

The Other Collin County Democrat

THE title is a bumper sticker **Sainted Editor** once designed but can no longer use, having moved to Dallas. But he got a kick out of explaining it to newcomers. Old Collin County hands take it literally. It makes it all the more strange that **Bill White**, Texas' Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate, should choose enemy territory to speak to a Rotary. But it became clear when his literature table in the hall was staffed by a young man under the banner of "Republicans for Bill White."



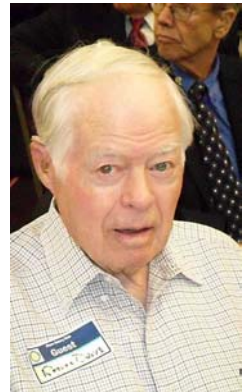
Prince (Snake-) Charming John pounded the meeting's opening into our heads at 12:16, calling upon Bryan Stamper to Pray and **Carolyn Moebius** to Pledge. He thanked **Ben Criste** for greeting; as Club Administration Vice-Chair, Ben is charged with finding Greeters for our meetings. Clearly more of us should volunteer to help him out.



Since we had a roomful of guests to hear the candidate, John felt it necessary to explain away the Jackelope mascot. He said it was a tribute to his "sense of humor and bad sense of timing." Then he called upon substitute, substitute, substitute **SERGEANT-AT-**

ARMS, LB THE RADIANT, the "Honorable Past District Governor." **LB** introduced the "most

distinguished member of *Plano Sunrise*," and husband of **Maribelle Davis** (thus blessed with her guidance far longer than the Club even though she was its first female member), **Colonel O. Reeves Davis**.



LB introduced **Bob Warren** as a CPA but "not as good as the one up here." When Bob objected, **LB** conceded that he was the best CPA currently seated.



LB had all the many, many guests stand to be recognized *en masse*, then, when he indicated that he'd launch into a pitch for the Rotary Foundation, Prince John shooed him off the podium. **LB** quoted **Rodney Dangerfield**.



John offered **Jo Via** and **Earnest Burke** a free opportunity to crow about their respective events. Jo told us that she welcomed "85,000 of my closest friends" to the recent **Plano Balloon Festival**, the first to be held without **Randy Wright**! She explained that it was close to a record crowd and a rip-roaring success.

Earnest was less exuberant. He thanked everyone in the "Flagship of the District" Club for having participated in the Hendrick Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament.



He said that the proceeds are still being tallied, and he would report them to us once they're known.



John told **Chris Henry** that although he had to announce yet another golf tournament, with the Program running late, he'd to do it later. **Clarence Gilmore** also probably wanted to tout *Sunrise Rotary's 9th Annual*

Oktoberfest, Monday, October 25th from 5-9 pm at Zagat's-rated *Best German Restaurant in Texas*, **Juergen Mahneke's Bavarian Grill**. *C'est la vie.*

When Maribelle hid behind the lectern, **Ean** recommended removing the Rotary Bell so that the Maribelle could be seen!



That accomplished, she told us what a privilege it was to introduce Bill White. (We'll make her pay for it by having to introduce **Rick Perry**, should he accept the Club's invitation to speak.) She said that the UT Law School graduate was a three-term Mayor of Houston and a recipient of the Profiles in Courage Award. Since a candidate is entirely capable of extolling his own virtues, Maribelle elected to cut her remarks short and invited Bill White to address us.

Bill told us that, as Mayor, he spoke before countless Rotary Clubs, and that this was the 40th Rotary club he'd addressed as candidate for governor. Indeed, his connection to Rotary was developed at a tender age, when he won the Four-Way Speech Contest in San Antonio and earned a \$500 leg up on college. He says that he admires Rotary because it was international "*before international was cool.*" He admires Rotary too because it "*emphasizes*



what we have in common" (an all-too-important message in these Days of Intolerance).



He cast his eye over the "*many distinguished guests*" here today, including **Mayor Dyer**, his *Pro Tem*, and City Councilmen. Talking to them, he said, "*You know what accountability means,*" adding that, as Houston's mayor, "*we were in the phone book.*" ("*My door is always open*" suffers somewhat in translation to "*my phone is always off the hook.*") He reduced his accomplishments as Mayor to the phrase "*we brought people together to get things done,*" implying that such a style is sorely needed in Austin.

So, as much as he honors and respects Rotary for its accomplishments, he conceded that he wasn't here today to praise us as much he was "*on a job interview,*" and we were the interviewers. He emphasized that he wants to apply the skills he's honed in the private sector to public service.



Bill told us that we've lead "*48 other states*" in growth for over a century. (Now either he needs to revisit Geography or California has another talking point.) We Texans come from different backgrounds and ethnicities, but we have in common a work ethic, a sense of opportunity, and take individual responsibility "*to do what needs to be done.*" He didn't think he needed to lecture Plano on the concept of growth. So when his opponent takes credit for State growth, he's probably "*been in office too long.*" (Presumably Bill has a recommendation as to how to remedy that.) Besides, it's unlikely that **Rick Perry** wants to take credit for Texas being 49th in the nation (after whom: Alabama?) in the

percentage of college graduates among its citizens.

Bill decried a system that obliges teachers to teach skills to taking standardized tests rather than the basic skills needed for college or vocation. Bill wants to turn that around and to have Texas at the other end of the list. He wants our students trained for the global economy in which we're already embedded. And he doesn't believe that political patronage or ideological litmus tests are quite the correct techniques for accomplishing these goals.

He pointed out that no one has ever declined the services of a fire department on the grounds that it is an insidious government service. Indeed no one has ever inquired whether an Emergency Services Unit coming to their rescue is Republican or Democrat. All that's required is that these services are supplied as efficiently as possible, and that is accomplished by keeping everyone motivated by annual reviews. Those not performing aren't given a pass, even though they may espouse your own political philosophy, but rather replaced.

Houston, he claimed, was the first city in the nation to be able to cut property taxes by "*weeding out the un[der]performing*" civil servants. In so doing, he managed to increase funding for public parks and libraries. (Now Maribelle's fascination becomes apparent!) And it was only possible to do so across party affiliations.

This being Rotary, Bill couched the remainder of his remarks within the framework of the Four-Way Test, which, like the Bible, can be interpreted to fit almost any agenda. For example, Mr. White interpreted Governor Perry's refusal to debate under the rubric of "*Is it the Truth?*" In particular, he hit Rick's pious assurances that the State has "*no budget problem*" followed closely by his admission that "*everyone knows [the State's] in trouble.*" Bill's take is that the Recession exists (thank you, **Phil Gramm**) as a result of the Wall Street excrement, and that as of October 2008, Texas

began to cut capital spending. On the other hand, he noted that Texas leads the next 39 states combined in job creation.



His solution rests with accountability. In Houston, for example, he published a monthly review of City revenues and expenses, and by conservative fiscal management, he managed to leave Houston with double its bank balances. In contrast, he says, the Department of Transportation miscalculated its budget, losing over a billion dollars. Its response, "*We're sorry,*" didn't cut it for Bill; he thinks anyone who has a billion dollar budget error needs to go. Indeed, he thinks TxDOT has too much authority, and he'd rather see more transportation options and choices available to local governments. That philosophy extends to the school systems that, he says, suffer from "*too many top-down mandates.*"

Under "fair to all concerned" he included Houston's reaction to Katrina. When asked what the City's policy would be toward refugees, he quoted **The Golden Rule**, "Do as you would be done by."

Thanks to the GI Bill, his Dad was the first in his family to attend college. Similarly, his Mom was first to attend in her family. He concludes from their success that everyone needs the proper skills to succeed in life. And he is dedicated to help provide. Bill mentioned a Dennison Rotary at which he met the School Board President ("Hello, **Skip** and **Susan.**") who told him that the 4+4 State mandates are stifling options to offer voc-tech courses.

He paraphrased a complaint from a Pasadena mother that while her parents sent her and her two sisters to TAMU without facing bankruptcy, she can no longer do the same for her three daughters. The downturns in the refineries mean that many families have now lost ground.

Bill thinks that when a single university in China graduates more engineers than all of

those in the United States, educational priorities must be raised.

Speaking to “goodwill and better friendships,” Bill said he needed all our help. He urged us to “*get to know people of different background*” from ourselves. For him, diversity means those of differing views as well as ethnicities, and he wants us to reach out and find common projects on which to work.

His concrete recommendation to a Riverside Rotary was to help its local free clinic. (*Déjà vu*, anyone?) With 2½ years of Rotary help, the Clinic reopened, asbestos-free. He said that finding common ground works far better than “*playing people off against one another.*”

Finally, “will it be beneficial to all concerned” moved him to comment on border security?!? Since he was running out of time, the logic was sacrificed to the message, and he dumped tax relief and “*the kids to be better off*” on us in a jumble at the end, concluding “*vote for me or agin me, but please vote.*”

Howard Shapiro asked him to take the high road and make the concessions necessary to enable the Governor to agree to debate. He agreed that debates are an “*obligation to the public.*” And he has accepted all such. Indeed, he has placed no conditions at all on any such.

Scary Bob Epstein asked what support he’d offer the unarmed border patrol. Bill insisted that wasn’t a planted question! He said that border sheriffs support him because he’ll fund 1,000 new deputies, increasing the current number by 25%. That will stress the State budget by only 0.1%, surely, he implied, money well spent. But National Guard have no authority to arrest anyone, and their patrols of the highways don’t catch off-road traffickers. So we need intelligence, inside informants, and



consultation with local law enforcement that isn’t now happening, he said.



Cary Israel decried the disparity between State funding for universities versus community colleges. When Bill asked, Cary told him that he’s been Collin College’s President for 11 years, and throughout that time, the medical insurance for his faculty has never matched that for university denizens.

Bill said that Cary must have noted that Gov. Perry vetoed Community College funding just before the start of school this year. Deflecting Cary’s question, he went on to rail against the publishers of textbooks who rake in an average of \$150 per spine. Bill suggested providing open source materials (recommended to Cary by **Sainted Editor** as well) to be downloaded without mandating individual teachers to use them.



Prince John offered Bill *By Dawn’s Early Light* to sign and return for the *Memorial Elementary Library*. He warned us that “*there shouldn’t be any other announcements,*” and rendered us out with three strikes of the Rotary Bell at 1:05.

See
<http://photographyblog.dallasnews.com/archives/2010/09/jackalopes-and-governors.html>