

Sun City Democrats

www.suncitydems.org

January 2012



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, please contact President **Billie Reaney** at 512-868-0098.

Saturday, January 7, 2012

Time: 9:30 AM Coffee, 10:00 AM Meeting

Location: Sun City Cowan Creek Center, 1433 Cool Spring Way, Florence/Georgetown Rooms

Speaker: Royger Harris is a repeat speaker for us. He is an investigator in **Jana Duty's** County Attorney's office, and he gives us great insight into what is going on behind the scenes in Williamson County government. Harris also founded and serves as President of the **Williamson County Employees Association**.



The problems in the **Williamson County Criminal Justice** system, the **Michael Morton** exoneration, and District Attorney **John Bradley** will surely be a part of this free-form discussion. **Jana Duty** has also declared herself to be a candidate to replace John Bradley as District Attorney.



Obama Family Portrait taken December 11, 2011
Michelle, Malia, Barack, and Sasha

SUN CITY DEMOCRATS 2012 OFFICERS

President: **Billie Reaney** 868-0098

Vice-President: **Duane Florschuetz** 868-2621

Secretary: **Bonnie Boorman** 863-2387

Treasurer: **Pat Hilliard** 591-7052

Communication: **This position is vacant.**

Facebook Editor: **Larry Hilliard** 591-7052

Newsletter Editor: **This position is vacant.**

Website Editor: **This position is vacant.**

Issues Group: **This position is vacant.**

Hospitality: **Pat Prudhom** 686-0506

Meeting Setup: **Fred Becker** 864-0704

Coffee: **George Wagner** 864-0641

IMPACT: **Dwaine Boydston** 431-4412

Membership: **Larry Hilliard** 591-7052

Database: **Frank Wentworth** 864-3385

Programs: **This position is vacant.**

Special Events: **This position is vacant.**

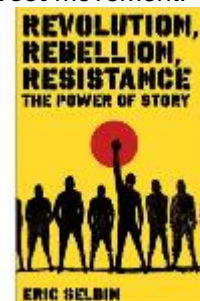
Past President: **Roe Mackey** 864-7948

Saturday, February 4, 2012

Time: 9:30 AM Coffee, 10:00 AM Meeting

Location: Sun City Cowan Creek Center, 1433 Cool Spring Way, Florence/Georgetown Rooms

Speaker: Professor Eric Selbin, Southwestern University Professor of Political Science and University Scholar, is the author of *Revolution, Resistance, and Rebellion: The Power of Story*. He specializes in confrontational politics. He will help us learn about the **Operation Wall Street** movement.





SPECIAL EVENT:
Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Time: Tentative 5:00 PM Start Time

Location: Sun City Social Center Ballroom

Speaker: James Kenneth Galbraith, Texas' best known economist, writes frequently for mainstream publications and is a frequent expert guest on TV. He is currently a Professor at the **Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs** and Chairman of the Department of Government, **University of Texas** at Austin, as well as the holder of other academic appointments.



Sun City Democrats Help Local Attorney Get on 2012 Ballot for DA

~ Billie Reaney
President, Sun City Democrats

Sun City Democrats were able to round up over 200 signatures on petitions to get **Ken Crain** on the ballot for the 2012 election. Mr. Crain, a local attorney, is filing as a candidate for the office of **Williamson County District Attorney**. Mr. Crain has 24 years experience as a lawyer in Williamson County.

Currently **John Bradley**, a Republican, is the District Attorney with a long history (20 years) as DA or assistant DA. He is currently under fire for his tactics in the **Michael Morton** case, and as the chairman of a committee examining the evidence in the **William Scott Cunningham** murder case. Cunningham was executed for two supposed murders resulting from arson. The charge of murder, however, fails when experts testified that no arson occurred. The Cunningham and the Morton cases have received wide publicity with John Bradley's handling of both seen to be a deliberate failure of justice. With regard to Michael Morton, Bradley, along with his mentor, **Judge Ken Anderson** (more than 30 years in the county criminal justice system) have been exposed as working hand in hand to keep Morton, an innocent man, in prison for 25 years. Hiding evidence, denying access to information, making exaggerated claims in this case speaks of either incompetence or deliberate malpractice.

Mr. Crain's call for integrity and responsibility in the Office of the District Attorney is one that we should all embrace.

Please SUPPORT the Sun City Democrats

The **Sun City Democrats** provide many activities and services for members. We have educational meetings, provide speakers, social events, maintain a website, and a monthly newsletter. We exist only because of loyal volunteers and those who pay dues each year.

Effective January 1, 2012, annual dues is \$20.00.

Please mail your check, made out to **Sun City Democrats** to: **Sun City Democrats; 1530 Sun City Blvd, Suite 120; PMB #432; Georgetown TX 78633**. A membership application should accompany your check; they are available online at www.suncitydems.org or click here:

[Sun City Democrats Membership Application](#)

Please SUPPORT the Sun City Democrats Political Action Committee ~ IMPACT:

Our PAC is known as **IMPACT: Informed Members Political Action Committee of Texas**. **IMPACT** is the only legal way that the Sun City Democrats may contribute to candidates. Send donations to **IMPACT; 1530 Sun City Blvd, Suite 120; PMB #475; Georgetown TX 78633**. **Dwaine Boydston** is our **IMPACT** Treasurer: treasurer.impact@gmail.com or 512-431-4412.

Williamson County Democratic Party:

Precinct 381

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

Precinct 394

~Dwaine Boydston, Precinct Chair
431-4412 dwaine.boydstun@gmail.com

Precinct 396

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

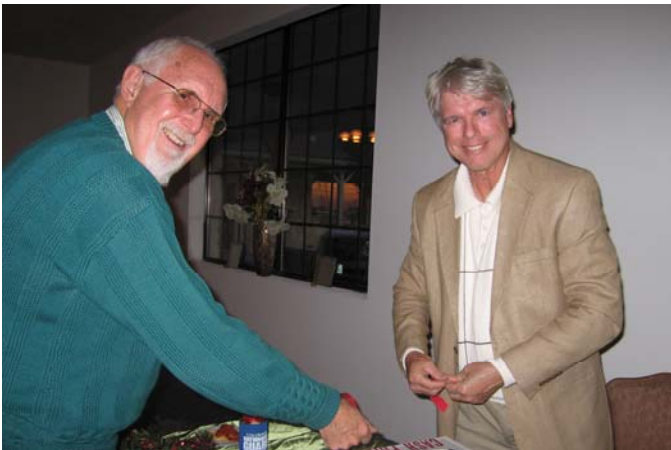
Precinct 399

~This position is available! Please contact one of the other precinct chairs listed above.



A Few Photos from the Sun City Democrats Holiday Party at Ruby's Café & Bakery in Jarrell, Texas ~ Jodi Salyers

If you weren't there, you missed another very enjoyable Sun City Democrats Social Event! Applause goes to **Pat Prudhom** for volunteering to take charge and make this event happen.



Duane Florschuetz presents outgoing **President Roe Mackey** with a little token of the Club's appreciation for his leadership for the past two years.



Two-thirds of our state’s rapid population growth over the past decade has come from Latinos.

That emerging demographic will eventually turn Texas Blue. But for our schools and families struggling under disastrous Republican policies, “eventually” isn’t soon enough.

That’s why we developed this bold and innovative new approach to Latino outreach: **The Promesa Project.**

Our project was carefully conceived and constructed over several months based on two key research findings:

- Young Latinos are increasingly the trusted sources of political information in their families and social circles.
- The internet has surpassed television as the main sources of political information for young people under 30.

We’re utilizing a combination of online and grassroots techniques to reach out to young Latinos and ask them to give us their promise, or “**Promesa,**” that they will be our Democratic messengers to their families and social networks.

We’ll use online outreach, campus organizing, our extensive network of young Latino Party Leaders and elected officials, and we’ll integrate all data gathered into our voter database so it can be used in **Get-Out-The-Vote** operations.

But to go a step further, we’ll also be integrating the very latest in online tools and techniques, including:

- In-house production of web videos, which are shareable and optimized for mobile devices. You can find these here: <http://www.promesaproject.com/>
- Talking points on various topics in a slideshow format, which are shareable online so they can be used in discussions at the kitchen table or on social media sites.
- Social media identities on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+ and Vimeo.
- Paid ads on social media which only recently have developed targeting and placement options that now make these incredibly efficient and effective.

This project can potentially bridge the gap between the Texas that Republicans have created for us and the one we deserve.

<http://www.promesaproject.com/> and get involved!



The Rise of the New Confederacy: How America-Hating Right-Wingers Took Over the GOP

~ Theo Anderson

AlterNet, published December 8, 2011

What is America, and what is an American?

If anything binds us together across space and time, it is our ideals and the stories we tell about our pursuit of them. From the beginning, we set ourselves against Europe's hierarchies. We exalted democratic government, equality of opportunity and individual freedom. We conceived of our experiment as "the last best hope of earth," in Lincoln's words.

But ideals don't live in a vacuum; they take root in the soil of institutions. Beginning with our first experiments in self-government, the dissonance between our ideals and our institutional practices, especially the tolerance and extension of slavery, created tensions that finally tore us apart.



The South's alternative vision of the good society was defeated in the Civil War, and our 20th-century history can be told as a narrative of halting progress toward greater tolerance and equality. The major plot points include regulations on corporations in the early 1900s; women's suffrage in 1920; a social safety net in the New Deal; the Supreme Court's rejection of Jim Crow laws in 1954; the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s; the gay rights victories since the 1970s.

This narrative suggests that our democratic experiment is working, albeit slowly. If we have never been entirely unified in our ideals, the Civil War at least re-unified our institutions. A century and a half later, we rally around the same flag. Or so we think.

The deeper truth is disquieting. **The rhetoric of Michele Bachmann, Sarah Palin and Rick Perry about the "real America" is not imagined: They and those who oppose them live in different Americas**, embodying different ideals and meaning different things to their loyalists.

How we reached this impasse is a fascinating question. The answer to it raises profound doubts and questions about how—and whether—we can move forward as "one nation, indivisible."

The split could be said to have begun at Harvard in the decades between the Civil War and the turn of the century, when the university's president, **Charles Eliot**, initiated a series of reforms that transformed the paradigm of higher education in the United States.

From the colonial era through the Civil War, Harvard's intellectual life revolved around the Bible. Harvard's mission was to train gentlemen of high moral character by giving them a solid grounding for their faith.

Eliot moved Harvard away from this ideal and toward the model of a **modern research university**. Expanding the boundaries of knowledge through research became the institution's focus. Most universities followed the lead of Harvard and that of Johns Hopkins University, founded in 1876 for the sole purpose of pursuing a secular research agenda.

This new mission for universities created a spectacular fragmentation of knowledge. By the early 20th century, the old-school generalist who taught everything from Latin to literature and history was a relic. The new university required scholars to specialize in defined fields. **This rise of experts within the academy reflected the increasing importance of expertise in American society**, as careers in the professions came to require specialized training.

The progressive movement of the early 20th century grew out of these developments. Progressives hoped to make the new knowledge emerging from universities relevant to the actual world. After the First World War, the window of opportunity seemed wide open. **John Dewey**, the Columbia University philosopher and quintessential progressive, supported U.S. involvement in the war because he believed that the federal government's new powers would be used, at the war's end, to reconstruct society along more egalitarian lines.

Dewey had eloquent critics on the left, most notably **Randolph Bourne**, a young intellectual who rejected the idea that a militarized state could ever be mobilized for progressive purposes. Dewey, stung by the criticisms, used his influence to have Bourne banned from most progressive publications.

Bourne's critique ultimately proved correct. But if Dewey was wrong in that case, and if he behaved appallingly toward Bourne, the essence of his vision won out. He and other progressives had been hopeful about the potential of harnessing knowledge to power for the purpose of reconstructing society; and from that point forward, for better and worse, progressive hopes for social reform have been heavily invested in educational and governmental institutions, and a loose, complicated alliance of the two realms.

GOP: God's Only Party

Religious conservatives pushed back by mobilizing and building a parallel universe of institutions to preserve what they believed to be the truth.

The cause of their exit from mainstream American institutions was religious liberalism – “modernism,” as it was called. Religious modernists accepted scholarly work about the human origins of the Bible while still valuing scripture as a source of wisdom. They accepted evolutionary theory while still holding out the possibility of divine purpose in the universe. They tried, in general, to reconcile religious truth with the knowledge emerging from the academy.

Modernists felt at home within America's mainstream, but religious conservatives felt betrayed. They built their own network of institutions to defend the old-time religion. Bob Jones University, founded in 1927, emerged from this era.

Two developments added energy and power to this wave of conservative Christian institution building. One was the new technology of radio, which in the 1930s opened the way for freelance evangelists to build their own ministries based on charismatic appeal.

The other crucial development was the popularization of a new account of humanity's fate: **premillennial dispensationalism**, or p.d. for short. It posits that human history can be divided into several ages, or dispensations, and that the current age will conclude with the Battle of Armageddon. However, seven years before that battle, Jesus will return to earth for the redeemed, and they will be “raptured” to heaven.



Much more than a theological perspective, **premillennial dispensationalism** is among the most potent and important political ideas of the last century. Its first great popularizer in the United States was **Cyrus Scofield**, whose annotated Scofield Reference Bible was published in 1909. Since then, p.d. has grown ever-more influential. It was the subject of Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, the best-selling nonfiction book of the 1970s; and it was the plot-driving device in the *Left Behind* books, which are among the bestselling works of fiction in the 1990s and 2000s.

The political influence of p.d. is located in its premise that all human institutions are irredeemably corrupt. Since conditions in this world will steadily deteriorate, the duty of the true Christian is to remain faithful to the gospel as the world descends into godless chaos.

Skeptics regarding p.d.'s influence rightly note that a relatively small minority of the population actually adhere to the theology. But unified and highly galvanized groups wield outsized power in American politics. The hard work of actually getting things done, whether for good or ill, depends on the energy and organization of “marginal” groups who represent minority opinions and which, more often than not, are fired by religious faith. That truth has been driven home with frightening clarity by the recent debt-ceiling debate and by the radicalism of the leading Republican presidential candidates – **nearly all of whom, not coincidentally, profess faith in some variation of p.d. theology.**



Today, the currents of victimization, separatism and fatalism coursing through p.d. have spread beyond the true believers to dramatically reshape the GOP. What has recently come to the fore within the Republican Party, but has been building within it for decades as the religious right's influence has grown, is a new Confederacy: a nation within a nation, certain of the degeneracy of the usurper “United States,” hostile toward its institutions of education and government, and possessing a keen sense of its own identity as a victimized, righteous remnant engaged in spiritual warfare. As **Michele Bachmann** put it when explaining her position as a tax accountant for the IRS, she took a government job because she wanted to infiltrate “the enemy.”

America on its knees?

Pundits argue that our current dysfunction stems from disagreements about the proper scope and size of government or the limitations of “free markets.” These explanations miss the heart of the matter. America's divisions involve fundamental questions of trust and truth: What authorities do you believe? Whose definition of truth do you accept?

For the pragmatic and progressive America that grew out of secularized higher education, truth has a provisional, this-worldly orientation. It's more evolutionary than eternal in character—a fluid body of knowledge and interpretation, subject to revision and expansion.

For the Confederacy that now dominates the GOP, truth is solid and fixed and divinely embedded in the structure of the universe. Humanity's responsibility is to accept and believe the truth rather than test ideas against actual experience. The Confederacy's obsession with "originalist" interpretations of the Constitution, a twin of biblical literalism, is the classic example: truth must be eternal, universal.

Pragmatists and progressives defer to experts and professionals. They expect truth claims to be supported by evidence that emerges from research and testing. They put their faith in this process, and in the communities of inquiry—the disciplines—legitimized by secular institutions of higher education.

The new Confederacy rejects that process wholesale. Its leaders and authorities are the spiritual descendants of the conservative Christians and charismatic radio preachers who broke away from religious modernism in the 1920s and 1930s. For these leaders and their followers, faith justifies, and verifies, itself. **You don't believe an idea because it's true. It's true because you believe it.**

This is why, in the "real America" of Bachmann, Palin and Perry, it is self-evident that cutting taxes increases revenues; the founders were evangelical Christians; evolution is bunk; climate change is a hoax; the United States has the best healthcare system in the world; we can transform the Middle East into a garden of democracy; Kenya native Barack Obama has slashed the military budget; the war on drugs is worth the cost; and so on. **These are all leaps of faith.** The new Confederates flat-out reject or ignore any counter-evidence, because they have their own fount of truth.

FOX News is the obvious example, but decades before the rise of FOX, going back to the early 20th century radio evangelists, conservatives had been quietly building their own media and networks for "truth" telling.

And here is the unsettling thing for anyone concerned about this fraught moment in the American experiment. Though they're clueless, the leaders of the new Confederacy do offer a seductively egalitarian vision. The solutions to all our problems can be found, they promise, not through actual experimentation or so-called knowledge, but from the simple faith of ordinary citizens.



Rick Perry, the governor of Texas, summed up the egalitarian fatalism at the heart of the new Confederacy this summer, in a letter inviting fellow politicians to his

prayer rally in Houston. "Some problems are beyond our power to solve, and according to the Book of Joel, Chapter 2, this historic hour demands a historic response," he wrote. "There is hope for America. It lies in heaven, and we will find it on our knees."

In 2009, Perry flirted with the idea of Texas leaving the Union, a fact that is astonishing yet unsurprising. It is astonishing because it's hard to believe a politician of Perry's rank and visibility would openly muse about secession and remain a viable presidential contender. **Imagine the outrage on FOX News if Barack Obama had once said anything similar.**



It's unsurprising because the truth is right there: **Perry, Bachmann and Palin and the segment of the GOP they represent have already seceded from the Union.** Spiritually speaking, they live in a radically different vision of "America," one with its own faith-based realities and aspirations.

Spiritual secession isn't the same as actual secession, and we are a world away from the 1860s. But Rick Perry's toying with the idea wasn't exactly a gaffe. It briefly brought to light a certain disquiet that we aren't prepared to talk about openly, and raised questions that are too painful to confront. **A house divided against itself cannot stand**, as Lincoln said. But what if the divisions are just too deep and wide to bridge? What if the common ground for compromise simply does not exist? What if the last best hope of earth cannot long endure, after all?

God help us, indeed.

twitter gems

@desertcronem: Christine ODonnell endorses Mitt Romney. She must be working for Newt.

@Wolfrum: If Ron Paul had been President instead of FDR, we'd all be speaking German right now. Except all the minorities. They'd be dead.

@sallykohn: How come Newt Gingrich can have a \$500K debt at a jewelry store & be "responsible" but homeowners facing foreclosure are reckless?

@ArrestRoveNow3: Teabagger leader arrested for possession of gun (Glock) at airport. White people can't bring guns on planes? Obama ruins freedom.