

The Republican Club of Sun City NEWSLETTER

June 2011

Everett Schmidt, Editor

Sun City Texas

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWERTNER TO ADDRESS CLUB

State Representative Charles Schwertner will address the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 30 in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.

Entering the past legislative session along with a host of other freshman Republican representatives, Representative Schwertner will, like his colleagues, finish the special session now underway as a seasoned veteran whose adherence to those principles in which he and most of his constituents believe was battle-tested. Given the voluminous amount of significant legislation passed during his tenure – much of which has yet to be adequately explained to the public - the program should be one of the most informative the club has had.

The Social Hour, Dinner and Program. A social period will begin at 6:00 PM. The dinner will begin at 6:30 PM followed by the program. The dinner will be catered by **Nemec Catering** which will serve Bar-B-Q beef and chicken, potato salad, green salad, tomato/cucumber salad and condiments.

Cost. Cost is \$16 per person. Checks, made out to **The Republican Club of Sun City**, should be mailed to **The Republican Club of Sun City, Bernie Miller, Treasurer, 1530 Sun City Blvd., Suite 120, Box 227, Georgetown, TX 78633** by no later than Friday, June 24. Bernie has also set up a special box on his front porch at 265 Trail of the Flowers for those club members wishing to hand deliver payments. For information about reservations, contact Bernie at 868-9125 or bimiller1@verizon.net **VISITORS ARE WELCOME!**

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SOLICITS SUGGESTIONS FOR OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee, charged with the responsibility of submitting to the membership by this fall one nominee for each of the club's 5 officer positions for the year 2012, is asking those club members who would be willing to serve as an officer, or who would like to recommend consideration be given to certain individuals as nominees to so inform a committee member. Members of the Nominating Committee are: Julian Bucher, chairman (863-7703), Barbara Wood (931-9998), and Patrick McCaslin (863-3150).

Normally, the club meets 8 times per year; however, during years of presidential elections (as is the case in 2012), more meetings may be held.

Next year will be particularly critical, because, as is generally understood, the nation must choose whether to maintain a constitutional republic or to transform itself – possibly forever – into some form of a socialist state.

Sun City, with its strong Republican base and its traditionally high voter turnout, can make a positive contribution in the coming election. The Republican Club plays several roles in connection with political matters: it provides a forum for candidates and resource persons to communicate with citizens on various matters; it serves as a conduit – via personal contact and the newsletter – for disseminating information; and it provides a presence of the Republican Party in Sun City which can attract like-minded residents to the Republican cause.

But if Sun City Republicans are to live up to their potential, some individuals must be willing to serve as club officers. Following is a listing of the officer positions with a brief description of duties:

- **President.** Presides at meetings, appoints committees, has general supervisory responsibilities for the work of the organization.
- **First Vice President.** Performs duties of the president in his or her absence, serves as program chairman, coordinates duties of the hospitality committee.
- **Second Vice President.** Maintains membership list, oversees publication of yearbook.
- **Secretary.** Maintains record of meetings, has custody of records, transmits newsletter to membership.
- **Treasurer.** Receive and be custodian of all club funds, pay bills as authorized, give report at club meetings, submit records to Audit Committee for review.

OBAMA SEEKS TO DISTRIBUTE WEALTH VIA NEW POVERTY PROGRAM

Foreword. Marvin Olasky, editor of *World*, reports that the Obama administration will, on September 1, unveil a radically new way to determine what constitutes “poverty level” in the United States.

Originally, with the advent of President Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty” in 1964, in order to establish a “poverty level,” the concept, according to columnist Terry Jones, was to measure just how vulnerable low income people were to hunger. To do that, a government statistician named Mollie Orchansky simply took the cost needed to cover a basic diet, multiplied it by three, and called it the “poverty line.” While there have been some minor modifications of that plan, “the simple basis for calculation has remained the same,” asserts Olasky.

But on September 1, in proposed legislation termed a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), a new concept for determining the poverty level will be introduced by President Obama. While the original concept dating back to the 1960s was used to determine a minimum income level in absolute terms, the proposed new concept will determine that level in relative terms. Specifically, the new poverty measure “will be based on what Americans at the 33rd percentile of income pay for food, clothing, shelter and utilities, plus an additional one-fifth of that for other purchases.” The new concept is consistent with Obama’s desire to “spread the wealth” and to bring about a more egalitarian society.

Background Information. Olasky reports that during the Johnson administration, Mollie Orchansky, referred to above, saw that a half-century ago families of 3 or more people typically spent about one-third of their after-tax income on food. Logically, she multiplied basic food costs by three to come up with poverty thresholds for various family sizes.

Problems With the Present System. Olasky points out one glaring problem in today’s method of calculating the poverty level: “People today normally spend closer to one-sixth of their income on food rather than one-third, as Orshansky had calculated. That change has come about as a result of improved farming techniques and improved refrigeration and transportation.

And there are other factors which bring into question the validity of the current method. Author Robert Rector, in a 2007 report, found that, “The typical American designated as poor has a car, air conditioning, a microwave, two color televisions, cable or satellite TV reception and a VCR or DVD player.”

And there’s more: Income, as the government counts it for poverty purposes, does not include such items as food stamps, housing subsidies, health-care benefits, or other forms of welfare.

Obama’s Proposed Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). Some of Obama’s proposals are noncontroversial and reflect needed changes. Olasky cites some of them:

- When calculating the SPM, take into account welfare payments that those classified as poor receive from about 71 programs. Doing that reduces hugely the number of people defined as going without basics.
- Reflect changing social relationship, with cohabiting couples treated as if married, and the default family pattern seen as one adult and two children, rather than 2+2. That’s realistic but troubling – and given how often cohabiting couples break up, this calculation may mask some poverty problems.
- The third SPM change – take into account geography – has a political edge. Housing costs tend to be higher and unemployment greater in states that are more unionized and less oriented toward free enterprise. If the SPM becomes the norm, blue states in general will get more money, red states less.

Obama’s Injection of the “Inequality” Factor. One of Obama’s proposals could be particularly controversial – the one that sets the poverty measure at the 33rd percentile of what Americans pay for food, etc. “Why 33 percent?” asks Olasky, who notes that, “Suddenly, millions more will be defined as poor . . . and a drumbeat for more federal spending can pick up intensity.”

If America adopts Obama’s plan, it will be adopting the model of Europeans who have already made poverty relative. The European Union defines poverty as “an income below 60% of the national median...”

Current Perceptions of Inequality. Despite reports on the surprising number of possessions owned by the poor, a significant decline in the percentage of income paid for food, and a failure of government to count welfare payments as income, the dominant media paints a picture of rising inequality in the U. S. An Associated Press headline recently asserted, “Income Gap Between Rich, Poor the Widest Ever.” The *New York Times* reported, “Closing Income Gaps Tops Obama’s Economic Agenda.”

Aware of the reports cited in the above paragraph, former Cato researcher Will Wilkinson concludes: “Real economic inequality has grown far less than the income figures suggest. It should now be clear that income statistics can be the source of profound distortion and confusion . . . Fixating on income inequality may have caused us to miss one of the biggest stories of modern times: America may have become materially more equal. And no one noticed.”

CALIFORNIA'S NEW REDISTRICTING PLAN AND PROPOSITION 14 MAY BRING ABOUT SOME SURPRISES

Foreword. California's huge problems involving immigration, taxes, debt, societal dysfunction and other matters have been growing for years and are, by now, generally known throughout the nation.

In an effort to cope with those and other problems, California recently adopted two unique measures concerning politics, the final effects of which have yet to surface. One is a redistricting plan unique to only California and Washington. The other is a primary plan unique only to California and Arizona.

This report will provide some analysis of those two measures which potentially can have some impact on the entire nation. Remember: "As California goes, so goes the nation."

The Previous Redistricting Plan. Columnist Chuck Devore reports that in California "the art of gerrymander was so powerful that in the two election cycles after new districts were established in 2002 [in the wake of the 2000 census] there were no partisan turnovers in 310 regularly scheduled elections. Even the Chinese politburo, with its unelected membership, saw greater change."

Similarly, columnist Larry Killey reports that, "So effective was the California gerrymander in the 2004 general election, not one seat of the 80 in the state Assembly, of the 20 in the state Senate, not one of the 53 U. S. Congressional districts, changed parties."

The New Redistricting Plan. So to cope with that situation and a host of problems seemingly growing ever-worse, California voters, in 2008, changed the plan from one of allowing politicians to draw their own district lines to one in which legislative lines were drawn by an independent commission. Initially, this commission was involved only with state-wide offices, but in 2010 its authority was expanded to include congressional districts.

The redistricting commission is composed of citizens who, by law, have no prior involvement in politics. The commission cannot take partisan registration into account, nor can it consider where current incumbents reside. The commission's work is to be done by September.

While one might think that boundaries drawn by the commission may have some benefit for Republicans, such may not be the case if response by Republicans to a newly released map is any indication. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, "Many Republicans complained that the proposed new districts would make their party even less competitive." The chairman of the California Republican Party agreed with that assessment, and then added, "I don't think [that result] is what the voters had in mind."

The recently released maps will be subject to more hearings before they are finalized on August 15.

Proposition 14. An approved constitutional amendment, effective in 2011, Proposition 14, replaces traditional partisan primaries in state and Congressional races. It requires all candidates to run in a single primary open to all registered voters, with the top two vote-getters meeting in a runoff. Candidates can choose whether or not to have their political party affiliation displayed on the ballot. The top two vote-getters – even if from the same party – would advance to the general election.

Newsweek predicts Proposition 14 will have "a seismic impact on the politics of a state used to ground-shaking events."

THE DECEITFUL TERMINOLOGY USED BY CONGRESS

Columnist Walter Williams contends that Congress' use of the terms "entitlements" and "non-discretionary spending" to describe Social Security, Medicare and certain other programs is "corrupt beyond redemption." This contention comes in the wake of reports that the combined unfunded liability of Social Security and Medicare is about 7 times the size of the U. S. economy and 10 times the size of the national debt, and that those "entitlement" programs, and others, account for nearly 60% of federal spending.

In explaining his criticism of the use of the term "entitlements" Williams asks if one American is "entitled to something he didn't earn, where does Congress get the money?" He answers his question by stating that an "entitlement" is a "Congressionally given right for one American to live at the expense of another. In other words, Congress forcibly uses one American to serve the purpose of another American."

Williams then addresses the terms "discretionary" versus "non-discretionary" as used by Congress in regard to spending matters. He notes that about 60% of spending is what Congress terms "entitlement" or "non-discretionary" spending, that about half of "discretionary" spending is for national defense, and that, each year, "non-discretionary" spending consumes a higher and higher percentage of the federal budget.

But, he contends, all congressional spending is discretionary and controllable. “For political expedience, Congress has written laws to shield certain spending from annual budget scrutiny by calling it non-discretionary.”

Columnist James Payne asserts, “The grandfather of today's semantic confusion was Franklin Roosevelt who initially found that the nation regarded a tax-funded pension system to be 'un-American and socialistic,’” but who later was able to force the entire country into the Social Security system. How was he able to bring about the change? Payne contends the change was made possible largely through the use of such semantics as the following:

- The new wage tax, earmarked to pay pensions, wasn't called a “tax” but a “contribution”
- The payment was not called “subsidy” but “social insurance”
- The funds from the wage tax were said to be “trust funds” - which exist in name only
- The Social Security Administration keeps records of each worker's “contribution” as if these payments established a legal right to specific benefits when Congress can raise or lower benefits

Roosevelt's motives, according to *The American Enterprise*, were based on a belief that “once everybody depended on these government transfers, there would be no going back. This tactic, as he famously said, guaranteed that 'no damn politicians can ever scrap my Social Security System.’”

THE AMERICANS WHO RISKED EVERYTHING: THE SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Following are excerpts from an essay written by Rush Limbaugh's father about the signers of the Declaration of Independence. They are published every other year in this newsletter near the time of an Independence Day celebration.

The Declaration is Adopted. Congress transformed itself into a committee of the whole. The Declaration of Independence was read aloud once more, and debate resumed. A total of 86 alterations were made. Almost 500 words were eliminated, leaving 1,337. At last, after three days of wrangling, the document was put to a vote. Here in this hall Patrick Henry had once thundered: “I am no longer a Virginian, Sir, but an American.” But today the loud, sometimes bitter argument stilled, and without fanfare the vote was taken from north to south by colonies, as was the custom. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

The Signers. What kind of men were the 56 signers who adopted the Declaration of Independence and who, by their signing, committed an act of treason against the Crown? To each of you the names of Franklin, Adams, Hancock, and Jefferson are almost familiar as household words. Most of us, however, know nothing of the other signers. Who were they? What happened to them?

I imagine that many of you are somewhat surprised at the names *not* there: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry. All were elsewhere.

Ben Franklin was the only really old man. Eighteen were under 40; three were in their 20s. Of the 56, almost half – 24 – were judges and lawyers. Eleven were merchants, 9 were landowners and farmers, and the remaining 12 were doctors, ministers, and politicians.

With only a few exceptions, such as Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, these were men of substantial property. All but two had families. The vast majority were men of education and standing in their communities. They had economic security as few men had in the 18th century. Each had more to lose from revolution than he had to gain by it.

These men know what they risked. The penalty for treason was death by hanging. And remember: a great British fleet was already at anchor in New York harbor.

Even before the list [of signers] was published, the British marked down every member of Congress suspected of having put his name to treason. All of them became the objects of vicious manhunts. Some were taken. Some, like Jefferson, had narrow escapes. All who had property or families near British strongholds suffered.

Francis Lewis, New York delegate, saw his home plundered and his estates, in what is now Harlem, completely destroyed by British soldiers. Mrs. Lewis was captured and treated with great brutality. Though she was later exchanged for two British prisoners. . . she died from the effects of her abuse.

William Floyd, another New York delegate, was able to escape with his wife and children across Long Island Sound to Connecticut, where they lived as refugees without income for seven years. When they came home, they found a devastated ruin.

Phillip Livingston had all his great holdings in New York confiscated and his family driven out of their

home. Livingstone died in 1778 still working in Congress for the cause.

Louis Morris, the fourth New York delegate, saw all his timber, crops, and livestock taken. For seven years, he was barred from his home and family.

John Hart of Trenton, New Jersey, risked his life to return home to see his dying wife. Hessian soldiers rode after him, and he escaped in the woods. While his wife lay on her deathbed, the soldiers ruined his farm and wrecked his homestead. Hart, 65, slept in caves and woods as he was hunted across the countryside. When at long last, emaciated by hardship, he was able to sneak home, he found his wife had already been buried, and his 13 children taken away. He never saw them again. He died a broken man in 1779, without ever finding his family.

Dr. John Witherspoon, signer, was president of the College of New Jersey, later called Princeton. The British occupied the town of Princeton, and billeted troops in the college. They trampled and burned the finest college library in the country.

Judge Richard Stockton, another New Jersey delegate, had rushed to his estate to evacuate his wife and children. The family found refuge with friends, but a sympathizer betrayed them. Judge Stockton was pulled from bed in the night and brutally beaten by arresting soldiers. Thrown into a common jail, he was deliberately starved. Congress finally arranged for Stockton's parole, but his health was ruined. The judge was released as an invalid when he could no longer harm the British cause. He returned home to find his estate looted and did not live to see the triumph of the revolution. His family was forced to live off charity.

Robert Morris, merchant prince of Philadelphia, delegate and signer, met Washington's appeals and pleas for money year after year. He made and raised arms and provisions which made it possible for Washington to cross the Delaware at Trenton. In the process he lost 150 ships at sea, bleeding his own fortune and credit almost dry.

Thomas Lynch, Jr., South Carolina delegate, had his family broken from privation and exposures while serving as a company commander in the military. His doctors ordered him to seek a cure in the West Indies and on the voyage he and his young bride were drowned at sea.

Edward Rutledge, Arthur Middleton, and Thomas Heyward, Jr., and the other three South Carolina signers were taken by the British in the siege of Charleston. They were carried as prisoners of war to St. Augustine, Florida, where they were singled out for indignities. They were exchanged at the end of the war, the British in the meantime having completely devastated their large land holdings and estates.

Thomas Nelson, signer of Virginia, was at the front in command of the Virginia military forces. With British General Charles Cornwallis in Yorktown, fire from 70 heavy American guns began to destroy Yorktown piece by piece. Lord Cornwallis and his staff moved their headquarters into Nelson's palatial home. While American cannonballs were making shambles of the town, the house of Governor Nelson remained untouched. Nelson turned in rage to the American gunners and asked, "Why do you spare my home?" They replied, "Sir, out of respect to you." Nelson cried, "Give me the cannon" and fired on his magnificent home himself, smashing it to bits. But Nelson's sacrifice was not quite over. He had raised \$2 million for the Revolutionary cause by pledging his own estates. When the loans came due, a newer peacetime Congress refused to honor them, and Nelson's property was forfeited. He was never reimbursed. He died, impoverished, a few years later at the age of 50.

And, finally, there is the New Jersey signer, Abraham Clark. He gave his two sons to the officer corps in the Revolutionary Army. They were captured and sent to the infamous British prison hulk afloat in New York harbor known as the hell ship "Jersey" where 11,000 Americans were to die. The younger Clarks were treated with a special brutality because of their father. One was put in solitary and given no food. With the end almost in sight, with the war almost won, no one could have blamed Abraham Clark for acceding to the British request when offered him his sons' lives if he would recant and come out for the King and parliament. The utter despair in this man's heart, the anguish in his very soul, must reach out to each one of us down through 200 years with his answer: "No!"

Of those 56 who signed the Declaration of Independence, nine died of wounds or hardships during the war. Five were captured and imprisoned, in each case with brutal treatment. Several lost wives, sons or entire families. One lost his 13 children. Two wives were brutally treated. All were at one time or another the victims of manhunts and driven from their homes. Twelve signers had their homes completely burned. Seventeen lost everything they owned. Yet not one defected or went back on his pledged word. Their honor, and the nation they sacrificed so much to create, is still intact.

The 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence proved by their every deed that they made no idle boast when they composed the most magnificent curtain line in history: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

NOTES ON THE PASSING SCENE

(Some random observations on this crazy world in which we live)

The Ill Effects of TV. Author and professor Ben Berger cites some ill-effects of TV. He notes, "It cheapens political discourse, weakens family ties, prevents face-to-face socializing, and exposes kids to sex and inures them to violence. Yet Americans can't get enough . . . Now the average U. S. household has more TVs than people." According to the Nielson Company, in 2009 the average American watched over a whopping five hours per day. Berger notes some of the more subtle effects of TV:

The hunger for stimuli may result in our favoring visual media over print, and spectacle over depth. Print makes us translate words into mental imagery and sounds, which exercises our minds. Television is less taxing; it does all of the work for us. The late Media theorist Neil Postman found in TV an inherent bias toward the shallow, and not just for sit-coms and the like. Eventually, programmers feel pressure to make even the news and other serious programming more entertaining, if only to compete with alternatives. When we are constantly bombarded with spectacular images, we find it harder than ever to face the weighty and comparatively dull issues of public life. Postman worried that our combined tendencies to take the path of least resistance and the path of greatest pleasure would mean a stampede from any kind of meaningful reading: "Television does not ban books, it simply displaces them."

(Source: National Review)

When It Comes To Doomsday, The Left Shouldn't Laugh. The secular, especially the anti-religious left, seem to enjoy the spectacle of some religious celebrity making a fool of himself by predicting the end of the world, as was the case when May 21 was to bring about such event. The left loves to ridicule anything religious.

But, says columnist Dennis Prager, the religious world has far fewer doomsday predictions than the left does. He submits the most obvious current example was global warming. The world's left-wing media has for years predicted a worldwide catastrophe resulting from global warming. Even the United Nations issued a warning that the world would have to cope with 50 million climate refugees by 2010, a prediction that did not materialize.

Both *Time* and *Newsweek* covered stories about how heterosexual AIDS would become a national plague. In 2000, at the Democrat National Convention, the Democrats featured five children who recited lyrics about the doomsdays that were facing America due to smog. In his 1968 book, *The Population Bomb*, Paul Ehrlich wrote, "In the 1970s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death..."

Prager makes these observations about such predictions: "There is one major difference between leftist and religious doomsday scenarios. The religious readily acknowledge that their doomsday scenario is built entirely on faith. The left, on the other hand, claims that its doomsday scenarios are entirely built on science."

The New Jersey Supreme Court Legislates From The Bench. By a 3-2 vote, New Jersey's Supreme Court ordered the state to spend an additional \$500 million for 31 schools in some of the state's worst districts. The verdict forces Governor Chris Christie to rework his already strained budget plans.

Mr. Christie has said he will abide by the court's direction, though none of this would have happened if Democrats hadn't obstructed his judicial nominee. Democrats had refused to hold hearings for one of Christie's nominees to that court, thus enabling the Chief Justice to temporarily appoint someone to serve in the interim. The Chief Justice's temporary appointment was the deciding vote.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

