



ALAMO FLY FISHERS

November 2009

San Antonio, Texas

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AFF MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER
17TH

ALAMO HEIGHTS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

You've Got to Stand for Something...

BY ROB BURLINGAME, AFF PRESIDENT

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Mid 70's and sunny...today was another beautiful day in south central Texas that left me wishing I was cruising the flats or wading the Hill Country instead of being stuck in "cube-ville" at the office. But as is typical with our weather, the next two days are forecast to be 15 degrees cooler and Noah-sized rainstorms! We have reached the transition in our seasons where each day's weather is anyone's guess...but if you get it right, you can have some of the most pleasant fishing conditions of the year! That was the trip I had a couple weekends ago. Two full days of full sun, great tidal movement and perfect temperatures. The winds were a bit heavy to start, but calmed to 5-10 mph in the late afternoons. It was a weekend made for fishing and as always, a learning experience to fine tune my fishing skills. That story, however, I will save for another time and page.

The experience I wanted to share happened on the ride down to the coast. I will pause to warn you that even on short drives, I often fall victim to random stimuli that invoke deep philosophical thought. OK, enough of the big words and back to the story. As I ventured southbound, my iPod was busy spitting out the remnants of a drawer full of CDs from the last 20 years. One long forgotten song came on and I had to turn it up. It was Aaron Tippen's rendition of "You've Got to Stand for Something" from the early 90s. The song is a short remake of a classic Charley Pride song, but still holds a deep message about defining your values and staying true to them. The original version holds an even deeper message. I can't help to remember that Charley Pride was one of the first black country artist, who debuted in the racially strained environment of the 1960s. In a recent interview about his experiences, he simply stated, "You've got to stand for something...and I stand for country music." He lived the words of that song every day of his life.

You're probably wondering how on earth this relates to fly fishing. I'm glad you asked! As a club and an angler, we have to stand for something, too. By Charley Pride's example, that means we have to put our whole heart into whatever it is we are passionate about. A quick glance at the club home page reveals a condensed version of our club's mission statement: "We are a service organization dedicated to the betterment of the sport of fly fishing through conservation and education." Easy enough...sort of. Read that statement

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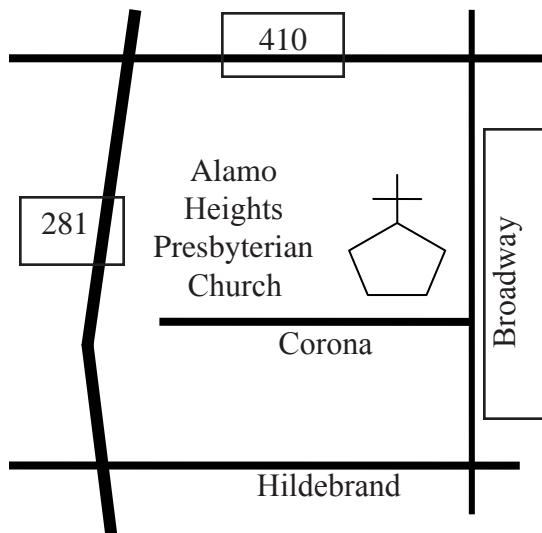


ALAMO FLY FISHERS OFFICERS

President	Rob Burlingame	(210) 885-3730
Vice President	Javier Trevino	(210) 315-3888
Secretary/ Treasurer	Mark Paulson	(210) 896-3384
Outings Director	Todd Fleming	(210) 479-3062
Education Coordinator	David McWilliams	(210) 478-6534
Web Master	Rob Burlingame	(210) 885-3730
Newsletter	Andy Niland	(210) 651-4359
Conservation	Ed Niehaus	(210) 829-4011

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. at Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church, 6201 Broadway.
- Fly tying sessions are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m., with the exception of meeting night. Bring your vise and tying gear or just come and share in the discussion.



ALAMO FLY FISHERS
PO BOX 6224
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78209

www.alamoflyfishers.org
info@alamoflyfishers.org

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again and really think about what that means to you. What does service mean to you? How can we better the sport through conservation and education? We have a diverse club and just as much diversity in the organizations or causes pull at our heart strings. The key here is to solicit the help of the club and its members to help promote and support your cause. Think about some of the organizations or causes that you have learned about through other club members, maybe one you would not have otherwise known about.



We have done a great job as a club this year in supporting the fly fishing community and some of the larger groups that are out there. We have given donations, helped to sponsor a benefit tournament and provided volunteers to a number of events. Most of



the club is aware of the great relationships that have been formed over the years with groups like Casting for Recovery, Project Healing Waters and Texas Parks .

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Master Boat Builder Tim Clancey - Introduces the STILT to AFF at our November Meeting

Tim's reputation as a skiff builder is widely known as his skiffs are easily recognizable on the roads to and from our Texas Coast. His latest design, The STILT is a new concept in poling skiffs. I had the privilege of seeing the STILT prototype which Tim honed after water trials to perfect the ride quality, and performance he envisioned for this new design. I must say, my first view of the prototype, and boat #1 was a sight to behold – if you're a skiff fanatic. The excerpt below was taken from the New Water Web site:



NewWater Boatworks and its parent company Pro-Line Custom Aluminum and Canvas have been in the business of building the finest marine accessories and custom shallow draft fishing boats since 1983. Known for its introduction of a new generation of shallow water, flats skiffs—the Avocet, Curlew, Ibis, and Stilt—NewWater has a peerless reputation among anglers who specialize in sight casting in the shallowest clearest waters along the Gulf Coast and beyond.

Representing an altogether new concept in poling skiffs, the Stilt is destined to make history for its sleek, artistic design, and its unparalleled performance as a technical poling skiff. See the first photos of this stunningly beautiful skiff, which was unveiled on August 29, 2009, at the NewWater Owners Tournament in Rockport, Texas.

Specifications:

Length---20 feet, 2 inches

Beam----61.5 inches

Weight---490 pounds without motor

Fuel tank--18 gallons



Tim's new invention – the Lamivent System – is incorporated into the tunnel area of this sleek skiff and Tim will explain in detail how the Lamivent System works to provide quick planing and increased speed without increasing horsepower. Tim will also explain how he designed, tested, and finalized the design of this beautiful and effective new boat design.

Come see Tim and his new boat at the November meeting November 17, 2009.





Flesh Fly

GABE AVALOS

Well a big apology to everyone for not writing fast enough. I have actually been sitting on a few articles that should be out for the next newsletters. With that out of the way it is time to school you on, as Elmer Fudd would say, Wabbits!!!

Rabbit strip is a great versatile material that is perfect



for both fresh and saltwater streamers. I worked a lot with rabbit strips last year has a great way to substitute for marabou. After tying up a couple of woolys with a rabbit tail, I was off to the river. The movement of the rabbit was amazing as it moved in the current and several hookups weren't a bad indication either. From that afternoon it was off to the lab to see



what concoction I could think off. But has it goes simplicity is always your best friend. The following recipe is a variation of a flesh fly. Below is the link for tying a Flesh Fly but the recipe is simply enough due to the addition of a bead head and different hook size. One downside to using zonker is that once completed the fly will look very bulky and might get in the way of other flies in your box. But once it is in the water the rabbit strip will slick back giving the fly a more realistic movement.

This variation has become one of my go-to flies in my box for trout, bass, and bluegill. Some of my variations are two toned with unmatched tail/body colors and a shorter tail than the one tied in the video. The fish in the picture was caught on a gray variation at the Fredericksburg Fly Club's Lease last year. Those of you that fish for tarpon will notice that this fly is just like a Tarpon Bunny. I hope this pattern lands some big fish for you as it has for me and don't forget to support your local fly Shop!

FLESH FLY Variation

Hook: Mustad 9672 size #10-#6
Tail: Magnum Cut Zonker
Body: Cross-Cut Rabbit strip
Bead: Black bead head
Thread: Match body color

Tying instructions can be found on youtube and at: www.flytyer.wordpress.com/2008/06/26/easy-flesh-fly/

PS- I ran across some great web sites for discounts and product reviews: www.midcurrent.com has loads of information from techniques to new product reviews. And www.redtruckflyfishing.com has great discounts on last year models and carries everything from rods to clothing and accessories.



Elevated

Outings Outlook

DAVID MCWILLIAMS

Over the last several months I've been working over a buddy of mine in Port Lavaca to pick up fly fishing. He's already a fanatical conventional fisherman, so it didn't take much enticing. After watching video clips from The



Drake's 5 Minutes of Fly Fishing (www.drakemag.com), a few from World Angling Media (www.worldangling.com), and flipping through the latest issue of Catch Magazine (www.catchmagazine.net) I knew it had him hooked.

His father-in-law is a farmer in Palacios, Texas, and is also a fanatical fisherman. I fished with the two of them for the first time about a month ago, targeting big trout in the surf, and knew then and there I had found fine fishing company. So, when the opportunity arose to fish with him again this past weekend I seized the opportunity.



Congratulations are in order for the Alamo Fly Fishers. On October 10th, we won the team club competition at this year's Redfish Rodeo. We were well represented, and a strong showing by Amancio Cantu, Doug Slick, and Steve Flanagan secured the club trophy. In the individual competition, Doug Slick came away with a trophy for the longest Slam – longest combination of redfish, speckled trout, and flounder caught on the fly. These were shining results on a tough day of fishing. Thank you to everyone who participated! We will need everyone back next year to defend our title!

The morning of the Redfish Rodeo started off in the low 60's, heavy cloud cover, winds about 15+ mph from the North, and a higher than normal water level. I found some fish early, deep into the flooded cordgrass. I spotted some redfish way back in some very small areas of water among the grass and mangroves. One redfish I saw was shadowing a stingray waiting for something to be spooked by the ray. It was very difficult to make a cast, and no doubt they new I was there. I had no real luck until the sun came out between 1:00 and 3:00 pm. Conditions during the day improved, and for a couple of hours after lunch the sun broke through, the winds subsided to about 10 mph and the water level dropped significantly on a strong outgoing tide. The falling water level brought fish streaming out of the grass, and the sun made spotting them much easier. I caught five redfish in a fairly short amount of time. No big fish, but it was fun to spot them, make the cast, and see them move on the fly and eat it. It is quite a thrill when it all goes right. My largest was a 21-1/2" redfish caught next to the grass line in about 6" of water.

I'm sure everyone has noticed the change of weather. We have finally begun to get some meaningful rain on a regular basis. It is amazing how quickly everything greened up after a few inches of rain. And oh my gosh, the air temperature now is so comfortable we don't need mechanical cooling or heating. The last time I drove to the coast I had the natural ventilation



SCOUTING REPORT

BY CLAY GILL

Howdy and welcome to the Alamo Fly Fishers! Welcome fall weather has everyone longing to be out in the sunshine. Cool crisp mornings and the hint of winter is in the air. It is time to go outdoors. Join us soon for a meeting, outing, or education program for some fun and a chance to learn more about the great sport of fly fishing. Everyone is welcome so come join us soon. We can help you get started if needed.

The season to be jolly is approaching fast. It won't be long before we have the Christmas party. Once we get past Turkey Day just blink and it's Christmas again. Make plans for this great event. If you have not joined yet your dues are carried over for next year and you can get in on the great raffles and silent auctions. It seems everybody goes home happy from this great feast and get together. Contact us if you have anything you can donate. We hope to have the best prizes yet for this one. Last year was amazing-and lots of fun!

Central Texas Trout Bums are excited. It won't be long. The Guadalupe will come to life with stocking programs. Tankers with stocker Trout inject new life blood for enthusiasts who love those Cypress lined Guad River banks. Lunch on the river or a whole day wading in pools there, it is a must on the go-to list. Tugs on the fly line are almost a sure bet using Midges and Nymphs. Stay tuned for details, outings, and make plans to aggravate those Trout sulking below Canyon Dam. Check the Tackle Box or Gruene Outfitters for daily conditions.

The coastal region has some red tide problems but has been outstanding this year. Conservation activity and the protective net ban laws have truly helped. Sport Fishing Magazine's cover says this of the Gulf region-"Gulf of Mexico-Fishing's Promised Land". We are so lucky to have this treasure three hours away. It is another world to run to when the big city noise gets too loud. Tight lines are less important once there. All I need to hear is Palm fronds and gulls squawking. If you plan a (PINS) seashore beach trip, check before you go regarding Red Tide fish kill. It has been a problem lately, and can irritate those susceptible. It will pass.

Where to go fishing now you might ask? For a quick half day outing a perch jerk can do the trick. Public waters can be very good in the fall also. Another fish that schools now near the surface is the White Bass. They will be doing the bait bust show on the surface early and late. The activity is

non-stop if you can get a front row seat at the right places. Poppers can work, but a small white sinking, twitching lead eyed Clouser yields more fillets.

Rivers have received a shot in the arm so flows have allowed drift trips lately. It was drag your boat more than fishing until the rains came. The Llano and Nueces are recovering from low conditions and things are looking better. The South Fork Llano River State Park is a nice fall campout. Deer and Turkey are literally in your campsite. The shuttles there are not always available but can take you up towards Telegraph for 2-4-8 hour floats back to camp. Check flows and conditions anywhere you go for a drift trip first before you travel.

You can get a few good fish in local community lakes. Even better, go where a canoe or kayak is permissible to lend advantage. Be sure of the lake rules, and seek the places with clean-safe water. Many are close to your home. Catch and release fishing for a few hours can easily be injected into a busy holiday routine. You may not have time to travel -but a half day on the water can even your keel. Take some kids with you!

Now is the time to tie or buy the right flies and get your gear out for the cold water Trout fishing. Patch the waders before you get to the river and they flood with water. Get the leaders tuned up and stretch those four weight lines to get the loops out. Clean your lines and box up fly combinations for sizing and river conditions. It won't be long, and the transition will be here. Trout gear can replace Redfish rigs somewhat, and the cycle goes on and on. --You gotta love it! Texas fishing only stops for a while if there is heavy sleet it seems!

Check the AFF web site for activity and scheduled events. Todd Fleming has a lot in store for us! We thank him for all his hard work and *all our very fine club officers this year. We have had some great presentations and plan to make next year just as good!

Be safe, and have some fun this fall. Join us soon. We will be going right down the road to have some fun together. The Rainbow Trout live forty minutes away! Please advise on any special needs or interests. Good luck fishing, and be safe out there!





Just One More Cast

By Clay Gill



KEEP AN EYE ON IT

Everybody says predator fish go for the head or eyes when they slash their quarry. You can see these feeding fish hack through terrified baitfish herding them as they hurl in at high speed. It is mutilation with reckless abandon. It made it popular to have big flashy eyes on most home made flies cast into this circumstance.

We all have seen this feed frenzy from time to time somewhere. But do those predators really have time to say, hey-lets hit that one in the head! I would like to think good looking realistic eyes on my flies produce better in that arena. But do they? The poor hapless wandering single minnow really gets the once over from a hiding predator. He is much observed prior to demise. Thousands jammed together create a riotous frenzy, and only luck may save them.

But, for a single baitfish fishing environment it may be true. The eyes have it. It seems certain the realistic or rattling eyes produce better on some fishing flies. It can pull out reluctant predators and light their feeding fire. Realistic flies get smacked quickly! And the noise factor makes it that much better.

Probably what is working better is the way fisherman use their offerings. With a realistic look and authenticity comes confidence. Pro Bass competitors call this "confidence bait". It works better because they believe in it. Everyone has one of these. Maybe it just worked when another would not. But when you lean into it as you bite your bottom lip and focus like it can hear you thinking, --you are in tune.

There must be a billion ways to make good looking eyes on a popper or minnow imitation. The easy way is to purchase what looks good and experiment. Some say big black pupils make the eyes better. Other eyes are red and mean looking. There is the flashy stick-on type

(pre-stamped), and they do the job also. Some people paint eyes before a clear coating. It looks real but is one dimensional.

Now which one do we place on homemade poppers to elicit a sure bet strike upon presentation? They are all good if you like them. You will fish it more, and that equates to what Dad called "time on the water". You pay your dues and eventually it goes well. Experimentation leads to a focus on what works-and when. Then stick with it, and make an effort to confirm your well founded beliefs. -You must believe!

One thing I have seen that seems to make a huge difference is the distinction between silent and rattle lures. I saw that for decades in Bass fishing clubs and on my own. That led to the evolution of my fly tying. There is a craft store waterproof glue-on "bubble" eye that has the 3-D look. More important it has a BB inside. On the strip, it sends out the clicking reverberation that fish sense with their lateral lines and I believe it can push a half hearted fish over the edge.

This rattle eye has become one of my favorite confidence flies. Older poppers having stick-on one dimensional eyes got retrofitted long ago. They now sport these 3-D eyes in the appropriate proportionate size. It works, and I think doubled my strikes for sure! The larger eye has a pupil that moves inside and clicks if jerked.

They are called doll eyes and come in big jumbo packs. Just keep the super glue off the clear dome where the pupil or bb is housed. (From 1/8 inch to 1/2 inch diameter-you can get assorted sizes in a bulk pack). The glue will cloud up the transparency if it gets on the outside. Flatten a spot on the side of the popper with pliers if your model is still in the rough stage. The bottom of the plastic eye is flat. Hold for twenty seconds after one single drop of Super Glue. The epoxy coat is last after color finish, then the eyes. Favorites are, (1/8") and (1/4") - mostly for poppers.

You must believe in something when you fish. When you do -- it all comes together. After the results are in and you recap the day, I bet you will be fond of the results your realistic flies produce. Rattle eyes --can double your strikes on poppers.

Like a great hunting dog- no mystery for sure, -fix not,- -what isn't broke.



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blowing through my truck and thoroughly enjoyed smelling the many outdoor fragrances along the way. Cut grass and freshly plowed soil, or wood smoke from a distant fireplace is so distinctive and pleasing. It is great to get away from the city and out of our hermetically sealed manmade environment.

I'm very excited that our river and lake levels are starting to move in the opposite direction. I am encouraged that forecasts for a wetter than normal winter will continue to raise the extremely low lake levels from the past two years of drought. The increased flows of fresh water will have profound affects on all of our fisheries. Winter fishing for rainbow trout on the Guadalupe River, Spring fishing for white bass on the Colorado River, and even Summertime redfish at the coast will all be improved by more normal fresh water flows. I am the eternal optimist when it comes to fishing, but I am especially excited that the coming year can provide terrific fishing opportunities for us in every direction. The recent drought has been rough for fishing across the state, but I am confident fishing will rebound on this change of weather and good times are in our future.

On Friday November 20th I'm headed west for a weekend exploring the Devils River area. This is a scouting trip in preparation for a more in depth outing in April 2010 – probably 23rd through 25th if you are doing some long range planning. For several years I have been reading articles and hearing stories of the Devils River. It certainly has its share of character and historic intrigue. Without a doubt the location is extremely rugged and remote, the water is the clearest in the state, and fishing for large bass is reportedly second to none. I figured it was about time to check this area out for myself. For my trip in a couple of weeks, I'm planning to camp at the Devils River State Natural Area, explore the area where I can, and of course spend some time fishing the river. On this trip, I'm not planning a downstream float, but instead spend some time fishing the water accessible from the park area. I will bring hiking boots and a float tube to access some of the larger deeper stretches of water. I'm looking forward to a Fall camping experience under the stars, including a few dutch oven

treats, maybe a glass of communion red wine, and of course some excellent daytime fishing. Let me know if you are interested and available to join me for this new adventure.

This is also the time of year to renew our GRTU memberships and sign up for the lease access program. Texas Parks and Wildlife and GRTU will soon be stocking the river with thousands of new fish. Stocked rainbows will range in size from 8" to over 24". With the cooler weather and recent rains, fishing will soon be excellent throughout the river. And as Bill Higdon reminded us at our October club meeting, don't forget your midge boxes, and fish the slower deeper water for bigger fish.

Mark your calendar now and plan to join us for our club Christmas Party and end of year fundraiser on Sunday December 13th. The party and dinner will again be held at Alamo Café on Hwy 281 just north of Bitters Road. Activities begin at 6:00pm and dinner at 7:00pm. It will be a fun night of fellowship recapping the year with stories, memories, and pictures of events and outings that took place in 2009.

If you are having trouble finding fish, or need some help with casting or tying flies, be sure to ask about our Mentoring program. You can sign up for the Mentoring program at any of our club meetings. Do you have questions or ideas for outings? Let us know. We have a very dynamic club with wide ranging interest and skill levels. I'm sure we can help you find someone with your interest who can help you achieve the next level in your fly fishing journey. I hope you will get involved in our club outings. Be safe. I look forward to seeing you on the water!

Todd Fleming
AFF Outings Director – 2009



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Wildlife that often produce visible and local evidence of our support. Some are tangible items like fish structures, stockings, hatcheries and events. Some of the results are even more valuable but less tangible, like smiles, tears, memories and heartfelt appreciation. These organizations have received mainstream recognition in our club, but we mustn't forget those that sometimes seem to fade into the background. Let's strive to make them mainstream as well.

Take the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) and Keep America Fishing for example. They may not produce results each month that we can see or touch in our favorite fishing holes, but their role is equally as important. FFF is a huge advocate of education and promotion of the sport. Both groups are also our warriors in Washington, fighting to keep our waters open, stocked and fishable. They see to it that the sport and our values stay top of mind to those who can make an impact, positive or negative. Make sure you are supporting groups like FFF to show an appreciation of all they do for us.

Look for local and regional opportunities as well. They

can range from volunteering at a local high school class, Boy Scout camp or casting clinic to giving presentations to other outdoor groups. It could be helping at a Kid Fish or youth fishing club event, even if they are not fly fishing. Seek out great local causes and support groups like Wade, Paddle & Pole and Billy Sandifer's annual beach cleanup. Look for non-formal opportunities as well, like taking your neighbor's kid to fish for the afternoon. It's not about the size of the organization or the quantifiable impact, it is about promoting the sport that we all love and feeling good, knowing you are making a difference. If you have a special group that you are passionate about, share it with the club officers and let's get more people involved. Remember, we are a fishing club, but we are also a "service" organization.

Every one of us has a passion for the sport of fly fishing. As a club, it is near and dear to our hearts. Let's make sure we are sharing and supporting what we love. We can always go fishing for fun, but try to seek out opportunities to go fishing with a purpose and for a cause. The rewards you will reap are immeasurable.



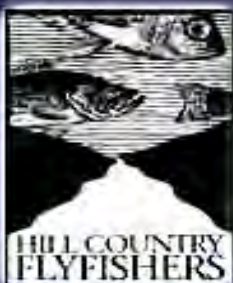
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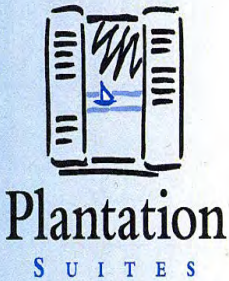
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When he called me with a scouting report a few nights before the trip I realized just how zealous the two of them are.

As I mentioned, my friend's father-in-law is a farmer, and like a few farmers in the area he has a small plane that he flies to help various aspects of his operations. It turns out it is also very effective at locating redfish.

Zippering around a few hundred feet above the water, the



two of them had gone out scouting and located a very large school of redfish. And, as luck would have it, the school was stacked up in a shallow marsh that backed up to a pasture they had access to.

My whole objective for the trip was to help my friend catch his first red on a fly, but, considering the circumstances, I'd be lying if I told you I wasn't as giddy as a 6 year old before Christmas on my drive to Port Lavaca.

Saturday morning while the two of us were prepping our gear on the shoreline, his father-in-law was prepping his plane. The plan was for him to do a fly by and signal to us the location of the school. But, by the time he flew over my friend had caught his first fish already and had just hooked into his second.

We spent the rest of the day chasing tails around the marsh, catching and releasing our fair share of fish.

It was a beautiful blue bird October day with keen company. It was an elevating, innovative, memorable trip, to say the least.



ALAMO FLY FISHERS
PO BOX 6224
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78209-0224