

The WCYR Advocate

Williamson County Young Republicans

June, 2004

Joshua Edlin, editor

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Next Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2004
Executive Meeting: 6:00 PM
General Meeting: 6:30 PM
Location: TBD
Speaker: Janice Bowling

Announcements

- We are currently looking for a new location for meetings. Current possibilities include Stony River and the Republican headquarters in downtown Franklin. The location for our next meeting will be announced via the email list. If you are not on the list, please contact Brandon Ryan.
- The Davidson County YRs are holding their annual golf tournament on June 26. If you would like to participate in the tournament, please contact Brandon Ryan.
- We recently hired a painter to paint the lobby of the Republican headquarters. The paint job looks great and was greatly appreciated by the senior party.

President Bush Visits Vanderbilt

On May 27, President Bush visited the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and then held a panel discussion on using information technology to improve health care and lower its costs. Due to a heroic effort by Kimberly Miller, a number of YR members were able to volunteer.

We were tasked with assisting the media, as well as ensuring that the local media stayed within strict guidelines. Due to an abundance of volunteers – by one account, more than had volunteered for any previous function – the workload was light.

The auditorium was fairly small, and while space for volunteers was standing-room only, we were close enough to see the President clearly. Unlike many events, where you feel you could have experienced more with a TV, the setting was intimate enough for us to know we were there.

At the end of the panel, President Bush shook hands with everyone who could get close enough, and a few of our members got autographs. ♦

President Bush shakes hands with attendees.



Remembering Ronald Reagan

By Josh Edlin

With the passing of former President Ronald Reagan, we have learned more about Reagan's life in the past seven days than we have in the entire span since he left office. With so many retrospectives, almost everything worth saying has been said. And yet, I feel compelled to weigh in with my own thoughts. These are my favorite stories about Ronald Reagan.

On March 30, 1981, John Hinckley opened fire on Reagan and his entourage on a sidewalk outside the Washington Hilton. Reagan's secret service agents moved quickly, but Reagan was shot. A ricocheted bullet entered his side and pierced his lung.

Reagan thought he had broken a rib in the chaos, but he soon developed problems breathing. Nonetheless, arriving at the George Washington University Hospital, Reagan stepped out of the limo, adjusted his suit, and began walking into the hospital, ever the American President.

Things got worse after that. Reagan's lung had collapsed and initial efforts to reinflate it failed. At first doctors believed he had suffered a heart attack, and once it became apparent he had been shot, they couldn't find the bullet. Even then, with his life in jeopardy, Reagan quipped to the doctors, "I just hope you're all Republicans."

Over the course of his recovery, Reagan continued to use humor to bolster both himself and those around him. When he was intubated and unable to speak, Reagan began writing humorous notes to friends, staff, and medical personnel. "Could we rewrite this scene beginning about the time I left the hotel?" And my favorite: "Send me to L.A., where I can see the air I'm breathing."

Upcoming Events

June 11	Janice Bowling Fundraiser
June 17	Alzheimer's Association Fundraiser
June 26	DCYR Golf Tournament
July 13	July YR Meeting
Aug 21	County Picnic

Service Opportunities

Volunteers are needed for the following duties / events:

- The Williamson County Republican Party and the YRs have set a goal to have 10 YR members join the Chairman's Circle. The fee is \$1,000 and entitles you to attend all Williamson County GOP functions free and to receive other special perks. For instance, the Chairman Circle members received "face-time" with Senator Frist before the President's Day dinner. If you are interested, please contact Brandon Ryan for more information.

Along with the election of officers for 2004, the appointed positions need to be filled. If you have an interest in any of the following positions, please contact Brandon Ryan.

- Social Chairman
- Fund-Raiser Chairman
- State Party Liaison
- Liaison to U.S. Senator Frist
- Liaison to U.S. Senator Alexander
- Liaison to U.S. Congressman Blackburn
- Liaison to State Representative Casada
- Liaison to State Representative Sargent
- Media Chairman
- Constitution and By-Laws Chairman

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When leaked to the press, these notes served to relieve the American people and endear Reagan to the hearts of many.

Also in 1981, negotiations with PATCO, the union representing the nation's air traffic controllers, broke down, and PATCO decided to strike. Since air traffic controllers are government employees, the resulting strike was illegal. With demands amounting to \$700 million, coupled with the national security implications of having uncontrolled skies, Reagan refused to accept a strike. Reagan ordered the controllers to return to work within 48 hours or lose their jobs. The union was confident that Reagan was bluffing, and 70% of all air traffic controllers continued to strike. True to his word, Reagan fired them all, and thanks to a plan put together by Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis, the FAA, and the Department of Defense the skies remained open.

In 1987, Reagan speech writer Peter Robinson was tasked with writing a speech for Reagan's trip to Berlin. After consulting with several German citizens, Robinson delivered his draft. Reagan liked it. His advisors, however, did not.

The State Department, the National Security Council, and the ranking diplomat in Berlin all put pressure on Robinson to change the speech. The language was too forceful and would be an affront to Gorbachev. National Security Advisor Colin Powell and Secretary of State George Schultz both weighed in against the speech. A total of seven different drafts were given to Robinson as possible replacements. But Robinson held firm. The speech held.

However, when the entourage reached Italy, Deputy Chief of Staff Kenneth Duberstein explained to Reagan the objections to the speech. Robinson's role was finished. It was now up to the President. Reagan kept the speech.

Finally, in Berlin, the State Department presented another speech to replace Robinson's speech. Reagan was firm; the original speech would be used. "The boys at State are going to kill me, but it's the right thing to do."

President Reagan gave the speech to the assembled crowd. As Reagan later told it, "I felt an anger well up in me, and I am sure this anger was reflected in my voice when I said those words." And so, the phrase which had so worried his advisors became one of the most famous lines Reagan ever spoke: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

I'm not sure that these three vignettes illustrate any single point, but to me they serve as poignant glimpses into the nature of Ronald Reagan. At a time when good men were in short supply, Ronald Reagan came forth as a man of vision. He believed in a brighter America and had the fortitude to follow that dream. He was not afraid to take a hard stance and to back it up with action if necessary. He could disarm even his staunchest opponents with his quick wit and was never afraid to laugh at himself. Ronald Reagan was a man of singular character at a time when character is what America needed most.

Of course, not everyone agrees. I recently stumbled upon a book by one Robert Bly that purported to be about being a modern man. On the first page, Bly makes clear who he believes to be the outdated, undesirable man: "He got to work early, labored responsibly, supported his wife and children, and admired discipline. Reagan is a sort of mummified version of this dogged type. ... his view of culture and America's part in it was boyish and optimistic." I didn't read further, so I can't say what kind of man Mr. Bly claims to be, but Ronald Reagan is exactly the kind of man I want to be.

God bless you, Mr. Reagan. ♦