

The Republican Club of Sun City NEWSLETTER

February 2011

Everett Schmidt, Editor

Sun City Texas

FOLKLORIST TO PERFORM AT CLUB MEETING

Scott Killen, master story teller whose presentations bring images of the Texas of long ago to today's audiences, will perform for the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 10 in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.

While his performances are entertaining, they also provide historical insights into the lives of Texans who lived during the era of Indians, cattle drives and gun fights, the time period from which much of Texas lore emerged. Instead of relying on visual depictions provided by television and movies, the folklore listener must rely for his or her images on a source becoming increasingly less used because of the pervasiveness of electronic media: one's own imagination-- responding to a skilled story teller, such as the one to appear at the coming club meeting. A special report about folklore and Scott Killen is provided below.

Visitors are welcome to attend club dinner meetings.

The Social Hour, Dinner and Program. A social hour will begin at 6:00 PM. The dinner will begin at 6:30 PM and is followed by the program. The dinner will be catered by **Cafe on the Green** which will serve slow-cooked beef sirloin tips, mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls, coffee, iced tea and water.

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, February 4th. Bernie has also set up a special box on his front porch at 165 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.

HEALTH CARE PLANS TO BE EXPLAINED DURING MARCH MEETING

Arlene Wohlgemuth, Executive Director of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a former legislator and one of the most knowledgeable persons in the nation about health care plans, will discuss during the meeting of Thursday, March 10 some of the exceedingly momentous decisions facing the state and nation about health-care. Although the situation involving health care plans are now extremely fluid, the topics are almost certain to include ObamaCare, Medicare and Medicaid.

Details of that meeting will be provided in the March newsletter.

OTHER CLUB NEWS

Club members are reminded that membership dues (\$10 per person) are now payable for the year 2011, and that, according to club bylaws, if not paid by February 28, become delinquent. That status means the names of those club members who have not renewed by that deadline are subject to being removed from the mailing list to receive club newsletters and other announcements, and to not being listed in the club roster published in the club's Yearbook, generally distributed around March. Dues may be paid via a membership form attached to this newsletter or at club meetings.

Club vice president Brenda Leisey reports that club membership for the year 2011 now stands at 137.

Club vice president Ed Konetchy has arranged for past issues of the club newsletter, beginning with the January 2010 issue, to be available at the Sun City web site, www.sctxca.org. Those newsletters contain news articles still pertinent.

Correction. The date for the June club meeting shown in the January club newsletter is not correct. It should be listed Thursday, June 30.

TEXAS FOLKLORE

What is folklore? One writer, responding to that question, contends, "It is almost impossible to give a succinct definition of folklore." Nevertheless, there have been broad and general attempts to provide at least some definition to that term:

- *Wikipedia*, the electronic encyclopedia, states, "Folklore consists of legends, music, oral history, proverbs, jokes, popular beliefs, fairy tales and customs that are the traditions of that culture, subculture, or group."
- One folklore society contends, "In the public mind, it appears largely to be viewed as either a subject for scholars or vaguely as something to do with ancient Greek myths and legends. Others might associate folklore with folksongs, with ancient ballads, with Native Indian tales or with tall stories."

While those descriptions may suggest that folklore is something mainly superficial, without any particular value, that folklore society contends, "...as an element of our past and present society, it is something we can all relate to. Its value is no less than any other part of our heritage..."

Scott Killen. A member of the Texas Commission on the Arts, Touring Arts Conference, and the Central Texas Storytelling Guild, Scott Killen has performed at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, the O'Henry Museum, the Austin Symphony BATS and various other occasions.

He offers both stories and poems. The reader may obtain some insight as to the general nature of his performances about Texas by noting the following sampling from his repertoire:

Bigfoot Wallace and the Hickory Nuts
Colonel Scott's Flight Training
The Hanging Tree
The Scalping of Josiah Wilbarger
The Texas Rangers
The Devil Made Texas

Legendary Texas scout faces a Comanche raiding party
Learning to fly biplanes in San Antonio just after WW1
Was justice done? You decide
The true story of a Texas who lived through a scalping
True stories of bravery by the Texas Rangers
An old poem explaining why Texas is the way it is

UPCOMING SENATE RACE LIKELY TO BE A "DOOZIE"

With the recent announcement by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison that she will not seek re-election to her Senate position after her term expires, the names of a flurry of candidates to replace her have surfaced. These candidates will soon make their presence ever-more apparent inasmuch as the next round of primary elections is "just around the corner"--unbelievably, only a bit over a year from now.

Some of the candidacies extend back to the days when Sen. Hutchison, while a candidate for Governor, promised - but later reneged on that promise - to resign her Senate seat, win or lose the Governor's election. Candidates whose names surfaced at that time, whose candidacies have not been withdrawn, include railroad commissioner Michael Williams and former Texas Secretary of State Roger Williams who was recently endorsed by former president George H. W. Bush. Elizabeth Ames Jones, another railroad commissioner, is shown on her web site to be an announced candidate.

On Wednesday of this week, former Texas Solicitor Ted Cruz, a young lawyer of Cuban-American heritage, sent out e-mails announcing he had filed paperwork to become a candidate for the Senate position. He appears to have appeal among conservatives and members of the Hispanic community.

According to press reports, Dallas mayor Tom Leppert is also considering a run for that office.

Possibly the biggest gun in a field of candidates would be Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst who stated within the past week, "While my focus remains on the challenges we face at the state level and making the upcoming session successful, I fully intend to explore running for the U. S. Senate."

The alignment of candidates could affect Attorney General Abbott's decision to run for another office, and his decision could, in turn, affect the alignment of Senatorial candidates.

The *Austin American-Statesman* reports some potential Democrat candidates, including former comptroller John Sharp, former U. S. Representative Chet Edwards of Waco, state senator and former mayor of Austin Kirk Watson, and Rep. Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio. Additional names will soon surface.

OBAMA, REGULATIONS AND A CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC

It may have seemed a bit unusual, but there it was in only one newspaper: on the "Opinion" page of the January 18 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* was an op-ed piece written by President Obama announcing and explaining reasons for his recently-issued Executive Order titled "Improving Regulation" which was designed to "remove outdated regulations that stifle job creation and make our economy less competitive." Other newspapers and other media subsequently reported and analyzed that announcement.

Wall Street Journal writers contend, "The Administration offered few specifics, and it was unclear how much of the review [which government agencies were ordered to conduct] would be substantive and how much cosmetic." It is clear, however, contends one writer, that Obama did *not* intend to include such mammoth regulation promulgators as:

- **The Dodd-Frank Act** which regulates financial institutions, excluding Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac
- **ObamaCare** which involves 2,700 pages of legislation and which delegates over 2,500 times regulatory authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services
- The **Environmental Protective Agency (EPA)** which recently announced it is taking the unprecedented steps of directly issuing air permits in Texas, thus overruling the state agency, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which normally has jurisdiction over such matters
- The **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** which recently promulgated by a partisan vote of 3-2 a "net neutrality" regulation which will result in the Internet being treated like a public utility subject to myriad regulations which go with that classification. That regulation is opposed by over 300 House and Senate members
- Others, such as the **Securities and Exchange Commission**, the **Federal Reserve**, and the **Food and Drug Administration**

Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, in attempting to justify the above entities being excused from Obama's review of regulations, said he had "no doubt" the benefits of the regulations embedded in the health-care and Wall Street overhaul laws outweigh the economic costs. But it should be noted that the technique of balancing benefits against costs - as Gibbs posits - is one which provides the administration with enough flexibility to justify almost any conclusion.

The vagueness of Mr. Obama's comments suggest he may have simply been "posturing" for a position to better enable him to cope with a failing economy, the opposition to ObamaCare, and the expected investigation of government agencies by Republican-controlled House committees.

Mr. Obama may also have been motivated in part to issue his Executive Order to counter the efforts of Rep. Darell Issa (R., Cal.), chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Governmental Reform, who earlier this month, sent letters to scores of U. S. business groups, asking them to identify costly regulations for his committee to probe.

Senior citizens, especially, should be concerned over the recent revival *by regulation* of the so-called "death panels." As most readers are aware, that regulation, as summarized by the *Wall Street Journal*, provides that "Medicare will now pay for voluntary end-of-life counseling as part of seniors' annual physical." Under that arrangement, physicians, being paid by the government, become, as Rush Limbaugh points out, agents of the government. In that capacity, they can be subject to government pressure to counsel their patients to "take a pill" rather than receive expensive government care - whatever the government wishes.

Dr. Donald Berwick, who heads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and who promulgated that regulation, was appointed to his post while the Senate was in recess (his was a recess-appointment), thus escaping exposure of his controversial views by a Senate committee. He is an enthusiastic supporter of the British health care system.

What may come as news to the reader is the report from the *Texas Eagle Forum* newsletter that the Federal Highway Administration is, by regulation, ordering local governments to buy new street signs that federal bureaucrats say is easier to read. The size of the letters on street signs are to be increased from the current 4 inches to 6 inches on all roads with speed limits over 25 miles per hour. Local governments should also install signs with new reflective letters more visible at night, and when signs are changed for any reason, they can no longer be in ALL CAPS. Companies that make signs are reported to have lobbied hard for the new rules.

Citizens, however, are not powerless to cope with the over-regulation coming out of Washington. The Heritage Foundation reports:

Congress still has the power of the purse and can withhold funding for implementing ObamaCare or writing global warming regulations. There is also the *Congressional Review Act*, which allows Congress to review and overrule regulations issued by government agencies.

REPEAL OF “DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL”: A REPUDIATION OF JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY, NATURAL LAW, CULTURE?

In late December of 2010, a Democrat Congress, as one of its last official acts, repealed what is known as the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” law which had allowed gays to remain in the military provided they did not reveal they were gay.

The repeal of that law came in the wake of a study titled “Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated With a Repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,’” commissioned by the Department of Defense. This 267-page report ostensibly shows that military personnel support the repeal of that law. But while there has been little public scrutiny of the results of that study, a number of writers contend the study is seriously flawed.

A *World Net Daily* writer reports there are questions about survey size, data sampling and research methodology. The authors of that study report that they asked 103 questions online of 115,000 personnel and received a 28% response, which is generally acknowledged to be a very low rate, especially for a military population.

Further, there is a disturbing inconsistency in submitting the questions. For example, only 5 of the 103 questions were asked of *every one* of the survey participants, meaning personnel were not responding to the same questions. In addition, different questions were asked of those who were deployed after 9/11, and those who were not.

Columnist Ann Coulter also raised questions about the validity of the survey. She contends, in her own inimitable way, that “the Pentagon asked only if [the troops] can learn to play nice with the gays.” She points out that the Pentagon polled all military “personnel” *and their spouses*. Of those polled, only a small percentage were those that would do the fighting and have to live together in primitive conditions. The Pentagon acknowledges that 54% of the survey respondents were Coast Guard members. As might be expected, Marines were most resistant – by 58% - to overturning the law. Coulter also notes, “The military is not representative of the country at large. It is disproportionately rural, small-town, Southern and Hispanic.”

Columnist Pat Buchanan, unlike the vast majority of political pundits, defies political correctness by offering the following scathing and penetrating comments about Congress' repeal:

- The least respected of American institutions, Congress, with an approval rating of 13 percent, is imposing its cultural and moral values on the most respected of American institutions, the U. S. military.
- Why are we undertaking this social experiment with the finest military on earth? Does justice demand it? Was there a national clamor for it?...This is a political payoff, at the expense of our military, to a militant minority inside the Democratic Party that is demanding this as the price of that special interest's financial and political support.
- This is a victory in the culture war for the new morality of the social revolution of the 1960s and a defeat for traditional Judeo-Christian values. For only in secularist ideology is it an article of faith that all sexual relations are morally equal and that to declare homosexual acts is bigotry.
- What happens now to Evangelical Christian and conservative Catholic chaplains who preach that homosexuality is a sinful and shameful practice? Will they be severed from the service as homophobes?
- Not until recent decades have many in America or the West argued that homosexuality is natural and normal. As late as 1973, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality as a mental disorder. Today, anyone who agrees with that original assessment is himself or herself said to be afflicted with a mental disorder: homophobia.

In the last point, Buchanan refers to the listing in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association, the manual used by insurance companies to write up health coverage and by criminal courts when considering sentencing.

It is instructive to note how purported disorders and diseases come to be listed in that manual. Medical doctor and author Julian Whitaker describes the process:

A select group [of psychiatrists] isolate themselves in a room and conjures up new psychiatric diseases in the [*Manual*]. ..After some discussion, they take a vote on whether or not these behaviors qualify as a “psychiatric disease.” Let me repeat: *They create diseases by nothing more than a show of hands.*

Whitaker contrasts that procedure with afflictions diagnosed by medical doctors: "If you have diabetes, for example, your lab tests show high blood glucose levels. If you have a broken bone, it can be clearly seen on an x-ray. However, if you have a psychiatric condition, your "disease" cannot be verified by any kind of test of exam."

One might think that such procedure, lacking scientific verification, might result in decisions being made on the basis of political pressure. There is evidence that that has been and still is the case. Anne Hendershott, author of *The Politics of Deviance*, contends:

The [psychiatrists'] organization has a long history of succumbing to pressure by interest groups. In 1974, under fire from the emerging gay rights movement, the members of the APA voted at their annual meeting to delete homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* – thus removing any stigma from homosexual behavior. Like the subsequent stand on pedophilia, this vote had nothing to do with new research or groundbreaking genetic finding, but was a political response to an already powerful social movement. For years before the APA's reassessment of homosexuality, gay rights advocates had lobbied the association at the annual meetings. There were boycotts of the cities in which the APA held its conventions, and there was a well-planned media attack on the association. Given the intensity of this lobbying effort, it was no surprise when the APA finally bowed to the pressure.

THE CULTURE WAR CONTINUES

One Side Continues to Win; One Side Continues to Lose

The losing war against traditional American values continues as is evidenced by the following reports.

"Phyllis Frye, Formerly Phillip Frye, Appointed Municipal Judge" Although it was not the headline used in Houston to report a significant cultural event, it could have been. According to the *Houston Chronicle*, thirty years ago a man dressed in women's clothing could have been arrested for exhibiting such behavior. But a few months ago, Phyllis Frye, formerly Phillip Frye, was appointed a Houston municipal judge by Mayor Annise Parker who is a lesbian. Frye was a husband and is a father.

The mayor has been active in other ways. As was reported in the May 2010 newsletter, she signed two executive orders that allow transgenders to use the city-owned restrooms designed for the gender with which they identify. This means that a biological man will now be allowed to use the women's restroom if he identifies himself as a woman. The federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), pending before Congress, would do the same nationwide.

Kye Allums, a member of George Washington University women's basketball team, has decided she is a he. Spurred by a track-and-field controversy four years ago, NCAA rules prohibit sexual reassignment surgery or hormone treatments in order for athletes to retain their eligibility. Allums has pledged to forego those steps while she retains her eligibility for college basketball. But in the meantime, in the midst of a culture that doesn't dare utter a discouraging word about gender denial and genital self-mutilation, Allums is listed on the GWU website as a *male* member of the *women's* basketball team.

There are a host of other similar events – some far more serious – such as the sampling which follows:

- In both California and Massachusetts, Catholic adoption agencies have been forced to shut their doors after being ordered to allow same-sex couples to adopt children
- In Ocean Grove, New Jersey, a Christian group lost its tax exemption for refusing to host a homosexual ceremony
- A federal judge ruled that Eastern Michigan didn't violate a young lady's rights when it expelled her from a graduate counseling course for refusing to affirm homosexual conduct

SOCIAL ISSUES V. FISCAL ISSUES

Politically, there could conceivably be some advantage to separating fiscal issues from social issues. After all, there is now a strong consensus to reduce the debt, taxes and regulations. But there is not such a strong consensus on social issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, homosexuality and the like.

The hard truth, however, is that social and fiscal issues cannot be pried apart. Those who deplore

runaway government spending and out-of-control debt and deficits must face the fact that trillions of dollars are being spent on social problems which, by and large, have come about because of the breakdown of our culture and particularly the breakdown of marriage.

According to columnist Phyllis Schlafley, in 2008, 40.6% of children born in the U. S. were born outside of marriage; that's 1,720,000 children. And the problem is not limited to teenage girls. Over three-fourths of those children were born to women over age 20. Tax payers are spending \$350 billion to support single moms.

The left, however, is content to let the problem persist because 70% of unmarried women voted for Barack Obama for president. They vote for the party that offers the richer handouts.

Many, if not most, Republicans are more responsible, some recognizing the link between social problems and taxes. Rep. Mike Pence (R., Ind.), a Republican leader, contends economic problems are urgent, but social problems remain important in a way that blurs the distinction between social and economic issues. He states, "You would not be able to print enough money in a thousand years to pay for the government you would need if the traditional family continues to collapse."

In addition, there is a huge difference in philosophy among politicians as to ownership of money: does money first belong to the person earning it, or does it first belong to government which has the prerogative of doling it out to citizens as it sees fit. Columnist Jeff Jacoby illustrates this divide:

In an interview on NBC, Andrea Mitchell demanded to know how Sen. Judd Gregg could "justify going along with a larger tax cut, for those who really don't need it." Gregg replied: "Well, my view is: It's their money." ..The premise of Mitchell's question – that government has the strongest claim on money the affluent "really don't need" - strikes most non-liberals as not just wrong, but pernicious.

The philosophy of the left manifests itself in its attitude toward the rich. Columnist Bernard Goldberg points out that the left is bawling about how "we can't afford" to give people "who don't need it" a tax break. This argument makes sense only if income re-distribution is a central tenet of one's philosophy.

But the so-called rich do pay a disproportionate amount of taxes under the present tax code:

- The top 1% of American wage earners (adjusted gross income) pay about 38% of all our federal personal taxes. (But they take in only 23.5% of the income)
- The top 5% pay just under 60% of those taxes
- The top 10% pay about 70% of those taxes
- The bottom 50% of tax filers pay only 2.7% of our federal income taxes

NOTES ON THE PASSING SCENE

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

Some Surprising Consequences. Reporting some surprising consequences to stem from the coming redistricting of various governmental jurisdictions, the *Austin American-Statesman* points out that, although State Board of Education victors in last November's election would be expected to serve the usual four-year term, that will not be the case this time. That is so because of the once-a-decade redistricting which will soon come about necessitates that all 15 members of that board run for re-election in 2012 in their new districts. Other elected officials could be similarly affected.

