

## Urban Clues Key to San Antonio Scavenger Hunt

JORDAN GASS-POORE<sup>1</sup> on 17 October, 2013 at 05:00



Come Saturday, Nov. 2, the annual CitySolve Urban Race challenges teams to a one-day, scavenger hunt that will take them to unmarked checkpoints in Hemisfair Park, King William, and in every nook and cranny of downtown San Antonio.

Don't be alarmed: Costumed locals and tourists alike will mob the streets via public transportation and their own two feet to solve clues ranging from pop culture to basic math, as well as physical challenges, like bowling a strike.



One of many teams from last year's Urban Race poses for a photo as finalists for best costume. Photo by Steve Wood.

This year, Jason Hofsess founder and “creative genius” of CitySolve, an annual event that takes place in various cities nationwide, said he expects about 300 participants to gather at the starting point, The Friendly Spot in Southtown.

The starting point has been the same since the first CitySolve in 2009. How did Hofsess, based in California, know it'd be the perfect spot? How do he know what questions to ask about San Antonio's culture, local businesses, and hidden gems? Basically, he has local spies.

His main spy is Steve Wood, founder of [San Antonio Bike Tours](#), who connected Hofsess with Friendly Spot employees and continues to assist in development of bedeviling clues.



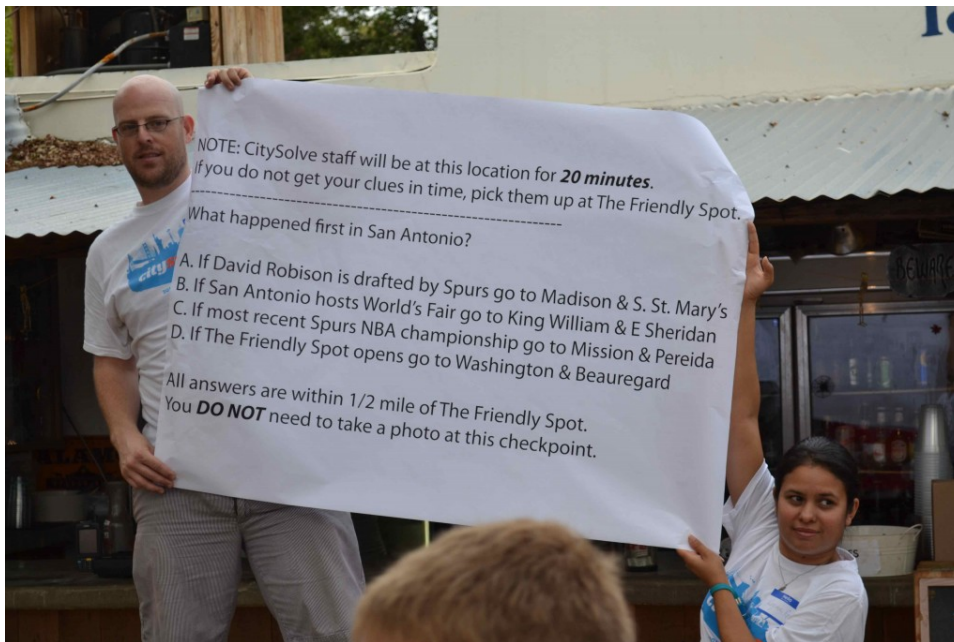
Steve Wood, of San Antonio Bike Tours, joins the Something Monday crew in his velomobile. Photography by Cooksterz.

Last year, Wood himself was a clue as he rode around on a tandem bike with a *papier-mâché* skeleton. One of the challenges was to snap a photo of him and his skinny friend.

Hofsess and Wood met while surfing in San Antonio – couch surfing that is.

Wood happened to open his home up to [Couchsurfing.com](http://Couchsurfing.com) in 2009, which connected him with travelers from around the world, including Hofsess. Soon after, Wood started San Antonio Bike Tours, where he guides visitors to the city into some of the cultures and communities the Alamo City has to offer via recumbent bike tours.

“(Hofsess) is a fun guy,” he said. “Ask him how he likes doing his laundry at my house.”



Jason Hofsess holds up a clue during a previous CitySolve Urban Race at The Friendly Spot. Photo by Steve Wood.

These relationships help Hofsess make each CitySolve race interesting and engaging, as he takes what he learns about the unique qualities of each city nationwide and includes them into the races.

“(Wood) has become a really good friend of mine,” said Hofsess, who continues to conduct research via couch surfing.

Chris Fox, CitySolve marketing associate, said that some of the event’s clues will encapsulate the history and culture of San Antonio.

“It’s an awesome experience on a Saturday, an experience like you’ve never had before,” said Fox. “And you’ll have a blast with your family and friends.”



Teammates participating in the CitySolve Urban Race read and answer clues for the next checkpoint. Yes, smart

Though Fox's heart is in Berkeley, where CitySolve is based, the Southern California native isn't a stranger to Central Texas. He has grandparents and uncles who live in San Marcos and vacationed there as a child.

Hofsess said the idea for CitySolve stemmed from a similar scavenger hunt he participated in on Halloween 2004.

Although Hofsess was employed, he quit his job three months after the event to start High Trek Adventure, which sponsored races in Tempe, Scottsdale and Tucson, Ariz. in 2005.

The company moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2006, but continuing to expand its reach to Hofsess' hometown of Rochester and Boston where he attended college.

In 2010, High Trek Adventure changed its name to CitySolve Urban Race and now operates in 24 U.S. cities, including San Antonio.



Jason Hofsess, founder of CitySolve

Tickets to participate are \$60 and a portion of all event proceeds will benefit Catholic Charities of San Antonio.

CitySolve's philanthropic work contributed to San Antonio resident Jamie Leeper's volunteer participation in this year's event.

## URBAN SPACES TOUR September 30 HOPS AND HISTORY



Teammates run to the finish line during a previous CitySolve Urban Race in San Antonio. Photo by Steve Wood.

Leeper said her non-profit Miles Against Melanoma, which she started after her husband's diagnosis with the disease, will be receiving proceeds from CitySolve's race next year.

"CitySolve welcomed our non-profit with open arms," Leeper said by email. "It's not very often that I have come across companies who proactively 'pay it forward' without a lot of red tape. (With) that alone - they have a customer for life."

She and a friend formed the team Awesome Possums, participating in similar races in San Antonio and Austin.

The duo rarely runs, Leeper said, because the race is about more than just speed. Knowing the city, in and out, and being able to quickly answer trivia allows her to remain optimistic about her chances. There are, however, uncontrollable variables.

A previous Awesome Possum's CitySolve adventure have found them on a VIA trolley in search of a clue - after having its location confirmed by the bus driver - but dropped off on the opposite side of downtown. The driver was mistaken. A word of advice: Be careful who you listen to.

"I personally think that an afternoon of intense exercise (physical and brain power) is good for everyone," said Leeper. "But these races are fun because you don't know where you will end up ... it's truly an adventure."



CitySolve Urban Race costume contest finalists at The Friendly Spot during a previous race. Photo by Steve

Wood.

Jordan Gass-Poore' is an English/mass communication senior at Texas State University- San Marcos. She began her work as a paid intern for The Rivard Report in June 2013. Her previous and current intern experience includes the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, *The Austin Chronicle*, *Slackerwood* and the *Austin American-Statesman*, among others. If she's not writing or sitting outside of her favorite local coffee shop drinking a Shyster (a delicious espresso-sugar-dairy concoction), you can catch her watching episodes of her favorite television series, "Battlestar Galactica." Contact Jordan via [jgasspoore@gmail.com](mailto:jgasspoore@gmail.com) or follow her on Twitter [@jgasspoore](https://twitter.com/jgasspoore).

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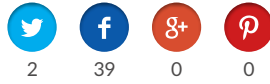
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A former Rivard Report intern, Jordan Gass-Poore' is now interning at The Los Angeles News Group in California. She is an English/mass communication senior at Texas State University. She has also worked as a paid intern for LMG Communications. AT&T is a client of LMG Communications. Jordan's previous and current intern experience includes the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, The Austin Chronicle, Slackerwood and the Austin American-Statesman, among others. Contact Jordan via [jgasspoore@gmail.com](mailto:jgasspoore@gmail.com).

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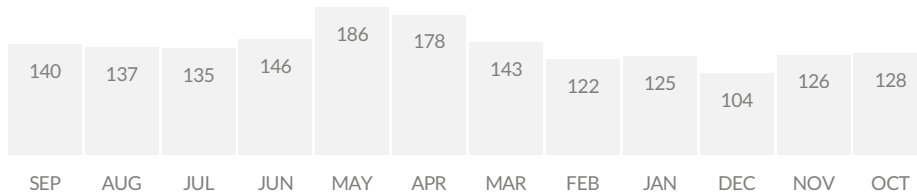
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