast mountains of polluting coal consumed in distant power plants. Fountains spurt scarce water hundreds of feet into the dry air; water delivered from afar to support a 1.6 million people in a valley averaging 4 inches of annual rainfall. Las Vegas stands as shimmering tribute to the unsustainable proposition that we can engineer the planet to suit our whims and blithely gobble resources heedless of tomorrow. After all, the next jackpot is only a lever pull away.

The Sierra Club's Cool Cities campaign to convince communities across America to fight global warming by reducing our energy use is the ultimate call to live within our means. As they say here in Vegas, the stakes are high, and we are literally betting everything we have on the outcome.

But the view from my hotel gives me hope. A gigantic billboard trumpets a local photo exhibit: Ansel Adams' America, and the image is of majestic mountains towering over a swiftly flowing river. Ansel Adams was a lifelong member of the Sierra Club who used his time and prodigious photographic talents in the service of the natural world. His passion and spirit represent another thread in the American psyche, one we would do well to emulate. For not only must we live within our means, we must also live with meaning.

Cool Cities Update Thanks to You We Made It!

On October 26 the Alamo Group received donation number 201 in our Cool Cities fund drive. As mentioned in earlier newsletters, an anonymous donor graciously agreed to contribute \$2000 to the Alamo Group's efforts if 200 other donors would each give at least \$10, and thanks to you, this has happened.

We are comparison shopping for a laptop and a video projector to use in Cool Cities Power Point presentations, and steps are being taken by our conservation committee to convince Mayor Hardberger to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

It is with great pleasure that we thank the following Cool Cities donors for their generosity and support:

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Save the Date! Holiday Party and Silent Auction

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, December 19 (the regular December meeting date) to attend the Alamo Group's Holiday Party and Silent Auction. The party will be from 6-8:30 at Lion's Field, 2809 Broadway. This is a wonderful old building (built in the 20s by the WPA) with a big stone fireplace and lots of room. Since we're getting the space for free, we have to be out by 9 sharp, but that gives us plenty of time for food, conversation, and the opportunity to get some great bargains just in time for Christmas.

It's "potluck" because we all enjoy the chance to try other people's good cooking; we're having a silent auction because it's a Club fundraiser *and* a

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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 6:45, program at 7 P.M.

November 21, 2006: Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Iliana Peña, Center Director, presents our new birding center complete with photographs, schedule, and opportunities for touring.

December 19, 2006: Annual Holiday Party and Silent Auction

6-8:30 at Lion's Field. See separate article on this page.

From the Political Committee

As political chair I would like to thank those individuals who have served on the political committee and worked and donated to political campaigns. This election is over, but if you are interested in preparing for the next one, contact me at 342-6694. We need at least two more members with political interests to serve on the committee.

Beck Steiner

ExCom Elections

In December, the Alamo Group will hold elections for three expired terms on the Executive Committee. We are seeking members who can make a commitment to attend monthly Executive Committee meetings and participate in running the club. You need not be an expert on environmental or organizational matters. All we ask is a willingness to learn and have fun along the way as we address the many issues that affect San Antonio and the region. If interested in being a candidate, please contact Tom Dukes, Eloise Stoker, or Dave Klar. Phone numbers appear on page 4.

Cool Cities Update Continued

Geert Aerts, Paul Alfieri, Verna Alvis, David Benavides, Siri Bletzer, Loni and Robert Calson, Donna Clark, Carol Collins, Loyd Cortez, Stan and Wendy Drezek, Lee Dodge, Sharon and Tom Dukes, Donald Edgcomb, William Elder, Matt Frondorf, Hector Gonzalez, Councilwoman Elena Guajardo, Felix D. Guerrero, Doris Hansen, June Henderson, Jane Hurlbut, Gloria Jauregui, Thomas Jepson, Steven Kellman and Wendy Barker, Dave Klar, William Larson, Ruth Lofgren, Joan Lyman, William MacAulay, Steven Marques, John and Nancy Masterson, Mitchell McCorcle, Janice Mendelson, Marsha Meredith, John J B Miller, Marian Moffat, Jack Moynihan, Danelle Okeson, Mary Pieper, Jean Renner, Stephanie Rhodes, Hardin Rhorer, George Rice, Blair Richter, Aaron Clark Schendel, Raymond Scholz, Anastacia Sequoyah, Joe Silman, Solar San Antonio, Marga Speicher, Jim and Eloise Stoker, Heather Sullivan, Helen and Eric Telfer, Ana Thornton, Lorna Thornton, Bruce Tyler, Loretta and John van Coppenolle, Stephen Waller, Jane Ward, Barbara Welch, Stewart and Flora Wilber, and Fred Wills.

Many of our generous donors did not indicate on the form whether to publicly acknowledge them, or specifically asked to remain anonymous. Therefore, we have erred on the side of caution. If we missed your name, please accept our apologies. Contact us and we will acknowledge you in next month's newsletter.

Tom Dukes

Holiday Party Continued

way to score some really unique goods and services. Bring your appetite and your wallet!

Local businesses are donating items, but most will come from members like you. Ideas/suggestions – some of which are already promised – include: babysitting (yours or your grandkids), books (something special you know you'd like to have), candleholders, a personally cooked dinner for two, dog-washing (yes, I want that!!), a professional interior makeover...and

lots more. Another great way to donate is to get together with one or more other people and make up a basket of items; how about a Grownups Movie Night At Home collection? That might include a movie, wine, glasses, cheese & crackers. How about a Camping Out collection? Be creative and Melody promises she'll help you! **We need to know what you're going to donate and receive the item(s) by Saturday, December 16.** A list of items and donors will be posted on our website.

If you want to donate an item or a service, call Melody Krumdieck at 655-9607. For more info about the party (or to RSVP) contact Meredith Sterling at 694-2660 (ireinventme@yahoo.com) or Loyd Cortez at 674-9489 (loydcortez@earthlink.net).

Sierrans Speak to City Council

Members of the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club addressed City Council, Thursday Oct.19th in support of the current tree ordinance. We joined our hard-working friends from the Citizen's Tree Coalition in asking the council to retain the current ordinance. Builder's groups are proposing to weaken the current ordinance and reduce our shade- and oxygen-producing-tree cover. San Antonio's City Council will vote November 2nd on amendments to the Tree Preservation Ordinance written by City staff. At that time, staff will also ask for a Council directive to rewrite the current ordinance.

The San Antonio tree preservation ordinance clearly enriches our city, and a recent study conducted by Planning Commissioner Amy Hartman shows that developments in compliance with the San Antonio's current tree ordinance contain twice as much tree canopy cover as those built using only the developer's judgment.

Development corporations from out of state are pushing hard to strip the existing ordinance of its teeth. They are even seeking to have nine native Texas species declared 'trash trees'. Out-of-state developers are trying to 'bulldoze' our local trees (and citizens) to squeeze more houses into barren landscapes. We cannot afford to have

our trees leveled to put a few extra dollars into the pockets of developers who don't even live here.

Members speaking to the council were: Richard Alles (representing the CTC), Dave Klar (AGSC representative); also making comments were: Paula Stone, Meredith Sterling and Randy Carroll-Bradd. Also attending were Mike Brannon, Loyd Cortez, Ned Allen, and Gina Pellegrino.

Paula D. Stone

Fall Beach Cleanup Windy!

Seven dedicated Sierra Club members braved the wind, sand, and sunshine to pick up and catalog debris at Padre Island National Seashore on September 23 as part of the semi-annual Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup. For some it was their first time camping at the beach, but they promised it would not be their last. Recent high tides had removed most large objects, but a gazillion smaller items were left behind. By analyzing the forms we turn in, researchers can determine where most of the trash is coming from (styrofoam cups, plates, forks, and plastic toys from picnickers; nylon and plastic rope and fishing line from fishing boats and surf fishermen; etc.) As we saw, it's very easy for anything plastic to get away from you when it's windy, so be careful at the beach. Many thanks to Maggie McDonald, Ellen Clegg, Jeremy Beers, Melody Krumdieck, Brenda Viera and her friend Bill.

Marsha Meredith

2007 Sierra Club CALENDARS

Support your local Sierra Club group by purchasing your 2007 calendars from us. Loyd Cortez will again be handling the sale of these gorgeous calendars. You can contact Loyd at 674-9489; or just bring your money to the next General Meeting. Remember, you can't go wrong with a Sierra Club Calendar as a gift.

Engagement Calendar: \$14
Wall Calendar: \$13

You Can Make A Difference

Do you want to secure your children's right to clean air, clean water, and a shade tree to play under?

Then do something about it! Join our E-mail Alert List. Right now your Alamo Sierra Club has about 100 members signed up. We want that list to grow to 500.

One citizen cannot have as great an impact as 500 Sierra Club members calling, writing, and e-mailing their officials. You better believe that they will take notice.

This is the impact that we want to have; to ensure our elected officials will listen to the concerns of the citizens.

Become one of those voices. Send Loyd Cortez your name and e-mail address at loydcortez@earthlink.net. Get on the Alert List and let's make a difference.

Social Gatherings

(Sometimes we get together just for fun.)

Tired from a long day of petitioning your legislators to pay attention to the environment? Feel like taking a break from tree-hugging (all that scratchy bark!) and sitting down with some like-minded folks to converse and relax?

Join us for a social event. Check the website for upcoming events http://texas.sierraclub.org/alamo/_sgt/m2m2_1.htm; or contact Meredith Sterling, 210-694-2660, ireinventme@yahoo.com. Have an idea of your own for something fun to do? Let us know about it.

Calling All Clowns and Drama Queens

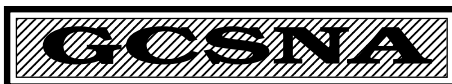
Do you have a sense fun and like to perform for an audience? If so, we need you! Each year the Alamo Group Sierra Club gets many requests for speakers. Local clubs and schools are looking for entertaining speakers who

can present programs on various topics pertaining to environmental issues. We would like to form a speakers bureau - a group of people to whom we could offer these opportunities.

Don't keep your talent and passion for the environment a secret; let us help you find an audience for it.

If you would like to share your talent by being a part of our speakers bureau, call Paula at 210-393-7351.

Paula D. Stone



Every Saturday beginning at 8:30 AM there is a guided hike at GCSNA. Not all hikes are appropriate for children, so check the Texas Parks and Wildlife Website at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/> for descriptions, or call (210) 688-9055 Ext. 286 for more information.

NOVEMBER 18 – ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE
Check <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/> for information and to make a reservation for this event.



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.

NOV 17-19, FRI-SUN: LOST MAPLES CAR CAMPING AND HIKE

Fall is a great time of year to enjoy the outdoors in Texas, and Lost Maples with its beautiful trees and trails is certainly one of the best places for camping and hiking. We'll have a new moon, so the skies will be dark with lots of stars. On Saturday we'll take 5 to 7 mile hike and have a potluck dinner that evening. Space

is limited to 16. Difficulty: MODERATE to DIFFICULT. Suggested donation: \$4 per adult. Participants pay their own state park entrance fee and share the fee for the campsites. Car-pooling is encouraged. Leaders: Marsha Meredith marsha1205@sbcglobal.net or 675-4097 and Bonnie Mitchell drmittell@quickca.net

DEC 2, SAT: GCSNA DAY HIKE

Join us for a 5-7 mile hike on one of the many beautiful trails at Government Canyon State Natural Area. The hike is limited to ten individuals. Difficulty: MODERATE to DIFFICULT. Cost: suggested \$2 donation to Alamo Sierra Club and entrance fee to the Natural Area. For details contact Marsha Meredith marsha1205@sbcglobal.net, 675-4097.

DEC. 9, SAT. MITCHELL LAKE DAY HIKE

Join us at 8:30 AM for a hike and birdwatching at the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center on the Southside on San Antonio. This former sludge site has been transformed into a world class birding spot with trails leading to ponds containing many aquatic species such as ducks, pelicans and wading birds. The Audubon Center has a \$5 per person entry fee. Contact Jerry Morrissey at jlmorrisey@aol.com or 497-5470 for more information.

DEC 10, SUN: - EISENHOWER PARK DAY HIKE

Enjoy a cool walk in a local park on the northwest side of town (on Northwest Military just outside Loop 1604). Meet at 9:00 AM in the children's play area near the bathrooms on the south side of the parking area. Please contact leader Lee Dodge, lsg999@earthlink.net, 647-0216, or assistant leader Peter Allen, pallen76@gmail.com.

JAN 13, SAT: - LOST MAPLES STATE PARK DAY HIKE

See website for details:
alamosierraclub.org

JAN 27, SAT: GCSNA DAY HIKE

See website for details:
alamosierraclub.org