

Sun City Democrats

www.suncitydems.org

February 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, 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 **Occupy Wall Street** movement.



Political Science Professor Eric Selbin and 1997 graduate Meghana Nayak display the book on international relations that they published together

Saturday, March 3, 2012

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

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

Speaker: Kurt Johnson, Sr. is a native of Hutto, a graduate of Texas Lutheran University and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He has worked as a newspaper reporter and managing editor and was a speechwriter in the Texas Senate. He was associate editor of *Texas Co-Op Power* magazine and is currently a business consultant. He also has written two books: *The Outskirts of Life from Hutto's Front Porch* (1987) and *Glass Walls* (2009), in which he uses **Williamson County** as a case study of a government misguided by neoconservative ideology. While he describes himself as a writer and business consultant, he is, in point of fact, primarily an **ethicist**. In *Glass Walls*, Johnson describes the Court's reaction to his comments: "The intense stare aimed at me by **County Judge Dan Gattis** every time I slowly enunciated 'moral fiber' from my script, was remarkable. I later described the intensity in his face as requiring a crowbar to unclench his teeth."

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: **Jodi Salyers** 864-2812

Website Editor: **Arnold Lesikar** 869-3572

Issues Group: **Jean Carlson** 868-5346

Hospitality: **Pat Prudhom** 686-0506

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

Coffee: **George Wagner** 864-0641

IMPACT: **Dwayne 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

SPECIAL EVENT:

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Time: 5:30 PM The Club will celebrate its 15th Anniversary with a Fundraising Social Hour; then at **7:00 PM, James Kenneth Galbraith will speak.**

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. His topic will be: **The Crisis, Jobs, and the Future of the American Economy.**



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 are **\$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 2012 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.

Below are links to the annual **IMPACT** contribution request letter and bank draft authorization. You now have 2 ways to make your contribution, either a single check or a secure monthly debit from your checking account. ***Because this year the elections are so important, I urge you to dig a little deeper and make a generous contribution.***

[IMPACT Contribution Request Letter](#)
[IMPACT Bank Draft Withdrawal](#)

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 vacant. Please contact one of the other Precinct Chairs for more information.**



Sun City Democrats

Remarks from the President

~ **Billie Reaney**

President, Sun City Democrats

At our Club's meeting in January, I pressed the idea that we should all be reading **The Williamson County Sun** and sharing it with our neighbors. I will continue to advocate that idea because, for the first time in a decade, the Sun is doing an excellent job of presenting the bad news about malfeasance within Williamson County government. With a distribution list of about 10,000; and because it is the "paper of record" for this County, the Sun reaches and thus affects a lot of citizens. We have been allowed a peek into the closet of county government where multiple skeletons lie stinking: **Michael Morton** incarceration and exoneration, **DA John Bradley**, **Judge Ken Anderson**, sexual harassment by a judge, incidents of fiscal malfeasance, with more to come. Revealed scandals are great at getting the attention of voters. Perceptions of and respect for Republican governance declines as the public becomes informed. And as Democrats, we have the happy opportunity to expound in every public forum available to us on the fallibility of our ethically-challenged public servants. Lasting erosion of voter support for Republicans is beginning. That is an essential first step in eventually cracking open the iron grip of the Republicans in Williamson County.

It is my plan to latch onto this opportunity with as much effort as we can muster. I am hoping to engage a number of you as volunteers in joining a communication effort which will employ all available means; our Newsletter, Letters to the Editor, paid advertising, the web, social media like Facebook and all points in between. So far, we have 3 excellent helpers: Editor of the Newsletter, **Jodi Salyers**; Facebook manager, **Larry Hilliard**; and Web editor, **Arnold Lesikar**. Long articles from the perspective of Democrats are being welcomed by **The Williamson County Sun**. As we become better known in the community beyond Sun City borders, we can become the respected voice for Democrats. I need volunteers who have some experience or would like to get experience or those who would simply like to see their letters chosen for publication. Take a minute now to volunteer to help change perceptions about the presence and value of Democrats as agents for change in this county.



Join the Sun City Democrats *Issues Group*

~ Jean Carlson

Issues Group Chair, Sun City Democrats

Jean Carlson invites all Democrats to attend the **Issues Group** meetings. The group has quite a few loyal members but still has room to grow! The meetings will be held every **2nd and 4th Wednesdays** from **2:00 to 4:00 PM** in the **Cowan Creek Activity Center** at 1433 Cool Spring Way in Sun City.

The meetings will be **February 8** in the **Jarrell Room** and **February 22** in the **Andice Room**.

Any Democrat is welcome! For more information, please call **Jean Carlson** at 868-5346 or email: jcarlson@suddenlink.net



Royger Harris captivated everyone with his insider info on Williamson County politics.
(Photo: George Flynn)



Join the Sun City Democrats *Facebook Group*

~ Larry Hilliard

Membership Chair and Facebook Editor

The **Sun City Democrats Club** has created its own "closed" Facebook group. "Closed" means that a member must request to join the group and only those approved can post and/or read other members' postings. In other words, our neighbors cannot go on Facebook and see our comments.

The purpose of our Facebook group is to share information, provide a venue to discuss ideas, recommend newsworthy articles pertinent to Democrats and build relationships among like-minded residents.

The group is open to any Democrat in Sun City or the Greater Georgetown area. You need not be a dues-paying member of the Sun City Democrats. If you already have a Facebook account, you can make a request to join the Facebook group by going to the Facebook search engine and typing in "**Sun City Democrats**," go to the page and click on "Request to join."

If you don't have a Facebook page and are interested in creating one, the following websites provide a step-by-step tutorial on how to create a free Facebook account.

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/facebook101>

<http://www.switched.com/2008/11/13/facebook-101-25-tips-and-tricks/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jea2-jGUBRs>

The **Sun City Computer Club** is also a resource for assistance. If you have specific questions, please contact me at LJ_Hilliard@juno.com



Sun City Democrats in their new meeting room at the Sun City Cowan Creek Activity Center.
(Photo: George Flynn)

Williamson County Ranks Third in State of Texas for Total Debt

~ Wilco Watchdog (and hat tip to George Flynn)
 WilcoWatchdog.org, published January 14, 2012



The Wilco Watchdog

Watching Over Williamson County For You

We reported last November thanks to our "fiscally conservative" commissioners court, Williamson County ranked third in the state, only behind Bexar and Harris counties in outstanding tax-supported debt for 2010.

The new numbers are out for 2011 and Williamson County has made significant leaps and bounds, in the wrong direction, almost overtaking Bexar County for second place.

While the top ten counties listed below actually cut their debt from 2010, Williamson County continued to pile it on.

Our debt has spiraled out of control thanks to the reckless spending of this "conservative" court and continues to grow with no end in sight. The Commissioners Court is actually considering another huge 250 million dollar debt initiative that will bury our county even further. Now that the coffers are running dry, the commissioner's court has a new plan to rob Peter to pay Paul. We will have details on that soon.

Pct 1 Commissioner **Lisa Birkman** has owned and added to this mess since 2004 and the rest of the court since Jan 2006. Since 2004, our debt has almost doubled, now at 1.24 BILLION dollars. This current court has added over 520 MILLION dollars to the taxpayer tab.

The next time your "conservative" County Commissioners tell you to support a multi-million dollar bond initiative (and it's coming soon), tell them "no thanks". The next time they say they haven't "raised your taxes", ask them how much debt they have piled on your back.

It's time to put the brakes on out of control spending by the Wilco 5.

Permalink: wilcowatchdog.org/2012/01/14/just-released-numbers-show-wilco-ranks-third-in-state-for-total-debt.aspx

| TEXAS COUNTIES Top 10 - Highest Tax Debt Service As of August 31, 2004 | | TEXAS COUNTIES Top 10 - Highest Tax Debt Service As of August 31, 2011 | |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| Government Name | Tax-Supported Debt | Government Name | Tax-Supported Debt |
| Harris | \$3,459,224,553 | Harris | \$3,567,257,335 |
| Williamson | \$721,531,368 | Bexar | \$1,464,627,876 |
| Travis | \$629,047,377 | Williamson | \$1,241,999,462 |
| Galveston | \$365,168,611 | Travis | \$822,766,342 |
| Fort Bend | \$359,459,477 | Denton | \$728,587,277 |
| Collin | \$340,408,611 | Ft. Bend | \$700,775,089 |
| Dallas | \$286,577,284 | Montgomery | \$688,816,499 |
| Montgomery | \$263,522,311 | Collin | \$521,244,568 |
| Tarrant | \$225,903,248 | Galveston | \$508,316,819 |
| Denton | \$194,664,439 | Tarrant | \$748,895,646 |

| Government Name | Population | Tax Debt Per Capita |
|-----------------|------------|---------------------|
| Harris | 4,110,771 | \$430.77 |
| Bexar | 1,723,780 | \$492.76 |
| Williamson | 426,645 | \$1,906.94 |
| Travis | 1,030,806 | \$587.18 |
| Denton | 667,053 | \$911.14 |
| Ft. Bend | 590,360 | \$716.14 |
| Montgomery | 459,018 | \$757.00 |
| Collin | 788,407 | \$995.17 |
| Galveston | 292,607 | \$491.60 |
| Tarrant | 1,817,658 | \$1,156.12 |



County Judge Dan Gattis



Pct 1 Lisa Birkman



Pct 2 Cynthia Long



Pct 3 Valerie Covey



Pct 4 Ron Morrison

ALEC Exposed in Texas

~ Progress * Texas (and hat tip to Nita Hornbeck)
<http://progresstexas.org/>

Here at **Progress Texas**, we are proud to announce a new project: **ALEC Exposed in Texas**. Nationally, the **Center for Media and Democracy** has launched [ALEC Exposed](#) with the goal of tracking the ways that **corporations rewrite state laws behind closed doors that cause direct harm to Americans' way of life**. In the coming weeks and months, Progress Texas will launch an effort to expose ALEC's corporate influence right here at home.

ALEC 101

Who Is ALEC?

For those who don't know already, ALEC stands for the **American Legislative Exchange Council**. They're a [conservative group](#) of some 300 corporations and 2,000 legislators who work in coalition to draft model bills designed to help corporate bottom lines.

ALEC started in 1973 as a small group of conservative legislators and policy advocates who wanted to push conservative agendas through the legislature. They got a boost in 1981, heavily assisting **Ronald Reagan's** national Task Force on Federalism. By 1986, ALEC had grown to 12 very powerful task forces. After the Reagan Administration, many broke off to become their own independent think tanks. During this time, they actively began seeking more corporate input, acting on their philosophy which sees corporations as allies in policy-making.

Although they proclaim themselves as a nonpartisan, nonprofit institution, their legislative base is comprised almost entirely of Republicans, and ALEC receives 98% of their funding from corporations. In the past 20 years, ALEC has donated \$228.3 million to campaigns, \$202.1 million to candidates, and an additional \$85.8 million to Republican committees, totaling \$516.2 million.

To put things in perspective, some ALEC notables are:

ALEC AWARD WINNERS:

Ronald Reagan
George H. Walker Bush
Rick Perry (2010 Thomas Jefferson Freedom Award)
William Bennet
Wayne Christian (2008 state legislator of the year)
Troy Fraser (2006 state senator of the year)

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

President George W. Bush
Dick Cheney
Dan Quayle
Trent Lott

ALUMNI:

Tom DeLay
Andrew Card (Bush Admin)
Congress members: **Kevin Brady**, **John Culberson**,
Sam Johnson, **Kenny Marchant**

What is ALEC's Corporate Influence?

The corporations sit on all nine of ALEC's task force committees and even have their own governing board, which meets with their legislative board. Essentially, they're a super-lobbying organization that works by drafting model bills and sending them off with legislators to introduce as their own into law. They are responsible for introducing 1,000 pieces of legislation annually, as many as 200 of which get passed into law.

Although they say no lobbying takes place, it's an obvious cover-up. For example, the chairman of their Private Enterprise Board, **W. Preston Baldwin**, is a long-time lobbyist and President and CEO of lobbying firm Centerpoint 360. Overall, 20 out of 24 corporate representatives on the board are lobbyists, representing corporations such as **Koch Industries**, **ExxonMobil**, **State Farm**, **Altria**, **Walmart**, and **Bayer** to name a few.

ALEC membership is very attractive for Republican Legislators, who get a free all-expenses-paid vacation (travel usually paid by taxpayers) where they get to attend huge corporate parties and forge connections with industry titans. The legality of these events, however, is questionable. Their free vacations, childcare, "scholarships" and discounted memberships may be in violation of some state ethics codes.

What is ALEC Exposed?

ALEC is a very powerful and very unethical institution that is borderline illegal. They have a strong influence over important legislative policy throughout the country. For a long time they've been operating behind closed doors, but have recently been exposed. **In Texas, their existence is so omnipresent that most Austin insiders will likely scoff at the mere mention that we're trying to expose their influence.** To a frighteningly realistic degree, exposing ALEC's influence in Texas is like exposing all the work of Republicans in our State Legislature.

Continued on next page...



Continued from page 5.

Progress ★ Texas

Building a progressive movement in the Lone Star State

The ALEC Money Trail

ALEC's Corporate Contributions Exposed

Corporate defenders of ALEC try to bill themselves as a dues-paying organization. Yet ALEC receives less than 2% of their funding from corporate and legislative dues, which are listed as tax-free "gifts." The vast majority of ALEC contributions come in the form of donations directly from the corporations and their corporate foundations. **In fact, over the past 3 years ALEC's legislative contributions were only \$250,000 compared to \$21.6 million in corporate donations.**

ALEC's primary donors are well-known contributors to conservative political groups and think-tanks. Some of top contributors include:

Exxon Mobil

Scaife family (Alleghany Foundation)

Coors family (Castle Rock Foundation)

Charles Koch (Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation) and (Claude R. Lane Charitable Foundation)

The Bradley family (the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation)

Olin family (John M. Olin Foundation).

[Source: People for the American Way](#)

In addition, **Altria** (Phillip Morris), **American Bail coalition**, **AT&T**, **Bayer**, **Coca Cola**, **Energy Future holdings**, **Pfizer**, **DIAGEO**, **Reynolds Tobacco**, **Salt River Project** and the **United Parcel Service** have all been major corporate contributors to ALEC.

ALEC and the Corporate "Private Enterprise Board"

America's largest corporations do more than just contribute the vast majority of their funds. The largest corporations in America even have their own "Private Enterprise Board" that operates alongside their board of directors. Here are just a few of their board members:

Altria (formerly Phillip Morris)

AT&T

GlaxoSmithKline

Johnson & Johnson

Koch Industries

Kraft

Coca Cola

PhRMA

Walmart

Peabody Energy (world's largest coal company)

State Farm Insurance

[Source: Center for Media and Democracy](#)

These companies and contributions go towards passing legislation and electing politicians that benefit their own corporate interests and convincing the American people that they're operating in our own best interests.

ALEC's Corporate Money Funneled Back to States

What does ALEC do with all the money? Other than host corporate conferences, they donate the money back to states and candidates that advance their corporate causes. **From 2001 to 2011, ALEC donated more than \$370 million to states.** The top five states in order are:

California: \$204 million

Arizona: \$ 16.5 million

Texas: \$16.2 million

Oregon: \$16.1 million

Illinois: \$11.8 million

[Source: Common Cause](#)

Of this \$370 million, \$228.7 in contributions were used to influence voter referenda on tobacco tax increases and prescription drug prices.

UPDATE: by Phillip Martin, January 17, 2012

Over the last few months, we have blogged about ALEC and [their influence on the Texas Legislature](#). Today, our work has culminated in the first of a series of reports detailing the influence of the **American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)** on Texas laws and lawmakers. The report explains ALEC's corporate agenda, outlines the money trail from ALEC corporate members to Texas lawmakers, and highlights how legislators take ALEC's corporate-approved "model" bills and implement them in Texas.

From 2001 to 2011, Texas lawmakers have received over \$16.2 million from ALEC corporations – the 2nd highest total among states. **Rick Perry** is the largest single recipient of ALEC-related funds nationwide, having received more than \$2 million from ALEC corporate members from 2004-2011. The report also describes the cozy relationship between ALEC and the extreme right-wing group, the **Texas Public Policy Foundation**, which regularly partners with ALEC to promote its corporate "model" bills here in Texas.

The Texas Legislature should be a laboratory for democracy, not a corporate clearinghouse for padding bottom lines at the public's expense. ALEC Exposed in Texas shines light on the corporate lobbyists that craft cookie-cutter laws behind closed doors to put the profits of global corporations over creating better lives for Texans.

[You can download the complete report here.](#)



Obamas paint during Martin Luther King Day of Service.

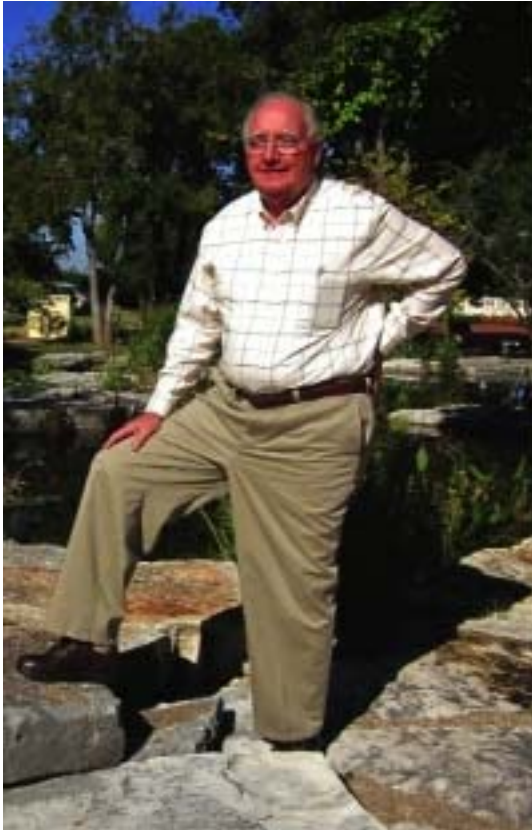
A Hero for our Children

~ Laura Ingram, [Focus on Georgetown Magazine](#)
Originally published as the main feature in [Focus on Georgetown's](#) inaugural issue in November 2010.

Local volunteer receives state award for his work mentoring "at risk" children.

Read Laura's whole article here (you have to download the magazine, then go to page 6):

http://focusonourtown.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/11_10_Focus_Gtown.pdf



Note from Sun City Democrats' Newsletter Editor: Our loyal Official Coffee-Maker (and Student Mentor Extraordinaire), George Wagner, is trying hard to win this for the Georgetown School District. It is no easy trick to vote. The clue is you must sign in originally, and select log-on and password. Then you can vote every day. Try to help him. I now have it set up to just refresh every day. Thanks for trying.

Letter from George Wagner:

Last year nine Austin individuals received the **Recognized Good Legends Award** for providing outstanding service to their community. From now to **February 17**, all citizens throughout Texas and the US will have the opportunity to say "Thanks, Austin!" by

voting for their favorite Legend, and the most votes will win **\$10,000.** The award will go to GISD, with **particular consideration for Special Ed Programs.** I am asking for your vote, as a vote for me is a vote for a child. Approximately **10%** of our GISD 10,000 students are diagnosed as Special Needs, many others undiagnosed and borderline.

To vote you may enter by clicking into either of the two web site links.

1 - **Email** – <http://www.recognizegood.org> – **you may vote once a day – a good way to build up votes – make this your first choice for simplicity**

2 - **Facebook** – <http://apps.facebook.com/recognizegoodlegend> - **You may vote twice a day if you use both links**

If you are not a Facebook person go to the e mail link. You will find the Legends background information and a video to view and how to enter your vote. The page will show results to date for each legend

Below is a current status of my day to day activities.
Be sure to view the other legends for their super contributions

- **Currently mentoring 7 students**, from 4 to 14, in 5 schools, 4 Special Ed.
- **Transition Group** – 18 to 21 year old GISD students preparing for Independent Living
- **Head Start** – 4 year old with learning disability
- **Brookwood** – 10 citizens with mild to severe physical and mental disabilities
- **Special Group Projects** – Sun City Fishing Club and Softball Clubs conduct all day clinics for about 50 Special Ed and economically deprived kids. (May & June). Science Fair supported by 40 Sun City Science Judges. (January 26). So much support from Sun City residents over the last 14 years, too much to fill a book.

After you have voted, please forward this information to friends, neighbors, clubs, churches, schools and so forth. Most important, please share with me any ideas and thoughts you may have to support this program.

With the highest level of sincerity and appreciation, thank you so, so much.

George Wagner
Sun City Texas
512-868-7152