

The Republican Club of Sun City

NEWSLETTER

May 2017

Everett Schmidt, Editor

Sun City Texas

(Club Website: rcsctx.com)

(Subjects in this newsletter: Today's American Culture and the Culture of Ancient Rome; Texas Calls for "Convention of States," Texas Considers Replacing End-of-Course Exam, Patriotism and the Treatment of the American Flag)

ADVOCATE OF CHILDREN NEEDING PROTECTION TO ADDRESS CLUB Congressman Carter's Field Representative to Make Brief Report

Brandy Hallford, a practicing attorney who often serves as a court-appointed attorney representing children who are in legal custody of the Child Protective Services (CPS), will address the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for **Thursday, May 25** in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.

Hallford is also on the Board of Directors of the Williamson County Children's Advocacy Center, a nonprofit organization which works closely with CPS, and which, for 20 years, has provided children with a safe place where they could talk about alleged sexual and physical abuse, and which, more recently, also provided counseling, medical exams and other related services. According to an article in *Community Impact Newspaper*, the Center interviewed 638 children in 2016, information which suggests the magnitude of the child abuse problem in Williamson County.

Also on the program is Anthony Triola, District Field Representative for Congressman John Carter, who will make a brief report on behalf of Congressman Carter on a variety of topics at the federal level which will be of interest to attendees.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MEETING OF MAY 25

BEGINNING TIMES: Doors Open – 5:45 pm; Social Period – 6:00 pm; Dinner – 6:30 pm; Program – 7:00 pm

MENU: Salad – spinach salad with almonds, mandarin oranges, cranberry vinaigrette; Bread – assorted dinner rolls; Entree – roasted pork tenderloin with assorted sauces; Sides – corn souffle' casserole, chef's sauteed garden medley, red skinned mashed potatoes with cream gravy.

COST: Dinner fee is \$18 per person. Checks made out to "The Republican Club of Sun City" should be mailed to: **The Republican Club of Sun City, 530 Sun City Blvd., Suite 120, Box 227, Georgetown, TX 78633**, or left in a special drop box located on the front porch of the home of club treasurer Gene Edwards at 202 Duck Creek Lane. For information, contact Gene at 520-990-1159 or geneedwards@earthlink.net. The deadline for payment or reservations is Friday, May 19.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME! (Non-members may attend a maximum of two meetings per year – as attendees for the dinner or as observers for the program – without having to pay membership dues.)

SENATOR SCHWERTNER TO ADDRESS CLUB IN JUNE

Dr. Charles Schwertner, State Senator representing SD 5, will address the club during its dinner meeting scheduled for **Thursday, June 8** in the ballroom of the Social Center in Sun City.

Details of that meeting will be provided in the June Newsletter.

OTHER CLUB NEWS

Statistics. Vice president (for membership) Cathy Cody reports that membership for 2017 currently stands at 363. (The membership of 368 reported in the April newsletter was not correct. Presently, membership is 10 members away from the all-time high of 373 reached in 2016.)

Club treasurer Gene Edwards reports there were 155 individuals at the April dinner, plus an estimated 10 individuals attending as observers.

Procedure to Become Club Member. Current non-members who wish to join the club for 2017 should be referred to the club's website, rcsctx.com, where they can find an application for membership (which can easily be downloaded), plus other information about how to join the club. (They can also join at club meetings.)

DOES TODAY'S AMERICAN CULTURE CONSTITUTE A RETURN TO THE CULTURE OF ANCIENT ROME?

Foreword. This report is a modified version of a similar report which appeared in the February 2016 newsletter. It is presented here on grounds that the material presented will still be relevant to an effort to cope with today's culture which, a large segment of citizens would agree, is spiraling downward, out of control.

The report is in three parts: The first deals with the contention that culture trumps (precedes) politics – and not the other way around. The second part deals with the adverse effects which ensue when a society, primarily through its educational institutions, does not engage in a study of the past, and thus, being oblivious to the lessons of the past, is not able to learn from the past - to deleterious effect. The third part describes the culture of ancient Rome which the reader may find stunningly similar to that of today.

Culture Trumps Politics. Author and sometimes substitute host for Rush Limbaugh, Mark Steyn, makes the following contention about culture preceding politics: “The real battle for America is over culture, not elections.” His argument is simple. Culture trumps politics. In many ways politics is merely the reflection of cultural change. Steyn continues: “You can't have conservative government in a liberal culture, and that's the position the Republican Party is in. Liberals expend tremendous effort changing the culture. Conservatives expend tremendous effort changing elected officials every other November – and then are surprised that it doesn't make much difference. So we have to be in the game on all these fronts (TV shows, movies, universities, etc.), and not just dragging whatever inadequate nominee it is over the finish line every November.”

Steyn does not, however, contend that a conservative could not be a successful president. But he rejects the traditional advice of pollsters and consultants who say that candidates need to move to the center. The leaders who have mattered – Reagan, Thatcher – didn't move toward the center, they moved the center toward them.

Steyn's response brings to Limbaugh's mind how Reagan, after being stymied by the Republican establishment during his early efforts to become a presidential candidate, went over the establishment – direct to the American people – and was successful. As president, he coped with a belligerent Congress by, again, going direct to the American people. (Is it possible that, one day, Trump's name will appear in this regard along with the names of Reagan and Thatcher?)

Why Study the Culture of Ancient Rome? Author/talk show host Kirby Anderson maintains that “it is vital that we reconsider the nature of life in those early times [as ancient Rome]. For within those eras and movements are the seeds of the troubles we face [today].”

While the citizenry has in the past looked to educational institutions to provide this kind of information, most no longer do so – for several reasons: a study of Western Civilization has been almost entirely removed as a required course of study in universities; multicultural considerations now trump considerations of the historical importance of events and individuals – meaning, for example, the composer of rap songs can be given the same standing as Shakespeare. Further, hostility toward religion is now a growing factor in politics, as illustrated by the fact that during a recent Democrat national convention, a significant number of Democrats openly booed the prospect of God being mentioned in their party platform.

Effort of universities to reinstitute the teaching of Western Civilization courses are instructive. Columnist Dennis Prager explains that in 2016 Stanford University attempted to require a study of Western Civilization as it did in the past. That course, as a requirement, was discontinued in the 1980s when under pressure from protesters, often led by Jesse Jackson, citing the slogan “Hey, hey! Ho! Ho! Western Civ has got to go,” Stanford repealed its longstanding Western Civilization requirement. The aim was to institute a more “inclusive” curriculum that focused on multiculturalism, gender identity, and race.

The attempt made in 2016 to reinstitute the requirement was rejected by a student vote of 1,992 to 347. A columnist at the Stanford Daily explained why: Teaching Western Civilization means “upholding white supremacy, capitalism and colonialism, and all other oppressive systems that flow from Western civilizations.

Prager explains that the vote and the newspaper column encapsulated the left's view: In Europe, Latin American and America, it loathes Western civilization. Whenever there is conflict between the West – which is defined as white, capitalist or of European roots – and the non-West, the left portrays the West as the villain.

Prager, it should be noted, refers to the “left,” not to “liberals.” The latter generally venerates Western civilization. President Franklin Roosevelt, for example, frequently spoke of defending “Christian civilization.”

Author Eric Bledsoe explains more. Nationally, Western Civilization requirements are largely absent from university curricula. The sobering results of a 2011 report by the National Association of Scholars confirmed that of the 50 elite institutions studied, all had Western Civilization requirements in 1964, but by 2010, few did. Even worse, only 32 percent offered a Western Civilization course even as an option for undergraduates.

We have seen (and are now seeing) the grave consequences of over 30 years of ideologically rancorous courses disguised under the “inclusive” banner of diversity requirements.

Allan Bloom said that what makes Western Civilization unique is its emphasis on self-reflection and open dialogue. We must critique both brilliant and blundered ideas, of liberty and slavery; of despotism and constitutional government; of mercantile colonialism and prosperity-inducing capitalism. Higher-educational institutions that refuse to examine the triumphs and tragedies from Athens to Washington only guarantee that future generations will be ensnared by past vices, denied the promise of virtue.

SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CULTURAL DECLINE OF ANCIENT ROME

On grounds there is truth to Anderson's contention (quoted above) that, "for within those eras and movements [of the past] are the seeds of the troubles we face [today]," the following excerpts from three books which describe the debauchery of ancient Rome are presented. One book, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization* by Alvin J. Schmidt; two books, *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?* and *What if the Bible had Never Been Written?* are by D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe.

The objectives of these descriptions are to provide a basis for the reader to reflect on today's cultural climate, and to provide a basis for contemplating on why the depravity of ancient Rome emerged and, more importantly, what subsequently caused it to be mitigated or to end.

CHILDREN. *It was a dangerous thing for a baby to be conceived in classical Rome or Greece, just as it is becoming dangerous once more under the influence of the modern pagan. In those days abortion was rampant. Abandonment was commonplace; it was common for infirm babies or unwanted little ones to be taken out into the forest or the mountainside, to be consumed by wild animals or to starve or to be picked up by rather strange people who crept around at night . . . Parents abandoned virtually all deformed babies. Many parents abandoned babies if they were poor. They often abandoned female babies because women were considered inferior.*

INFANTICIDE. *Plutarch mentions the Carthaginians, who, he says, "offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan." Cicero justified infanticide, at least for the deformed, by citing the ancient Twelve Tables of Roman Law then he says that "deformed infants shall be killed."*

ABORTION. *Long before the birth of Christ, some of the philosophers – such as Plato, Aristotle, Celsus, and others well into the fourth century after Christ – had no compunctions about taking the life of an unborn child. Plato argued that it was the prerogative of the city-state to have a woman submit to an abortion so that the state would not become too populous.*

HOMOSEXUALITY. *Many people today know that the Greeks were notorious for their homosexual behavior. But often they do not know that Greek homosexual sex was primarily pederasty or pedophilia, that is, an adult man having sex with a young boy who commonly was between twelve and sixteen years old. The Romans practiced the same perversity. Roman literature both before and after the birth of Christ has numerous references, similar to Greek writings, showing that this kind of homosexual behavior was widespread and common.*

THE STATUS OF WOMEN. *What would be the status of women in the Western world if the influence of Christianity had not entered the human arena? One way to answer that question is to look at the status of women in most present-day Islamic countries.*

The status of women was exceedingly low in Roman society as evidenced by the fact that there was a higher rate of female infanticide.

There were numerous restrictions on women. Although a husband could divorce his wife, she could not divorce him. In his role as pater-familias, the man had supreme power over his children even when grown. He also had power to execute his children.

LIFE STYLE OF EMPERORS. *Pederastic sex (sex with boys) was common behavior among Roman emperors. Legends say that Tiberius, the emperor under whose rule Christ was crucified, often surrounded himself with young boys. Nero had at least two boys with whom he engaged in sexual acts.*

There is no indication that the wanton taking of human life was morally revolting to the ancient Romans – even to the Roman emperors. From 27 B.C. to 324 A.D., only thirteen of the fifty emperors who reigned during that period died a natural death; the other thirty-seven were either assassinated or committed suicide.

EPILOGUE

The present decline in American culture may constitute one of the main reasons – perhaps the main reason – polls strongly indicate that Americans believe the country is headed in the wrong direction. The present culture may have been accurately described in verse by Alexander Pope over 200 years ago:

**Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face**

We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

EFFORTS OF THE LEFT TO DESTROY JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

Columnist Jeffrey Kuhner makes some pertinent observations about the ongoing effort by the left to destroy the nation's Judeo-Christian culture:

From its inception, Marxism has been in a life-death struggle with Christianity. "Religion is the opiate of the masses," Karl Marx said. For Marx, secular enlightenment and personal liberation could only be achieved if the "primitive superstitions" of Christian dogma were swept into the dustbin of history.

Capitalism, private property, and nation-state and the traditional family - all rest upon the Judeo-Christian moral order. Marxists have understood one seminal truth: destroy a religion and you destroy the culture and civilization it spawned.

This is why modern liberals relentlessly advance the sexual revolution characterized by individual gratification, abortion on demand and birth control. Sexual permissiveness – the Godless libertine society - and not the international proletariat is the true agent of radical change.

In fact, the founder of the Bolshevik Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, deliberately promoted open marriage, abortion, birth control and militant secularism as a means of social engineering. For Lenin, religion was the enemy.

TEXAS LEGISLATURE CALLS FOR A "CONVENTION OF STATES"

On May 4, the Texas House, by a vote of 94 to 51, joined the Senate in voting to call for an Article V "Convention of States," a second – but yet untried – method of amending the U. S. Constitution, thus making Texas the 11th of the 34 states needed to call for such convention. This method is given support out of a belief that if proposed constitutional amendments are limited to those initiated by Congress, as provided by the first method, certain amendments would never be considered because of the self interest or ideology of members of Congress. For example, amendments to provide limits on the terms of office or to limit spending may never be passed by Congress.

The reader will recall that an Article V convention was the subject of a skillfully presented address by Chuck Adams during the club's dinner meeting of Thursday, April 27.

The reader may also recall that among the concerns of many citizens was that there would not be adequate control of the subjects considered at such convention. While the main purpose of such convention would be to limit the federal government, the left, with the help of the media, may manipulate a consideration of such matters as open borders, gun control and a socialist form of government.

The Texas Legislature, however, addressed those concerns by stating in the legislation that the convention would be limited to consideration of amendments expressly, "for the limited purpose of proposing one or more amendments to the Constitution to impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, to limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government and to limit the terms of office of federal officials and members of Congress."

That limitation conforms with what 10 other states have delineated in their calls for a convention, thus making 11 states, thus far, consistent in what is to be considered at a convention of states.

The Texas Legislature, according to the Austin paper, also provided a mechanism for enforcement by (1) establishing the rules governing the selection of Texas delegates to a convention of states, and (2) imposing criminal penalties on a rogue delegate who voted for proposed amendments not authorized by the Legislature.

To be adopted as a constitutional amendment, any proposed amendments must have the approval of at least 38 states.

TEXAS HOUSE TO CONSIDER REPLACING END-OF-COURSE EXAMS WITH CIVICS TEST IMMIGRANTS MUST PASS

A Republican House member, Rep. Trent Ashby (and others) submitted on May 3 a bill, HB 1776, which, if passed by the Legislature, would, according to *TexasTribune.org*,"eliminate the required U.S. History end-of-course test for public high schoolers and replace that with a version of the civics test that immigrants must take to become U.S. Citizens." As of 2017, 15 states have passed similar legislation, according to the Arizona-based Civics Education Initiative.

Those who take the actual naturalization test required to get citizenship are asked up to 10 questions from a list of 100. They must answer six correctly in order to pass. Under HB 1776, however, a student would need to receive a higher score of 70 percent or better to fulfill the graduation requirement of U.S. History.

For the general information of the reader, following are questions from a sample test created by the U. S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services. The reader is invited to take this test. Correct answers are shown below.

*WHAT IS A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT? A. The preamble to the Constitution; B. The beginning of the Declaration of Independence; C. An introduction; D. A change to the Constitution.

*IF BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT CAN NO LONGER SERVE, WHO BECOMES PRESIDENT? A. The Secretary of Treasury; B. The Secretary of State; C. The Speaker of the House; D. The President Pro tempore.

*WHAT IS THE HIGHEST COURT IN THE U.S.? A. The Supreme Court; B. The Federal Court; C. The Court of Appeals; D. the District Court.

*WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING IS A RIGHT ONLY OF U.S. CITIZENS? A. Freedom of speech; B. Attend public school; C. Freedom of religion; D. Run for federal office

*WHO FOUGHT U.S. AND ALLIED FORCES IN WW II? A. The Soviet Union, Germany and Italy; B. Japan, Germany and Italy; C. Austria-Hungary, Japan and Germany; D. Japan, China and Vietnam

*HOW MANY AMENDMENTS DOES THE CONSTITUTION HAVE? A. 23; B. 21; C. 27; D. 10

*THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS HOW MANY VOTING MEMBERS? A. 441; B. 200; C. 100; D. 435

*WHO WAS PRESIDENT DURING WW I? A. Theodore Roosevelt; B. Woodrow Wilson; C. Warren Harding; D. Franklin Roosevelt

*IN WHAT MONTH DO WE VOTE FOR PRESIDENT? A. October; B. January; C. November; D. February

*WHICH OF THESE STATES BORDER CANADA? A. South Dakota; B. Maine; C. Oregon; D. Rhode Island

Following is the sequence of correct answers: D, C, A, D, B, C, D, B, C, B

TODAY'S PATRIOTISM AND TREATMENT OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

Columnist Gary Bauer notes that today when political pundits attempt to describe the political and cultural differences in America, they will cite matters of sex, race, age and political ideology. But he notes another division which has recently emerged: patriotism – or the lack thereof. On one side are those who have an instinctive love of country, while on the other side are those whose feelings toward their country depend on which way the political winds are blowing.

Bauer cites a recent Gallup poll which found an 11 point decline in the percentage of Democrats who are “extremely” or “very proud” to be an American from 78 percent to 67 percent in a period of only one year.

Meanwhile, Republicans are just as patriotic as they have always been with patriotism ranking currently at 92 percent. (Gallup reports their yearly average since 2001 was close to 94 percent.)

Disturbingly, there is now a 25-point gap (92 v. 67) in patriotic feelings between Republicans and Democrats, the highest in Gallup's records. And because of the decline by Democrats, there has been a significant decline in patriotism by the *general public*. While in the early 2000s the share of Americans who said they were proud to be Americans was in the 90s, that statistic has now dropped to 75 percent.

Bauer makes some observations based on the Gallup poll: (1) Liberals are on average much more willing to allow politics to determine how they feel about their country. In contrast, Barach Obama's 2008 election did not cause Republicans to be less patriotic; (2) The left's patriotism fluctuates more wildly. Ninety-three percent felt very or extremely patriotic after 9/11, but that percentage, as noted above, is now only 67 percent; and (3) Gallup notes that much of the decline in patriotism has occurred among young people. Having grown up on a steady diet of liberal media, liberal popular culture and liberal education, many of them see nothing but oppression in their country.

One of the ways the left rejects a love of country is to burn or otherwise desecrate the American flag as can be noted on numerous occasions during reports of riots taking place on university campuses. While that behavior is repugnant to many Americans, it has been held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court in 1989 and 1990.

President Trump, however, via a tweet, takes strong exception to the Court's position, contending, “ Nobody should be allowed to burn the American flag - - if they do, there must be consequences – perhaps loss of citizenship or a year in jail.” That interpretation would not be unlike some of the restrictions universities attempt to place on various forms of speech on their campuses.

While such external pressures such as those advocated by President Trump can be effective in causing at least an overt respect for the flag. Perhaps a more effective way can be found internally if one one's conscience can be affected. Note in this regard the following.

A report by author Mark Alexander appearing in the PatriotPost.us can (or should) touch every American. Alexander takes to occasion to report in a recent post the death at age 85 of Col. Leo K. Thorsness (USAF Ret.) who earned the Medal of Honor for actions over Vietnam where he was shot down and captured, becoming a POW for a period of 6 years, from 1967-1973.

Col. Thorsness was the author of “Surviving Hell,” a remarkable testament to all Vietnam POWs and the

brutality of their incarceration. He also wrote a preface to a children's book, "I'm Your Flag So Please Treat Me Right." Alexander, also a writer, contends, "It should be mandatory reading for every American of any ago." Following are some excerpts from Thorsness' writing:

What do you think of when you see a little American flag in front of a grave marker? Let me tell you a story about one little flag. As a fighter pilot on my 93rd mission over North Vietnam, my F-105 was hit by an air-to-air missile and my Electronic Warfare Officer Harold Johnson and I, were forced to eject. After unsuccessful rescue attempts, we were captured by enemy forces and imprisoned in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" for the next six years.

One day in our sixth year of imprisonment, a young Navy pilot named Mike Campbell found a piece of cloth in a gutter. After we collected some other small rags, he worked secretly at night to piece them together into a flag. He made red from ground-up roof tiles and blue from tiny amounts of ink, then used rice glue to paste the colors onto the rags. Using thread from his blanket and a homemade bamboo needle, he sewed the pieces together, adding white fragments for stars.

One morning he whispered from the back of our cell, "Hey gang, look here," and proudly held up that tattered American flag, waving it as if in a breeze. We all snapped to attention and saluted – with tears in our eyes.

A week later, the guards were searching our cells and found Mike's flag. That night they pulled him out of the cell and, for his simple gesture of patriotism, they tortured him. At daylight they pushed what was left of Mike back through the cell door.

Today, whenever I see our flag, I think of Mike and the morning he first waved that tattered emblem of our great nation. It was then thousands of miles from home, imprisoned by a brutal enemy, that he courageously demonstrated the liberty it represents, and that is what I see in every American flag.

Alexander, after noting that Col. Thorsness will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery, and being obviously touched by the Colonel's writing, concludes his report thusly:

"Clear skies and tailwinds, Colonel."