

Sun City Democrats

www.suncitydems.org

June 2009



General Meeting

The General Meeting is typically on the first Saturday of each month. The meetings are free and open to the public. For additional information on the Sun City Democrats, please contact President **Jodi Salyers** at 864-2812 or Communications Chair **Carol Flynn** at 864-3544.

Saturday, June 6

9:30 AM Coffee, 10:00 AM Speaker

Place: Sun City Activities Center Atrium

Program: **Marsha Sharp**, Education Specialist, LBJ Library will be speaking on the legacy of Lyndon Baines Johnson. Ms. Sharp has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Texas, Austin, and a Master of Arts degree from Texas State University, San Marcos.



Ms. Sharp is currently with the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library serving as Education Specialist. She is in charge of the Library's adult and childrens educational programs. Using materials from collections in the library she arranges workshops, seminars and presentations for teachers, adults and children.

Issues Group

The Issues Group meets typically on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM in member's homes. For additional information on the Issues Group, please contact the host or hostess of the next meeting.

Wednesday, June 24, 2:00 PM

Place: Betty Dougherty's, 129 Sunflower Street

Program: The newly-formed Issues Group will be having its next meeting on Wednesday, June 24, at 2:00 PM at the home of Betty Dougherty at 129 Sunflower Street. The topic for discussion is "**Judging Justice.**" Texas is one of only 7 states to select its judges in partisan political elections; good-government groups are appalled that judges accept campaign contributions from lawyers and businesses that appear in their courts. Is Texas justice being sold to the highest bidder?

Please let Betty know if you will be attending by calling 864-1582 or emailing: bettydou@suddenlink.net.

NOTE: Summer Hiatus! There will be no General Saturday morning meetings in July, August and September. There will be no Issues Group meetings in July or August.

SUN CITY DEMOCRATS OFFICERS

President: Jodi Salyers 864-2812 jodotcom@aol.com

Vice-Pres: Jim Stauber 515-0486 jcstauber@prismnet.com

Secretary: Joan Baker 869-5611 mizbaker@suddenlink.net

Treas: Margaret Donaldson 818-1594 marjohndonaldson@yahoo.com

Past Pres: Mary Kay Pierson 864-9909 mkatpie@aol.com

Communication: Carol Flynn 864-3544 flycar@verizon.net

Hospitality: Fred Becker 864-0704 fb.becker@suddenlink.net

IMPACT: Don Lelong 869-1714 donandjackie@verizon.net

Membership: Frank Wentworth 864-3385 f_wentworth@yahoo.com

Programs: Craig Whitney 869-2690 cbwhitney@verizon.net

Special Events: Nancy Danley 864-1544 nrdanley@suddenlink.net

VOLUNTEER and Help Make a Difference

Volunteers are needed on all committees; please help us make the Club the best that it can be. To volunteer for a committee, please contact the chair of that committee listed above.

Please SUPPORT Your Local Club

Have you noticed that the **Sun City Democrats** have become a growing and vital presence in Sun City, Georgetown, and Williamson County? Wasn't it wonderful seeing so many Obama yard signs displayed in Sun City during the last election? Please join us by supporting our activities and help us continue to elect more Democrats by paying your annual dues.

Dues are **\$20** per member. You may pay at the sign-in table at the meetings or mail a check made out to Sun City Democrats to our Treasurer: **Margaret Donaldson**, 107 Rosecliff Drive, Georgetown TX 78633.



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Support the Sun City Democrats POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Our PAC is known as **IMPACT: Informed Members Political Action Committee of Texas**. **IMPACT** is the way that the Sun City Democrats organization can legally contribute to candidates. Send donations to **IMPACT** Treasurer, **Don Lelong**, 101 Crosby Street, Georgetown TX 78633.

IMPACT 's goal is to raise **10 Grand By 2010**, just after the primaries. That's about the same as we raised during the last election cycle. We are shooting for broad participation and modest, frequent contributions (of course large ones will be gratefully accepted too). Be on the watch for **IMPACT** mailings, fundraisers, and other opportunities to support Democratic candidates.



DEMOCRATIC PARTY INFORMATION

Texas Democratic Party

Boyd Richie, Chairman. www.txdemocrats.org
707 Rio Grande Street, Austin, TX 78701
Telephone: (512) 478-9800

Williamson County Democratic Party

Richard Torres, Chairman. Phone #: 512-964-5054
www.williamsoncountymdemocrats.org.

Monthly meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Party headquarters, 110 South I-35 (corner of I-35 and Highway 620 behind McDonald's in Round Rock).

Williamson County Democratic Headquarters needs volunteer workers. Address: 110 North Interstate 35 (at Highway 620). Phone: 512-388-1993

Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 11 AM to 6 PM
Saturday 10 AM to 2 PM

Williamson County Obama Store is located at the Williamson County Democratic Headquarters, featuring T-shirts, hats, posters, calendars, etc.



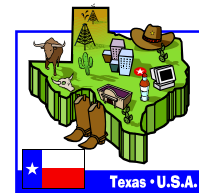
Richard Nixon and Lyndon Baines Johnson

PRECINCT 381 NEWS

~**Kay Walker**, Precinct Chair
864-2874 klwalker@suddenlink.net

MAY 9 ELECTION:

Local and county elections took place on May 9th, although not many people voted. Approximately 350 Sun City citizens voted, though to be fair, I must point out that anyone living in Jarrell School District did not have anything on their ballot and so could not vote at all. Congratulations are in order for **Patty Eason** for winning re-election to the Georgetown City Council District 1. Democrats also won a Round Rock city council place and a school board position. In addition, Democrats won a Taylor city council place and are in a run off for a Leander school board position. Against these 4.5 wins, we had three losses in the nearby area, so that is a plus for our total.



TEXAS LEGISLATURE:

The legislature is coming to a close without a great deal of progress. Here is the outcome on a few bills, though **Governor Rick Perry** can veto any of the passed bills as you know.

1. Elective Bible courses in public schools upon request - pass
2. The words, "Under God" added to the Texas pledge of allegiance- pass
3. Require truth and accuracy in sex education materials - fail
4. Two year moratorium on Texas Transportation Commission - pass
5. Protect journalists' right to protect their resources - pass
6. More money for border security - pass
7. Lower insurance rates for Texans - not much
8. Lower electricity rates for Texans - fail
9. Require different tests (than TAKS) for Texas public school students - pass
10. Put a 5% cap on tuition increases in state colleges - pass
11. Require biology classes to encourage questioning the veracity of evolution and climate change - pass
12. Expanded voter identification requirements - undecided

To check on the final outcomes, google **Texas Legislature scorecard 2009**. Although the Republicans have had a few set-backs over the spring, such as a new and more compassionate house speaker and today a Perry appointment rejected, they will pretty much have their way. As **Molly Ivins** used to say, **"The Texas Legislature is the best entertainment in town!"**

PRECINCT 394 NEWS

~Don Mohr, Precinct Chair
868-2850 donmohr@netzero.net

As of May 15th Precinct 394 has grown to a total of 119 homes as listed in the CA Directory; that is up from the 92 homes the end of the first quarter. However, as of the May 9th Election we only have 103 registered voters, which leaves over half of the residents needing to get registered in Williamson County. **Now is the time to get registered!**

As a follow-up to the presentation given by **Texas Watch** at the March Sun City Democrats Meeting on "**Homeowner Insurance Reform**", I attended the April 1st Lobby effort at the State Capital. I tried to meet with our local House Representative, **Dan Gattis**, and our State Senator, **Stephen Ogden**, to learn their position on the Insurance Sunset bill (SB1007). They were not available, nor could I get a call back from their Chief of Staff, and was only told that neither had a current position to relate to our constituents. After the Senate passed the bill on May 21 with no major reforms for homeowners, one that was called "a major win for the insurance companies" by **The Dallas Morning News**, it was time for Action. I prepared an e-mail that outlined how everyone should send a message to our representatives to get the bill fixed when the House considers SB1007. The **Texas Watch** link to send a message already prepared for your signature is <http://capwiz.com:80/texaswatch/issues/alert/?alertid=13317541&type=ST>.



PRECINCT 396 NEWS

~Billie Reaney, Precinct Chair
868-0098 billie_reaney@msn.com

Williamson County Democrats shouldered a big obligation last November when they decided to keep WCDP Headquarters open year round. Convinced that our party is headed for significant growth in the near term, we elected to finance a year round home for the party. The WCDP Fundraising Committee was formed, with **Billie Reaney** as chair, and we set to work to provide the kind of dependable funding that is necessary to pay the rent and prove that the Executive Committee had made the right decision. A half a year later we can be proud of all that we have accomplished.

The committee efforts has more than doubled the number and income of our annual donors, adding 35 new or renewing donors to make a total 65. The yearly gift from these donors average a little more than \$100.00 each. Our sustaining donors, those who give regular monthly payments of \$10.00 or more, now total 65, up from 44. Their monthly contributions average about \$17.00 each, a level that brings in \$1100 each and every month.

Sun City Democrats have been a big part of this success. **Howard Butler, Jean Carlson, Norman Ford, Jane Yendell, Kay Walker, Kim Moran, Billie**

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Reaney, Ronald Yeck, Larry J. Hilliard, Don & Jackie Lelong, Don Mohr, Harold Steadman, Phyllis Vogel and Karen Welcome are sustaining donors.

Kim Moran, Jane Yendell and Harold Steadman are also annual donors. The other annual donors from Sun City are **Joan Baker, Fred Becker, Betty Dougherty, Sharon Cassidy, Robert Melsha, George & Mary Pliszka, Vivian Schroeder, Diane Gadell and Richard & Diana Waterbury**. If I have left off your name, please let me know. If you would like to join this great effort to make a big move forward for our party, you can let me know that as well.

Thank you all for your help and confidence that this party is ready to become the major mover and shaker in this county.



PRECINCT 399 NEWS

~Bill Blair, Precinct Chair
868-9180 billblair3@verizon.net

Precinct 399 has a new Precinct Chair!

Please welcome **Bill Blair** to this position. Bill is a lifelong Democrat and a native of Colorado. Bill spent most of his working life as a business transaction lawyer in New York. Bill has served as a Precinct Chair in both Colorado and New York. He retired and moved to Sun City in 2007.



Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum



National Archives at LBJ Library and Museum



LBJ signs bill while Harry Truman looks on

The "GREENWASHING" Hypocrisy: America's Corporate Environment Champions Pollute The World

A majority of America's largest companies have become part of the "green" movement. Some have fleets of hybrid trucks. Others install solar panels on their large buildings to consume energy more cost effectively with less of an impact on the environment. Many give generously to environmental non-profit organizations.

The irony is some of them are among the most prolific polluters in the country. Pollution does not mean that the companies are doing anything illegal. Instead, it simply refers to natural consequence of the companies' industrial efforts which result in contamination to the air, soil or water by the discharge of substances that are toxic to the environment. **24/7 Wall Street** has put together a list of the top 10 "greenwashers" in America. Continue through our gallery to see who made the list.

1) General Electric (GE)



According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), for the electrical equipment industry, GE was the fifth largest producer of chemicals with four facilities in the top 100 generating 332,336 pounds in waste in 2007. In the miscellaneous manufacturing industry, GE's GE Osmonics facility was the fourth highest producing facility of TRI production-related waste with 1,919,437 pounds. According to the University of Massachusetts Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), General Electric is the sixth most toxic company when considering the amount of population exposed to its pollution and its toxicity level from its plants.

"Green is green as in the color of money". ~ General Electric brand director, Brandweek, July 26, 2006

2) American Electric Power (AEP)



According to Frank O'Donnell, President of Clean Air Watch, an environmental policy group and whistleblower, "AEP is one of nation's biggest polluters, now that GM is making fewer cars, and is one of the key lobbyist against political interest on global warming."

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O'Donnell also says that the company "aggressively seeks to block legislation unless it receives a huge financial wind fall in the deal." The company's corporate PAC donated to five members of the Dirty Dozen as well as Congressman Barton.

3) ExxonMobil (XOM)



For some time, policy and research groups have worked to discredit the reality of global warming. According to the U.K.'s Royals Society, a highly regarded scientific academy, these groups "misrepresent the science of climate change by outright denial of the evidence." In 2007, The Guardian reported that academics were offered \$10,000 each "by a lobby group funded by one of the world's largest oil companies to undermine a major climate change report due to be published today." Research performed by ExxonMobil watchdog, ExxposeExxon, suggests that "Since at least 1998, ExxonMobil has spent \$17 to \$23 million to bankroll these groups."



4) DuPont (DD)

On December 12, 2005 the EPA reached a \$16.5 million settlement with the DuPont arising from violations alleged by the agency that the company failed to report the possible health risks associated with perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), a chemical compound used to make Teflon. The settlement included \$10.25 million civil administrative penalty and \$6.26 million for Supplemental Environmental Projects. According to the EPA, "A SEP is an environmentally beneficial project that the violator agrees to undertake in exchange for mitigation of the penalty to be paid." At that time, the penalty was the largest in the agency's history.

5) Archer Daniels Midland (ADM)



The company maintains that it has the necessary scale and expertise to be a leader in the production of biofuels. Unfortunately, producing biofuels creates enormous amounts of global warming pollution, so much so that many argue that they offset the benefits gained when the fuel is used to power engines. This is the sin of the hidden trade-off. In this case, a company promotes the green attribute of a product without consideration for other environmental factors. ADM publicly touts biofuels' green benefits, while failing to mention that the energy necessary to grow the corn requires significant amounts of fossil fuels, offsetting the environmental benefits.



6) Waste Management, Inc.(WMI)

According to Elizabeth Royte, a journalist for the Natural Resources Defense Council's onearth, since 2005, Waste Management has spent more than \$90 million on TV commercials and print advertisements emphasizing the number of trees it saves through recycling, the amount of land it has set aside for wildlife habitats, and how much energy it generates through incineration. However, what the ads fail to disclose is that burning trash doesn't come without a price. Although the technology continues to improve, incinerators still discharge small levels of mercury, lead, and dioxin into the atmosphere. Royte also writes, "They also generate more carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour of energy generated than do power plants, and their ash is toxic." An additional consequence of incineration is that it discourages using landfills. Because power plants that use incinerators require a consistent flow of garbage, they are necessarily antagonistic to principles such as recycling, composting and reducing waste.

7) International Paper (IP)



According to TRI, for the paper industry, International Paper was the largest producer of chemicals with fifteen facilities in the top 100 generating 42,554,027 pounds in waste. The company also had the second highest producing facility of TRI production-related waste with 43,320,612 pounds. According to PERI, International Paper is the thirty-first most toxic company with a toxic score of 49,385. In 2008, the Rainforest Action Network condemned a proposal by International Paper to build a pulp mill and establish 1.2 million acres of plantation forest in Indonesia's rainforest. This came as a surprise to RAN because the company had established an internal policy that it would not expand into Indonesia because it is a global warming and biodiversity hot spot.



8) BP (BP)

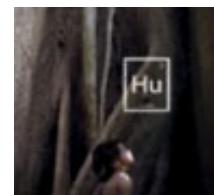
In December of 2000, CorpWatch, a non-profit focused on corporate violations of environmental fraud, gave BP a "greenwash" award. CorpWatch gives out the awards "to corporations that put more money, time and energy into slick PR campaigns aimed at promoting their eco-friendly images, than they do to actually protecting the environment." A 2009 study published by Greenpeace reported that BP "allocated 93 percent (\$20 billion) of its

total investment fund for the development and extraction of oil, gas and other fossil fuels. In contrast, solar power was allocated just 1.39 percent, and wind a paltry 2.79 percent." Along with its aggregate investment in alternative energy – including wave, tidal, and biofuels – this amount is only 6.8 percent of BP's total investment. Greenpeace claims that this information is from internal company documents which it obtained. As recently as last month, BP entered into a settlement with the EPA stemming from charges related to violations of The Clean Air Act.



9) Dow Chemical (DOW)

In May of 2001, a petition from Michigan-based environmental groups seeking public health assessment of dioxin contaminated in Midland, Michigan was made. It was recorded that "levels of dioxins detected in soil in the city of Midland and in the fish in the Tittabawassee River downstream of Midland exceed health-based comparison values." The report further stated that dioxin is believed to cause carcinogenic effects at extremely low levels of exposure. In 2007, Dow agreed to three EPA orders issued under the Superfund Act for sediment cleanup on the Tittabawassee River. However, despite this agreement, Dow Chemical has been slow to respond. As recently as 2008, the company claimed that it needed to measure the amount of the pollution before it could establish a cleanup program. Although the company removed contaminants from four environmental hotspots, particularly polluted areas, it has spent over \$40 million on sediment sampling as well as other studies. According to the EPA, these areas include some of the highest dioxin levels recorded in the Great Lakes region. In July of 2008 an agreement was reached between Dow Chemical and the EPA to clean up dioxin contamination in the Riverside Boulevard neighborhood. As of this year environmental groups and the EPA remain frustrated with the progress the company has made.



10) General Motors (GM)

In 2007, according to a study by Union of Concerned Scientists, General Motors ranked as the second worst polluter, just above DaimlerChrysler, out of eight major car companies. In addition, GM manufactures the most cars that have 15 MPG or worse in city driving. In 2008 the numbers were not much better for GM. According to

greencars.org, the American Council for Energy-Efficient Economy's site for consumer research on the environment, GM's numbers have not improved. The company had the most car models on the list with four. Not surprisingly, the Hummer H2, which is exempted from fuel economy regulations because it is considered heavy-duty, was rated number 1.



The whole article is here:

<http://247wallst.com/2009/04/02/the-%e2%80%9cgreen%e2%80%9d-hypocrisy-america%e2%80%99s-corporate-environment-champions-pollute-the-world/#more-29199>

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KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING, SUN CITY DEMOCRATS!

Ernest Beuthien's Letter to the Editor was published in the **Williamson County Sun** on May 13, 2009:

“Logical Fallacies”

After reading “Politicians our Problem,” I thought that maybe Democrats also were the cause of cancer. There is a logical fallacy “After this therefore because of this.” I think most of **Mary McGriff's** remarks are examples of that logic failure.

Her first statement about poorer communities seems to be an example of blaming the victim. It seems simplistic

to blame only one of the many causes of sub-prime loan problems for the whole problem.

About “cooking the books,” are Freddie Mac and Fannie May management the problem or are politicians? Is “cooking the books” a problem unique to quasi-public institutions?

The statement about Senator Obama and Chris Dodd is close to being correct. In fact, the ranking is Senator Dodd first, Senator Kerry second and Senator Obama third. In a larger sense, the majority of contributions have historically been given to the party in power. Is the point that political contributions to Democrats bought favoritism in bailout money handouts? Where is the evidence of the assertion?

Frivolous suits as a major component of health care costs has been long debunked (about one-half of one percent of costs).

While many of us hold politicians in low regard, we should seek the real cause of our problem so they may be solved. Scapegoating is not the answer.

~ Ernest Beuthien



Bill Metz's Letter to the Editor was published in the **Williamson County Sun** on May 17, 2009:

“Health Care Pipedreams”

I voted for **Barack Obama**. I even sent him some money. And I approve of all he is doing - with one exception: his plan to achieve affordable, universal health care.

To do so, he is relying on the voluntary cooperation of all the branches of the health industry - the pharmaceutical companies, the insurance firms, hospitals and doctors. That will never happen in the rapacious, laissez faire capitalism of America. These are not what are commonly called “socially conscious” elements of the economy.

Columnist-economist **Paul Krugman** put it neatly recently when he noted that what are low health costs for the public are low profits for the health industries. To expect profit-driven companies to voluntarily reduce their income is so unrealistic as to be naïve. The various branches of the health industry will summon their armies of lawyers, accountants, lobbyists and public relations practitioners, and together they will easily find ways to evade the non-binding promises they are making now.

Obama's plan is merely an outline of the direction he thinks the nation should proceed. The heavy lifting will be done by Congress, where many members will be bought off by the special interests - especially the insurance lobby. Only with total regulation and control will we ever get a workable health insurance program. I'm sorry to predict it, but the president's current effort in this field will sputter and die. Wait and see.

~ Bill Metz

AND THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS FROM SUN CITY DEMOCRATS JUST KEEP COMING ... KEEP IT UP! IT IS WORKING!

Jim Stauber's Letter to the Editor was published in the **Williamson County Sun** on June 3, 2009:

“I.D. Out of Control”

There is nothing wrong with the current way that people have to ID themselves when they go to vote. **Lisa Birkman** seems to think, along with most Republicans, that everyone should have to show a photo ID to vote. Sad to say, but some people are fickle when it comes to voting. If they forget to bring their photo ID, they will go home and not come back to vote. If the Republicans get their way it will be harder for the poor and elderly to vote. Many older people don't drive and therefore don't carry a drivers license, and many poorer people can't afford a car so they don't have a drivers license either: How are these people going to get a photo ID? We must keep voter identification simple. Election judges are at the polls for a purpose, and that's to check to make sure everyone who comes to vote is eligible to vote. That is why we have voter registration certificates. How many voter ID fraud cases have gone to court using the current system? None.

Now as to delaying bills at the Texas House of Representatives, the Democrats offered to move many bills ahead of the voters ID bill, but the Republicans refused to do that. They, the Republicans, want to suppress voters so that they can stay in power, pure and simple.

~ **Jim Stauber**



... and check out our full-page article in the **June Sun Rays** on page 94:

“2nd Annual Sun City Earth Day Fair”



George Flynn's Letter to the Editor was published in the **Austin American-Statesman** on June 6, 2009:

“More Voter ID Feedback”

Re: June 3 letter “Voter ID”

Once the victim of identification theft, I have taped a message in big block letters on the back of my MasterCard: ASK TO SEE IDENTIFICATION, in the hope that clerks will ask for something more than merely the card. The same message appears on my debit card, but clerks never read or comply. As far as check-cashing goes, merchants today run checks through readers that confirm the account and the balance, which is all they care about.

Doesn't the letter writer realize that the voter ID bill is aimed at suppressing the votes of the poor and the elderly, a high percentage of whom don't have credit cards, debit cards or checking accounts, a group most likely to vote for Democrats?

~ **George Flynn**



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

~ **Margaret Mead**

