



The RIGHT WRITE-UP

The Republican Club of Comal County

*A political group of conservative Republican men and women.
Our goal is to inform about current issues and conservative candidates.*

Volume 8, Issue 4

rcocc.org

April, 2023

OUR NEXT MEETING

THE REPUBLICAN CLUB OF COMAL COUNTY

will meet on Tuesday, April 25, at 6:30 p.m. *(setup at 5:00, social mixer at 5:30)*
at the First Protestant Church of New Braunfels, 172 W. Coll Street.
(Enter the parking lot by the Civic Center from Coll St.)

The Club will provide light refreshments such as veggie trays, snacks, and desserts. The Club will also provide utensils, water, tea, and coffee. Members and guests can bring salads and desserts to share, if desired.

We encourage members to arrive early. This will allow time to pay dues, greet friends and guests, and partake of refreshments before the meeting starts.

Please share this meeting announcement with friends and family.

As we grow in numbers, our influence grows with our elected officials, and they will respond to our calls on legislative priorities.

Questions? Call or email our President, Al Highfield, at 830-255-1367 or at Albert.Highfield@yahoo.com.



Our guest speaker will be

Colonel (retired) Doug "Stoli" Nikolai

He will talk about

"Habits of Honor, Faith, and Patriotism."

Please join us for this timely and informative talk.

(For more information on Col Nikolai, see page 3.)

A Message from our Club President

Thank you all for supporting “our club” and spreading the great conservative message of the Republican Party. The recent Easter weekend had me reflecting on the value that our Savior placed on our souls for our eternal life with Him and the Father. We should always have compassion, love, and understanding for our fellow human beings. This would show the world our belief in a free society. When people do things that we don’t like that doesn’t mean that we should mistreat them. What our actions should show is an understanding that maybe they have not been given the opportunity to change their actions. My point is talk to your neighbors, family members, friends, and anyone else you encounter and encourage them to join us for a meeting, and then they might see how welcoming our group can be. We must take the first step to grow our voting base to change our world!!!!

The Newsletter and lots of other good Club information can be found at rccc.org. Also, there are lots of photos, videos, and events posted there!

President Albert F. Highfield

“Ask me or other club officers what You can do to get involved!”

OUR PATRON PROGRAM

The Republican Club of Comal County is thankful for those who have contributed to our Club through the Patron Program during 2022 and 2023.

Patrons donate \$100 per year per person to help us finance our election strategy.

Suzanne Badger	Vicki Highfield	John O'Brien
Robbie Borchers	Marty Hiles	Kathy Phillips
James “Hoss” Boyd	Helen Horvath	Robert Phillips
Geneva Boyd	Don Johnson	Sue Piner
Edison Bryant	Barbara Layer	Austinn Pruneda
Chris Byrd	Susie LeCanu	Harold Sanchez
Derick Carver	Donna Lee	Sylvai Sanchez
Suzi Casey	Kerry Ledford	Maria Seiler
Ruth Chambers	Doug Leacock	Patrick Seiler
Bill Cooley	Don Lieske	Joy Streater
Mark Delaney	Al Malmsten	Anita Valdez
Steve Gallets	W. Lindy Menefee	John Walker
Fred Gibbons	Sharon Hall Monge	Susan Walker
Albert Haddad	Mark Montgomery	Kevin Webb
Scott Haag	Cindi Montgomery	John Young
Albert Highfield	Naomi Narvaiz	Diane Young

Contact our Membership Chairman, Cindi Montgomery, at 214-908-7212, to become a Patron member or for more information.

Patrons receive a special personalized Texas flag name tag.

Our guest speaker for April

We look forward to welcoming **Colonel (retired) Doug “Stoli” Nikolai** to our next meeting as our keynote speaker. His presentation, entitled “Habits of Honor, Faith, and Patriotism,” is designed to rekindle one’s patriotism for our great nation, remind a you that your faith and honor still have a place in today’s world, and motivate people to get out in their communities to make a difference through a series of historical vignettes and stories from his 26-year Air Force career. He currently is employed with BGI-LLC as a government contracted F-16 Simulator Instructor/Subject Matter Expert at Kelly/Lackland Air Force Base.

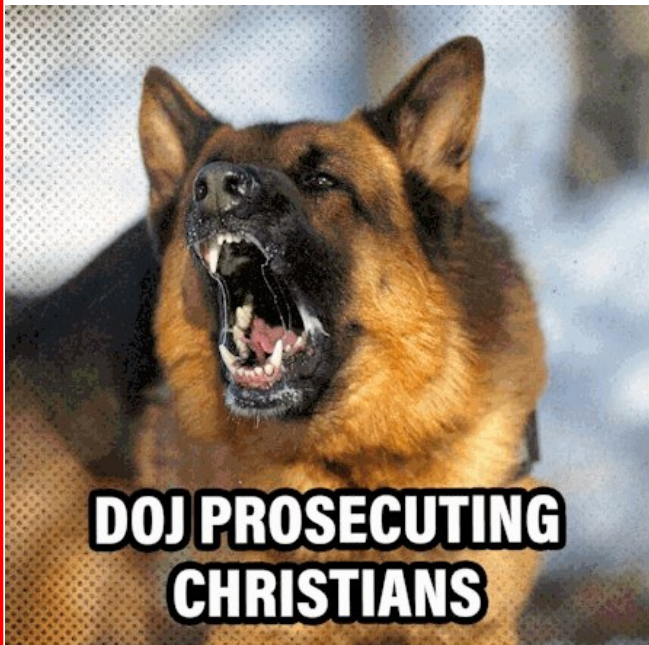
Colonel Nikolai has presented to over 50 Civic and religious organizations across the U.S. with many a standing ovation

Colonel Nikolai retired from the Air Force as full colonel after 26 years of service and accumulating almost 3,000 hours in the F-16, of which over 400 hours were combat time in the Middle East.

Colonel Nikolai’s final assignment was working in the Pentagon in Air Force Operations where he helped manage a \$450-million flying budget and provided oversight to combat, rescue, and air mobility aircraft programs and missions.

Other notable assignments he had included of Vice Commander at a Fighter Wing in South Korea, where he commanded over 3,400 airmen, as an Air Force Legislative Affairs Officer while working on Capitol Hill, and as an F-16 Fighter Squadron Commander in Germany.

Colonel Nikolai lives in Spring Branch, Texas, and is married to his wife Katie. They have four kids: Brodie (19), Rylie (17), Brynlie (15) and Preslie (12).



Our Officers for 2023

President	Al Highfield
Vice President	Marty Hiles
Secretary	Kathy Phillips
Treasurer	Patrick Seiler
Past President	Mary Wohl
County Chair	Sue Piner

Committee Chairs

Membership	Cindi Montgomery
Legislative Affairs	Don Johnson
Campaign Activities	Maria Seiler
Hospitality	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Parliamentarian	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Publicity Chair	Audrey Johnson Scheper
Facebook	<i>(Currently vacant)</i>
Newsletter Editor	Kerry Ledford
Associate Editor	Karen Hobson
Special Events	Donna Lee
Special Projects	Ruth Chambers
Patron Program	Cindi Montgomery
Web Master	Audrey Johnson Scheper
Sergeant-at-Arms	Marty Hiles

Comal County Precinct Chairs

Why do we publish the Comal County Precinct Chair List in the Republican Club Newsletter each month? Our mission as active Republicans is to support the political process. Each one of us should know what Precinct we live in and who serves as our Precinct Chair.

We should offer our assistance to our Precinct Chair for the elections. We can assist as an Election clerk or Election Judge on Election Day. We can offer to block walk to inform our neighbors of early voting. We can block walk for our chosen candidates. We can offer to take a list of Republicans to call with a reminder of the times and places to vote early. There are a number of ways an individual can help to assure a maximum Republican vote.

Studies show that when people intend to vote, but fail to vote early, a substantial percentage of that vote is lost on Election Day. There is a lot to be done. Please offer your help to your Precinct Chair.

<u>Precinct</u>	<u>Name</u>
County Chair	Sue Piner
Vice Chair	Marty Hiles
Recording Secretary	Judy Walker
Treasurer	Don Johnson
Assistant Treasurer	Vicky Highfield
101	Sharon Hall Monge
102	Kaci Sisk
103	Laura Buske
104	J.B. Williamson
105	Ernie Lee
106	Chris Byrd
107	Anita Valdez
108	Albert Highfield
109	Clint Palpau
110	JoAnne Martin
201	Marty Hiles
202	<i>(vacant)</i>
203	James "Hoss" Boyd
204	Marlin Brown
205	Steve White
206	Kathy Phillips
207	John Brewer
208	Geri Baker
301	Will Moravits
302	Edison Bryant
303	Kenneth Kasper
304	<i>(vacant)</i>
305	Isabel Ibarra
306	Barbara Harrell
307	Timothy Davis
308	Mary Lou Erben
401	Robbie Borchers
402	Melinda Rapp
403	Carolyn Besselman
404	Teri Taylor
405	Molly Vogt
406	Joe Carroll
407	Susan Walker
408	Don Johnson

Our Mission

The mission of the Republican Club of Comal County is to promote “Faith, Family, and Freedom” by providing information and education about critical political issues, by encouraging active participation in the political process, by supporting conservative Republican nominees, and by fostering loyalty to the Republican Party and its conservative ideals.

The Republican Contract with America, 2022

- 1) A Safe and Law-Abiding America. Crime prevention and punishment is mostly a local and state affair. But the federal government promises to prosecute fully any criminal who crosses state lines or uses interstate communications to commit arson, public destruction, smash-and-grab looting, or general attacks on any federal property within the states.
- 2) Affordable Energy for an Energy-Independent America. Restoration of gas and oil energy independence; reopening of federal lands for new energy leases; fast-tracking natural gas and oil pipelines; encouragement and incentives to mine rare and precious metals inside the United States needed for batteries and new sources of energy.
- 3) A Secure Border. Immediate completion of the border wall. Deportation of all those who crossed illegally between 2017 and 2024 and all criminals convicted of felonies or serious misdemeanors; employer sanctions; an end to catch-and-release; all refugee seekers apply outside the United States; a tax on remittances sent south of the border on those here illegally and on public assistance; the end of the primacy of family considerations in fast-tracking immigration requests, replaced by meritocratic considerations of English facility, skill sets, and education. All immigration would be predicated on legality, diversity, meritocracy, and measured and manageable numbers necessary for assimilation and integration.
- 4) A Sacrosanct Constitution and Preservation of Long-Held Traditions. On record for no changes to the Constitution; no dismantling of the Electoral College; no federalization of states' voting laws; no increase in a nine-justice Supreme Court; no statehood for Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico; no end to the Senate filibuster.
- 5) The Restoration of Election Day. Encouragement to the states to limit mail-in balloting, return to the old notion of absentee balloting as an exception rather than the norm, and cut back on extended/early balloting — with the goal that 60 to 70% of ballots cast are done so on Election Day.
- 6) A "Don't Tread on Me" Foreign Policy. Strong support for the sanctity of allied nations. Deterrence against Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and other belligerents. A realistic foreign policy of "No better friend, no worse enemy." An end to optional large, on-the-ground military engagements in the Middle East. A return of Pentagon emphasis on battle readiness rather than social justice and woke agendas, with budgets redirected to missile defense and naval and air deterrence.
- 7) Towards a Balanced Budget. Expenditures must match revenues. An update of the Simpson-Bowles National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform or enactment of its recommendations, with the aim of achieving a balanced budget in four years.
- 8) Anti-Trust, Anti-Monopoly Legislation. An end to Silicon Valley's vast monopolies, cartels, and immunity from public-utility regulations.
- 9) Strict Enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prohibition of the use of racial bias/advantage/preference in the operations of public local, state, and federal agencies. No federal funds allotted for critical-race-theory indoctrination.
- 10) No Federal Funds for Lawbreakers. An end to federal support of state agencies and private institutions that violate federal statutes and the Bill of Rights, whether sanctuary-city jurisdictions or campuses whose speech and trial codes violate the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments. Loss of tax-free status on income from university endowments of more than \$10 billion.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES FOR 2023

There are two Comal County election cycles in 2023, in May and November.

The May 2023 election includes New Braunfels Mayor, NB City Council District 5, NB City

Council District 6, NBISD Trustees for Districts 2 & 4, and CISD Districts 3 & 4 and at-large.

CISD may also place a Bond Issue(s) on the Ballot.

The November 2023 election will be for Constitutional Amendments.

MAY 6, 2023, Election Dates

January 1, 2023 - First Day to Request Ballot By Mail (BBM) or FPCA

January 18, 2023 - First Day to File for a Place on the Ballot

February 17, 2023 - Last Day to File

April 6, 2023 - Last Day to Register to Vote in May Election

April 24, 2023 - First Day of Early Voting

April 25, 2023 - Last Day to Receive a Request for BBM

May 2, 2023 - Last Day of Early Voting

May 6, 2023 - Election Day

NOVEMBER 7, 2023, Election Dates

October 10, 2023 - Last Day to Register to Vote in the November Election

October 23, 2023 - First Day of Early Voting

October 27, 2023 - Last Day to Receive a BBM Request

November 3, 2023 - Last Day of Early Voting

November 7, 2023 - Election Day

The Republican Philosophy

That the rights of the individual to achieve the best that is within him, as long as he respects the rights of others, is the source of our nation's strength.

That government exists to protect the freedom of opportunity in which each individual's creative ability can flourish.

That government activities should be limited to those things which people cannot do at all, or cannot do so well for themselves.

The most effective government is government closest to the people.

That those who cannot provide for themselves should be assisted by both government and society, but that every effort should be made to help them to become self-supporting, productive citizens with pride in their independence.

That equal rights, equal justice, and equal opportunity belong to all, regardless of race, creed, age, sex, or national origin.

That the preservation of our nation and the security of our citizens depend upon the constitution, the laws, and the courts, and that respect for them is the responsibility of every individual.

That government is accountable for maintaining sound money and a responsible economy. Individual rights, liberties, and properties are continually eroded when citizens are oppressed by excessive taxation, inflation, government waste, and over regulation.

That the government is responsible for national defense and that only a strong America can remain a free America.

That it is absolutely essential to maintain a strong national defense posture in order that we may at all times negotiate from a position of strength, not weakness, in our continuing efforts toward peace and friendship.

That these concepts are the foundation of our national strength and the Republican Party, which is committed to their preservation, is the party of today and the party of the future.

Candidates for Mayor and City Council of New Braunfels

There are four candidates running for Mayor of New Braunfels: (Roy) Neal Linnartz, Michael Alexander French, George Green, And Edward Martinez Jr. The candidates running for City Council District 5 are Mary Ann Labowski and Bently C. Paiz. The candidates running for City Council District 6 are April Ryan, Steven Voges, and James Blakely. The only City Council candidate who responded was Steven Voges. Our Club sent questionnaires to these candidates to determine their stand on various local issues. Below are the questions we sent, and on the following pages are their responses.

Questions

1. Are you aware that if New Braunfels receives HUD funds that you must develop an equity plan, which could mean anything from building low income housing to redistricting the schools to achieve racial equity? If no funds are currently being received, are you in favor of maintaining that distance from federal funding?
2. Before signing off on the building of housing and apartment developments, would you support a move to have the developers submit an independent study showing the actual impact that the proposed plans would have on the water supply? If said study reflected a significant negative impact to the existing businesses and residences, would you be willing to deny moving forward with the development?
3. Homelessness is a constant concern for every community. One of the most successful programs to meet people where they are and help them successfully transition back into society is Haven for Hope in San Antonio. Would you be open to bringing the organizations in NB who serve the homeless together to establish a similar model for NB?
4. The excess bills received this past year by NBU customers has left many with a total distrust of the leadership of NBU. Utility companies across the state suffered unexpected spikes in cost due to the unusual winter storm in 2021. Could NBU have handled the way they are recouping the costs better and would you be in favor of an audit to determine if there is a more equitable way to spread the cost out over the years?
5. Many cities are requiring employees to undergo diversity, inclusion, and equity training. They also are requiring hiring practices based upon DEI more than on candidate qualifications. What is your position on this, and what would you do to insure the most qualified candidates are employed regardless of ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation?

George Green

1. No, I was not aware of the equity plan requirements.
Yes, I would be in favor of maintaining that position.

In my research on this matter I found that HUD's Equity Plan is one small piece of a vigorous, intentional plan under Secretary Fudge's leadership to prioritize and embed equity into all of HUD's work.

2. Yes, I would deny moving forward with the development.
3. If the people support a homeless shelter, yes, with private dollars but not with taxpayer money. Again, if the people favor it, I would suggest seeming a public-private-partnership. I would not be open to bringing a Haven for Hope to NB; while SAT appear to be successful with HFH we must remember that they are over 1 million (2021) people and their FY 2023 adopted budget is \$3.4 billion vs. NB budget for 2022-23 of \$368.67 million. Plus, the original founder of HFH is a billionaire whose passion in for the homeless. It's hard for NB to match those resources and take on that expense.
4. Yes, NBU could have handled it differently, and, yes, I would be in favor of a audit.
5. My position is that we should hire the most qualified person for the position.
We are living in a time where accountability and results are valued. Our goal is to hire the person who comes closest to meeting 100% of the job requirements.

(Roy) Neal Linnartz

Thank you for the invitation to speak at your meeting and for the opportunity to answer your questionnaire. I did not take this opportunity lightly, as I have been voting Republican since turning 18 and getting the privilege of voting. I believe in making decisions based on facts and figures that come from reliable sources, rather than making decisions based on rumor or speculation. To best answer the below questions, I met with City Council members, the City Manager, City staff, NBU Trustees, the CEO of NBU, and multiple non-profit leaders to make sure I had the best information, data, and facts to answer these questions. When elected, I will communicate and collaborate to make sure I am informed before making decisions.

1. New Braunfels is currently receiving HUD funds and currently has an equity plan.

These funds are our tax dollars that we send to the federal government. They are returning them to our community with some strings attached as to how those funds can be spent but I think it is important that we try to take advantage of getting as many of these dollars back in our community to do good things, even if we are limited in how we spend them. These funds are doing good things in our community and going to good causes. Here are some examples of where the 2022 fiscal year funds were spent:

- \$5,500 to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of South Texas
- \$10,000 to CASA of Central Texas
- \$8,500 to Connections
- \$7,197 to Family Life Center
- \$8,000 to NB Housing Partners
- \$6,500 to River City Advocacy
- \$5,000 to Salvation Army
- \$9,000 to San Antonio Food Bank
- \$6,042 to Topoly's Story
- \$100,000 to Comal County Senior Citizen's Foundation
- \$87,214 to New Braunfels Housing Authority
- \$20,000 to Comal County Habitat for Humanity

2. Developers currently have to submit a request and NBU currently reviews all new requests for the impact the proposed plans would have on the water supply. An additional independent study would be repetitive and cost prohibitive, so I do not think it is necessary. There is a misunderstanding by many people in the community that NBU and the City of New Braunfels have a water supply issue but we do not. We currently have plenty of water supply to accommodate development at projected growth rates to get us through at least 2047 and NBU is continuing to acquire additional water supplies NBU has water supplies through the Edwards Aquifer, Trinity Aquifer, Canyon Lake, Mid-River Basin project, and the new Aquifer Storage and Recovery project. NBU actually has excess water rights and is currently selling water to other water providers. However, NBU dropped the ball several years ago and failed to build the capital infrastructure to deliver the water we need as we grow. For the last couple of years, and the next couple of years, NBU is playing catch-up to build the infrastructure to deliver the water that people in our community need. This inability to deliver water has led to the misconception that there is not enough water supply. Further, the misconception that we get all of our water from the Edwards Aquifer and that if the Comal Springs are dry, we are out of water has led to people believing that we don't have sufficient water. We must continue to upgrade and expand and not get behind again once we get caught up so that the water can actually be delivered to the customers. Developers currently do not get NBU approval and do not get permits to build until NBU knows that they can deliver the water needed for any new development. Developers do need to pay for the impact they have on the water infrastructure, and I will ensure that developers pay the maximum amount allowed by law for the impact they have on our water system so the citizens who are already here are not bearing that burden.

(Roy) Neal Linnartz *(continued)*

3. Haven for Hope is a wonderful non-profit organization that is doing great things for the homeless population in San Antonio and surrounding communities. In fact, some of the non-profit organizations in New Braunfels partner with Haven for Hope to get services not offered in New Braunfels. Most of the non-profit organizations in New Braunfels are working to help people who want help and need some assistance with finances or other obstacles to help them with a home and get back on their feet. Most of the non-profits in New Braunfels are dealing with people who just need a little assistance to get back on their feet but these non-profits are not equipped to deal with the population of homeless that can't or don't want to get out of homelessness; those are the people that get referred to Haven for Hope. While it is a great model for dealing with the more severe homelessness that San Antonio is dealing with, the non-profits I spoke with said that New Braunfels doesn't have the chronic homeless problem that San Antonio does. They said New Braunfels does not need or have the resources to fund a program like Have for Hope at this point and that we are better off working on helping those we can as quickly as possible and referring the other out to entities that can deal with it more efficiently.

4. NBU really dropped the ball on being proactive and getting ahead of the problem with communications regarding the unusual winter storm of 2021. This failure to communicate with the customers did lead to a lack of trust. However, other than their failure to communicate proactively, their Board and staff have tried to act in the best interests of the ratepaying customers. During the storm, ERCOT maxed out the wholesale cost of electricity (\$9,000/kwh) to encourage additional supply to the grid, and the utility providers were forced to pay the high rates. This cost NBU \$90 million over a few days while their budget for an entire year is \$100 million. NBU is a community-owned, non-profit, electric provider so all costs are just passed along to the customers without any profit. NBU, like the other utility providers across the state, had to borrow money to pay for the power that was purchased during the storm. Some utility providers elected to finance that debt long-term (up to 30 years) but NBU elected to add a temporary fee to bills to get the debt paid off quicker and it has currently been paid in full. By paying this debt off quickly, NBU saved customers \$40 million in interest that would have been passed on to the customers. NBU is currently replenishing its capital reserves to be able to get better credit and be able to borrow at lower rates. NBU currently has an external audit every year and that audit is further reviewed by an independent consultant (The Energy Authority) which has found that NBU has acted responsibly.

5. The City of New Braunfels currently hires on qualifications and does not currently give any preferential treatment to candidates based on ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. As the leader of the City Council and supervisor to the City Manager, I would demand that hiring continue to be based on qualifications and that there be no preferential treatment to candidates based on ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.



Michael Alexander French

1. I am not a believer in this term, "Equity." This idea that has made its way into our minds and government institutions has made our country very divided. We used to believe in judging a person by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. I believe in "Equality" as this action that gives everyone the opportunity to achieve something and make a name for themselves. "Equity" is an extremely racist idea that chooses people only by the color of their skin. In some instances, the ones that are chosen have not achieved or have shown that they deserve the right to move forward. We must recognize those that study hard throughout life and hunger to achieve success, should not be left out to dry. They must be the ones to gain the rewards. For those that do not achieve and have no interest in doing so, they should not be rewarded everything for doing nothing.

I will make sure that we do not accept any HUD funding if any type of "Equity" language come with it. I am not afraid to say NO! I understand that HUD will bring low-income housing and cause redistricting of our schools to achieve racial equity. This idea that we must group a certain race of people into forced low-income housing and redistricting of schools is a Racist idea and will only injure and disparage families into doing nothing towards success. We must find a better way to help our community besides resorting to and racial separation between the citizen in the name of "Equity." This is madness and does not work. This idea destroys families, communities, and the country.

2. I will strongly reject any new developments moving forward if our educated independent studies show that the actual impact on our dire water supply is and will be negative. We must preserve and conserve our Edwards Aquifer, what's left of our Comal Springs, our Comal River, our Guadalupe River, our Landa Park Lake, and our Canyon Lake. We must do this for the future of our city for generations to come! For if we do not, then we will lose everything! We will lose our protected endangered species of wildlife, our water supply, and our lifeblood of this city.

3. I understand that the city of New Braunfels is opening three large buildings that will house the homeless. I did speak with one of the City Councilmen and stated that there are only about 30 or so without homes and are being sheltered within some hotel rooms. I believe that opening these large homeless shelters is a bad idea and can attract more homeless people from other cities when news gets out that our bed capacity has not been met. These make-shift shelters will only house the less fortunate people and will then be forgotten. This can lead to nefarious activities and possible drug use and crime. Not all our homeless are bad individuals, but you must understand that if you do not incentivize or help them move forward in life, they will resort to other activities that are less favorable.

I can appreciate and understand the mission of the Haven of Hope: "Haven for Hope" offers a place of hope and new beginnings by providing, coordinating, and delivering an efficient system of care for people experiencing homelessness. They address the root causes of homelessness by offering programming tailored to the specific needs of the individual. Their approach is person-centered, trauma-informed and recovery-oriented. The goal is to meet individuals where they are and support them as they move toward self-sufficiency."

They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, age or disability. We do need a program that can help our homeless. We do not need senseless warehouse-like buildings to house our homeless and then forget about.

Michael Alexander French *(continued)*

4. I am one of the many that paid a tremendous amount from the Great Texas Freeze during February 2021. This historical winter event was the first Billion-dollar disaster to hit the entire state of Texas. The Texas electric grid operator lost control of the power supply, leaving millions without access to electricity and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, along with all Texans, demanded accountability for the disaster. Our community had to endure unthinkable hardships due to this extremely cold snowy storm, which included very high-water bills, fuel charges, and electricity charges. NBU did an outstandingly poor job of spreading out the cost of the bills charged to the customers, leaving a great impact on everyone. Many citizens were struggling to pay the bills as their utilities were being shut off.

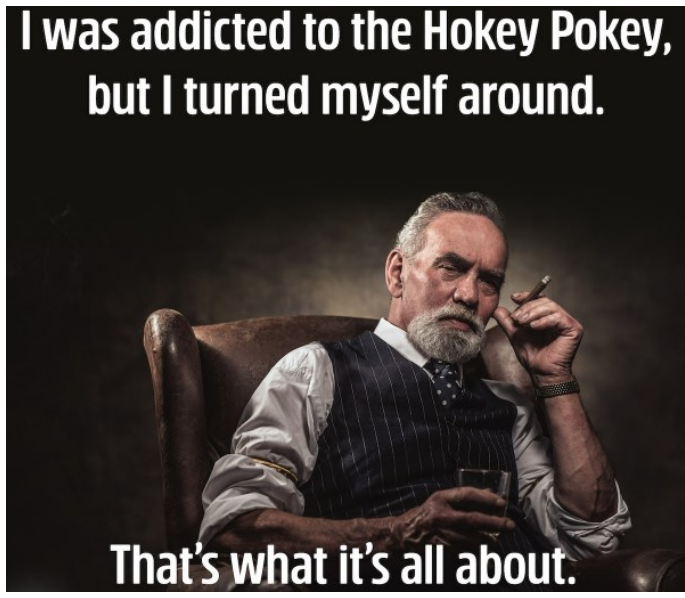
NBU should have seen the terrible impact of any outlandishly high utility bills. Was there no protocol for this natural disaster? NBU did nothing to diminish the burden of crushing bills to the customers. The total amount of charges billed to the customer should have been divided up into several months, if not even years. Our citizens were grossly neglected and abused by NBU and they deserved so much more. The disaster of the Giant Texas Storm was detrimental enough and to add an outrageous unpayable bill was unfathomable.

I am in favor of an audit to determine if there was a more equitable way to spread the cost out over the years.

5. I am not going to give in to the idea that our city must require employees to undergo diversity, inclusion and equity training. DIE will never outweigh any candidate that has the experience and qualifications to perform a job. When you base your hiring standards on the weakest link and racist actions to justify equity, you only diminish the potential of the profession or business. The work output will be lacking, and our communities will continue to divide between classes and races. I would require that all businesses within the City of New Braunfels hire the most qualified candidates regardless of ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

I was in the United States Army for 17 years and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan for 5½ years. We did not think of equity at any moment. We always achieved and succeeded from hard work, training, and the will to learn; to succeed and achieve. Our mighty military men and women are very qualified by their commitment to learn, adapt, and to survive. They were the most qualified to perform based on their achieved rank within their job and skills and that was understood by all. Equity would never achieve any results that are close to what I have experienced. Equity has no place in the military, including the civilian world.

Before an oil change, drain out all the old oil by giving the car a good firm squeeze.



Edward Martinez Jr.

1.) I'm aware the city council and boards will have to develop that plan. I have no administrative duties as per the charter section 3.05. that was created buy the council and approved by the citizens of new Braunfels. My job as mayor is to be the voice the people don't have behind closed doors and fight for them as much as I can. However, at the same time my job is to inform the people what's happening at all times behind closed doors and never keeping the citizens in the dark. If the people don't know what's going on than they can't have a voice. Anytime we the people can maintain distance from big government that is a great. We the people must learn to take care of ourselves as a community because this is where it all starts, this is the grassroots level where culture and our American way of life begins.

2.) What's already done cant be undone, so any future projects will have to have a study done on the environment before anything can be approved. The question is what will be acceptable to the people, there has to be a minimum and maximum the people are willing to present which will give an easy go or no go answer to the developers. As much as we want transparency, we must give it back. We the people must not only stand our ground but compromise when needed. The people must understand that the mayor has no administrative duties, he is there to make sure the establishment doesn't take advantage of the people and to inform the people at all times on what is going on with our city. I WILL DENY ANYTHING IN MY POWERS THAT BRINGS ANY HARM TO OUR BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY that the people don't want.

3.) My honest opinion on homeless is there is no real solution to it, everything people deem as good ideas are just band aids for an open wound plain and simple. That doesn't mean I don't care, but I live in reality and here in America you can't force people to do things they don't want to do. So building anything more then the places we have available already would add to those band aids. What we should ask is what can we do with what we have already that would further help the homeless be motivated to get back on their feet and join their brothers and sisters in the workforce. We the people have tremendous amount if intelligence in this community and in our city leadership as well as talking with the organizations here in town that work day in and day out with the homeless to develop a plane IN HOUSE without outside involvement. Of course, as always nothing gets done without the peoples voice being heard 1 st and foremost. There must be a bridge that connects the gap between the homeless and what as a community we can do to help so that there aren't people living on our streets and under our bridges. Not because we shame them if they do but because we realize no human should live like that when they have a lot to offer this great country, they just need to know they are part of the team and be instilled with the same determination and confidence that so many of us had instilled in us when we became part of a team.

4.) There is always more then 1 way to skin a cat but it doesn't mean your going to like all the ways. Audits are done every year on all the departments of the city as per the charter section 3.13. I cant give you the reason why they did what they did. My opinion is regardless of how they went about it they were going to make the money up just like any other person who lost money would. Either smaller longer payments or shorter bigger ones, either way people still aren't going to like it but I think more is due to misunderstanding how it works. Transparency is what's missing in our community which leads to trust being lost and people becoming unhappy with their leadership. However some of the blame also falls on we the people for not being more involved. Out of all the people that live in new Braunfels the charter passed. AT ALL TIMES I WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE PEOPLE. Anytime, anywhere and to talk about anything they feel like talking about Mayor is a full-time leadership position and must be treated with the most respect and love for the people.

Edward Martinez Jr. *(continued)*

5.) Ladies and gentlemen this whole CRT stuff is about the most annoying thing that has been created from the good idea fairies. In the real world of business no one cares about your color, race, religion, or anything else as long as you are the most qualified person for the job. I'm not even talking about education either, id rather someone with a drive and unrelenting will to win that is eager to learn over someone with education and average to bad attitude. You can always teach people but you can't fix peoples attitudes. The culture created in any organization is what drives it to succeed or fail, the evidence is everywhere. We the people are the ones who control the direction of our community. We the people must hold ourselves accountable, our children only grow up knowing what we teach them. I say we because this child doesn't sit at home all day, they go into the community and interact. We build a strong American 1 st community and leave all that CRT garbage out of it then there will be nothing to worry about aside from the little battles that are always going to go on with people that think they are lesbian trans alligators; those people will never stop. But this we know and our way of life we will defend and sacrifice as we always have. UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL!

Steven Voges, Candidate for City Council, District 6

1. Overall, the decision to accept or decline HUD funding and develop an equity plan is a complex one that depends on a variety of factors, including local needs and priorities, available resources, and legal requirements. Whether or not I would choose to accept federal funding and comply with the requirements is ultimately a decision that must be made. There may be some tradeoffs involved in accepting federal funding, as communities may be required to meet additional reporting and compliance requirements. However, federal funding can also provide critical resources to support the development of infrastructure and other projects that benefit the community as a whole, which is my main purpose as a city council member. I cannot clearly state whether I would be in favor or not, but if the HUD funds didn't benefit New Braunfels in anyway it would be an easy decision to make.
2. It is always good practice for developers and cities to conduct thorough environmental impact assessments, including water supply, before proceeding with any development plans. Such assessments should be used to identify potential negative impacts and inform decision-making by city council. If significant negative impact to the water supply is determined, I would absolutely deny moving forward with development.
3. I firmly believe that implementing a similar program in our community could have a significant impact on helping those experiencing homelessness. By providing resources such as meals, shelter, medical care, mental health services, education, job training, and support for addiction recovery. A program like Haven for Hope can help individuals overcome challenges by providing these resources and support, which ultimately fosters a successful transition back into society.
4. There is no doubt that the unexpected winter storm put a lot of strain on utility companies across the state, including NBU. However, it is important to ensure that the cost burden is distributed equitable among customers to avoid further distrust and dissatisfaction. I think it would definitely be a good idea to conduct an audit to determine if there is a more efficient and equitable way to spread out the costs over the years. This would not only help alleviate the financial burden on NBU customers, but it would also help NBU regain the trust from New Braunfels residents. In the meantime, New Braunfels city council should be ensuring NBU is prepared for the future and residents never have to go through a similar situation.
5. When it comes to hiring practices, it is essential to consider both qualifications and background. It is important to assess the criteria used to evaluate candidates, including skills, experience, and personal qualities. By creating clear and objective standards, we can reduce biases and increase the likelihood of hiring the most qualified team, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Candidates for New Braunfels ISD School Board, at-large seat, are James William (Bill) Lewis III and Kimberley Goodwin, and Falon Cochran. Only Lewis and Goodwin responded. The questions and their responses are below.

Questions:

1. Are you in favor of withdrawing from the Texas Association of School Boards?
2. Do you feel that parents have the right to respectfully submit concerns and be heard at school board meetings?
3. Do you feel parents have the right to question curriculums and review the curriculum being used?
4. Do you feel parents have the right to view which books are available to their students in the school library, and are you in favor of a process if not already in place to review objectionable and/or age-inappropriate material?
5. Do you feel that parents should be involved in the strategic planning for the school district?
6. Would you oppose a Pride Week if the administration proposed one, such as Austin ISD does yearly, where campuses are provided material meant to engage, educate, and inspire?
7. The 88th Legislature has had several significant bills filed which would have a direct impact on school funding, such as doing away with the M&O portion of funding, and school choice, where funds would be taken from the school district to follow the student. Given that roughly 80% of the budget is staffing, and retaining quality staff is highly competitive, where would you look first to curtail expenses?
8. A bill has been filed which would allow a school district to have a School Protection Force made up of former law enforcement, military veterans, and other competent individuals. The force would be developed by the county sheriff, and individuals would be screened by him with criteria put forth in the bill. This would only be to protect from bodily harm in the event of a threat. Do you see this as something that is needed and would it be beneficial in our school districts?

Kimberley Goodwin, candidate for New Braunfels ISD School Board

1. I think the strength of the Texas Association of School Boards is its ability to bring together school boards from across the state to network and share ideas; however, when this organization (or any other) advocates for reform that contradicts the majority of parents and voters, I think our school board should terminate the relationship. We live in a society where we have the choice to support the things that we believe in and discard the things we don't, and as a Trustee and a voter, the voters' consensus on issues should always be honored.

School Boards are not required to be a member of the Texas Association of School Boards and there are other vendors available that offer the same resources.

2. Parents should absolutely retain the right to submit their concerns and be heard at any level. NBISD provides a venue for parents wanting to speak to the Board directly. They have the ability to schedule a five minute segment on the monthly board agenda on the NBISD website under this link: [Public Comment at Board Meetings - New Braunfels Independent School District \(nbisd.org\)](#) I highly encourage anyone to attend the monthly meetings and voice their concerns and/or praises. Having attended these meetings myself since October 2022, I would suggest to those parents wishing to voice a concern: do some research and come to the board with a presentation that includes, how the issue is affecting their child, and facts and data to support what they would like to see as an outcome.

3. As a parent myself, I think having the right to know and understand what our children are being taught is crucial to the raising of my children. Parents currently have the ability to review the curriculum being utilized in our schools via a web search. All grades curriculum is available at the following link: [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills|Texas Education Agency](#). Parents should review their child's curriculum, and if there are concerns, present those to the proper body. These standards are set by the State with little local control; however, I do believe parents should play an active role in their child's education and be knowledgeable about what their children are being taught.

Kimberley Goodwin, candidate for New Braunfels ISD School Board (*continued*)

4. Parents have the right to review the book listings in the libraries currently and yes, they should. While I am not in favor of broadly banning literature or content to placate a minority group, I am certainly in favor of ensuring that material and content are placed in age-appropriate categories. I believe the implementation of a parent/teacher curriculum advisory group could greatly enhance our ability to present the proper content to the proper grade level, while considering the opinions of both teachers and parents.

5. I do feel that parents should be involved in strategic planning to a certain extent. The academic success of their children is greatly impacted by decisions that are made at the board level and their recommendations should be sought after and considered by any Trustee. NBISD has attempted to engage parents through surveys. As a parent, I have taken these surveys seriously and shared them with other parents. I do think that NBISD could do a better job in marketing the volunteer opportunities available within the district. Currently, there are multiple avenues available for parents and community members to provide input for the strategic planning and other district committees. I highly encourage all individuals wanting to get involved to reach out to the departments and campuses.

6. While I do support the ability for students of like minds, talents, beliefs, and lifestyles to congregate in clubs, groups and other school organizations, I do not agree that an entire school should be subject to celebrating any one club, group or organization individually. The topic, belief or content of certain clubs may be viewed as controversial to some, and I do not believe that any student, teacher or staff should be forced to support anything that may go against their beliefs.

7. As an auditor, budgeting is my strength and regardless of the outcome of the bills before the House, I will largely be looking at how the district spends money and how we can be more fiscally responsible, not only in teacher retention, but in all areas. With that said, the passage of either of these bills would be detrimental to our school budget. As a trustee I would look for areas of the budget to identify surpluses, areas where the current budget does not justify the intended outcome, and for new and unconventional ways to incentivize our teachers.

8. One of my highest priorities as a Trustee will be providing security at our schools, district-wide. I recently met with the Comal County Sheriff to share some of my security strategies that I would like to implement if I am elected. Because safety is a growing concern for parents, teachers, and students, I believe armed security is needed at every school. Providing this type of authority at the schools will do several things for our staff and students. First and foremost, it will provide a sense of security for those on campus, which in today's climate is badly needed. Secondly, it will reduce the attractiveness of our schools as a likely target for those wishing to do harm; and finally, it will remove underlying distractions, and detrimental student behaviors that hinder our teachers from teaching.

In addition to armed security, there are other initiatives concerning physical building security that I think warrant our attention as well, but School Safety Officers are the highest priority.

James William (Bill) Lewis III, candidate for New Braunfels ISD School Board

1. TASB has no regulatory, legal, or judicial authority over any school district or school board. NBISD will continue to uphold our community values to do what is right.

2. Yes. I believe that parents do have the right to submit concerns and be heard at board meetings but there needs to be better relationships built outside the boardroom. A successful school board should be transparent and accessible to the community. There must be meaningful dialogue with parents and community members to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students and families. The best board members communicate effectively, openly, and honestly with the community to ensure that everyone is informed and has an opportunity to be engaged. I will be accessible to stakeholders.

James William (Bill) Lewis III, candidate for New Braunfels ISD School Board (*continued*)

3. Yes. Students perform best when their parents are engaged and involved in their education. A healthy school district welcomes and encourages such involvement. Parents absolutely have the right to question and review curriculum. The Texas Education Code Chapter 26 includes the following parental rights:

1. reasonable access to the school principal,
2. access to all student records,
3. review each test administered to the child after the test is administered,
4. a district must provide parents access to instructional materials,
5. and the right to temporarily remove their child from instruction or another school activity when it conflicts with the parents' religious or moral beliefs.

4. Absolutely. The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires the district to provide parents access to instructional materials which includes library books. NBISD has Board Policy EF(LOCAL) that provides a process for anyone to challenge an instructional material.

5. Yes. Parents, business owners, and the community should all be represented in strategic planning and included in the decision making process.

6. Kids should not be used to support political agendas or make political statements. School districts welcome all kids that walk through the doors and focus resources on teaching the state approved standards. Districts should support teachers and students in their academics and all school related endeavors.

7. NBISD is scheduled to return millions of dollars back to the state. These "Robin Hood" dollars go back into the state's general fund. Those dollars should be returned to the taxpayers of New Braunfels and not placed in the state's coffers. The school board has the responsibility to approve a balanced budget that aligns with the district's strategic plan and instructional priorities. All programs, purchases, and practices must be continually evaluated to measure effectiveness and determine if funding should continue, be adjusted or concluded. An efficiency audit would be the first step in this process.

8. The bill HB 2811 is still in the early stages and was recently referred to the Youth Health & Safety committee. I will hold specific comments until more information has been released.

I am open to considering all options. Any plan that moves forward needs to be comprehensive in nature and inclusive of law enforcement. The safety of everyone in our schools is too important to rely exclusively on volunteer efforts.

Candidates for Comal ISD School Board, District 4, are Russell Garner and Garrison Maurer. Only Russell Garner responded. The questions and his response are below:

Russell Garner, candidate for Comal ISD School Board District 6:

Question 1: Are you in favor of withdrawing from the Texas Association of School Boards?

TASB provides important resources and training for school boards throughout Texas, most of which is non-partisan in nature. However, I do understand the concern voiced by conservatives that TASB has become too partisan/progressive as an organization. I would be in favor of withdrawing from TASB with other like-minded districts who could form a new organization to share resources. If we withdraw from TASB, we must have a resource-sharing plan with other districts to ensure our school board has the training/resources needed to succeed and meet legal guidelines. We do not want to add any resource burden to our taxpayers.

While withdrawing from TASB is an option, the current Comal ISD school board is able to utilize the resources and training provided by TASB without being influenced by the progressive/partisan aspects of TASB. Our board shares the common values of our community, and we are united in our beliefs to do the best for ALL STUDENTS. We are not influenced by negative political agendas which are not in the best interest of ALL STUDENTS.

Russell Garner, candidate for Comal ISD School Board District 6: *(continued)*

Question 2: Do you feel that parents have the right to respectfully submit concerns and be heard at board meetings?

YES! Parents should always be encouraged to speak at all school board meetings as a part of normal civil discourse. In Comal ISD, all trustees encourage parents to attend school board meetings and speak to the board during the allotted time. Parent participation in public education is critical to ensure the best outcome for ALL STUDENTS. To give each child the best chance to succeed, each parent should be involved in the educational process. Administrators, teachers, counselors, coaches, and parents should work as a team on behalf of each student to ensure the success of each student. If a parent has a concern about any part of the educational process, they should speak with the teacher or administrator on their child's campus. However, if the parent is not satisfied with the response from the campus, or they have more of a philosophical disagreement with the educational process, it would be perfectly justifiable for that parent to speak at a school board meeting to ensure the school board is aware of the issue. There should never be a restriction on parents being able to speak civilly at school board meetings. Civil discourse is critical to the success of democracy and public education.

Question 3: Do you feel that parents have the right to question curriculums and review curriculum being utilized?

YES! Public School Curriculum is guided by the Texas Education Agency's curriculum standards, which are called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and can be found on the TEA website. The resources for executing this curriculum are identified and procured by the professionals on the superintendent's staff with oversight from the school board. The Comal ISD website has significant detailed information on all of the curriculum utilized in CISD:

<https://www.comalisd.org/apps/pages/curriculum/subjects>.

Additionally, there is contact information for the specific curriculum experts on Dr. Chapman's staff. As a school board trustee, I encourage all parents to be involved in their child's education, to include reviewing the curriculum and questioning it if there are any concerns.

Question 4: Do you feel that parents have the right to view what books are available to their students in the school library and are you in favor of a process if not already in place to review objectionable and/or age inappropriate material?

YES! The CISD website has a link to a virtual library of all of our campuses: https://comalisd.follettdestiny.com/common/welcome.jsp?context=saas110_4265145 This website provides information on all books available at each campus. If a parent wanted to review a specific book and are unable to do so on the internet, I would encourage that parent to visit the campus and meet with an administrator/librarian to review the book.

Additionally, our district does have a process in place through a standing committee to review all library material, which I wholeheartedly support.

Question 5: Do you feel that parents should be involved in the strategic planning for the school district?

YES! In Comal ISD, parents ARE involved in strategic planning! This is a timely question, as Dr. Chapman recently announced the Collaborative Vision committee which will be singularly focused on strategic planning for CISD. This committee will begin later this month with 65 members made up of parents, staff, taxpayers, and other stakeholders. Each board member was given the opportunity to nominate one member. I nominated one parent and advocated for two other parents to be chosen for this committee.

Parent involvement in CISD strategic planning is critical to our success as a district! We cannot achieve the best outcomes for ALL STUDENTS without the involvement of their parents. Parents must be personally involved in their specific child's education, but also informed and involved on the direction of the district.

I will also highlight, ALL Comal ISD board members are CISD parents, and we put our role as parents above our role as board members.

Russell Garner, candidate for Comal ISD School Board District 6: *(continued)*

Question 6: Would you oppose a Pride Week if Administration proposed one such as Austin ISD does yearly where campuses are provided material meant to engage, educate, and inspire? I would oppose a Pride Week, which does not align with Comal ISD values. The leaders of Comal ISD support ALL STUDENTS and meet their needs by staying focused on education and providing the opportunities for the best outcomes for ALL STUDENTS.

Highly politically charged events like Pride Weeks do not advance our strategic goals as a school district and are not in the best interest of ALL STUDENTS.

Question 7: The 88th Legislature has had several significant bills filed which would have a direct impact on school funding such as doing away with the M&O portion of funding and school choice where funds would be taken from the school district to follow the student. Given that roughly 80% of the budget is staffing and retaining quality staff is highly competitive, where would you look first to curtail expenses?

Great question! There are a lot of questions about school finance tied up in the 88th Legislature. However, I'd like to highlight public education is currently funded based on student attendance, so we are already impacted financially by students leaving our district. Fortunately, due to the strength of the academics and other programs in Comal ISD, we are gaining students, not losing them.

In CISD, we already have a 20% homestead exemption for our taxpayers, so we are already funded at a level lower than surrounding districts. Because of this homestead exemption, we have been very fiscally conservative as a district with our budgets, so there is not an obvious area to cut expenses. However, I encourage Dr. Chapman to perform a third-party audit of our finances as our new superintendent to ensure we are being fiscally responsible as a district, and to find any possible areas of excess spending.

Based on my extensive studies of the CISD budget, and given the impact of inflation on our staff (whose salaries do equate to 83% of our M&O budget), I would expect the legislature to fund our schools at a higher level, while providing relief to taxpayers. The state currently has a significant rainy day fund which can help support a basic salary raise for teachers, while also helping lower the property tax rate for homeowners. While the possibility of removing the M&O portion of property taxes is a possibility, it would be very difficult to replace these funds without some other form of tax, which will have other consequences for Texas residents.

If the state were to reduce funding for public education, we would have to take dramatic steps to live within our budget while retaining staff, to include eliminating programs such as transportation (which is mandated), or extra-curriculars (which positively impact student attendance). There are no good choices in this scenario.

Question 8: A bill has been filed which would allow a school district to have a School Protection Force made up of former law enforcement, military veterans, and other competent individuals. The force would be developed by the county sheriff and individuals would be screened by him with criteria put forth in the bill. This would only be to protect from bodily harm in the event of a threat. Do you see this as something that is needed and would it be beneficial in our school districts?

Comal ISD has an excellent approach to security, as well as strong relationships with our local law enforcement agencies, all of whom prioritize student safety. Dr. Chapman is also leveraging school safety industry experts to ensure we have a holistic approach to safety and security in our processes, procedures, and facilities.

I am open to any ideas which can make our schools safer. However, the only way a School Protection Force would make our schools safer is if it was fully integrated into our organization and our security apparatus. We rely on the expertise of local law enforcement, and they must be fully supportive of a School Protection Force before we can bring it onto our campuses.

I am completely comfortable with the direction of Dr. Chapman with respect to school safety and security, which does not currently include a School Protection Force like described in the question. However, if such a force becomes mandated by law, I am confident Dr. Chapman can work with our local law enforcement to create such a force which will enhance safety and security for all of our students and staff.

RCOCC Community Outreach for 2023

New Braunfels Food Bank Partnership:

- ◆ Every dollar donated = 7 meals
- ◆ Need Food donated
- ◆ Volunteer opportunities (Packing Food & Garden)

Army Fischer House Partnership:

- ◆ Provides housing to Veterans whose families are getting medical attention at Brooke Army Medical Center
- ◆ Need monetary donations (tax deductible)
- ◆ Donations of supplies (toothbrushes, batteries, etc.)
- ◆ Volunteer opportunities as a team

Fourth of July Parade: New Braunfels:

- ◆ RCOCC Float
- ◆ Option to place Flags at one of the local bases
- ◆ We could partner with other Republican Clubs for the Flags

Freedom Walk: 9-11:

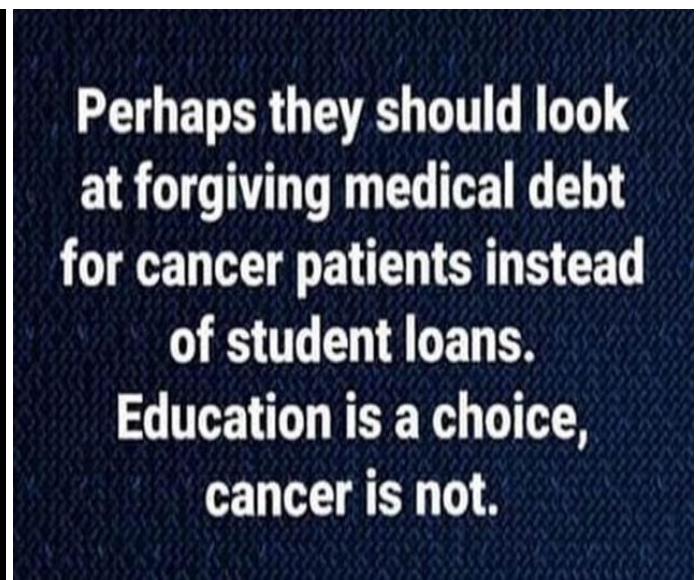
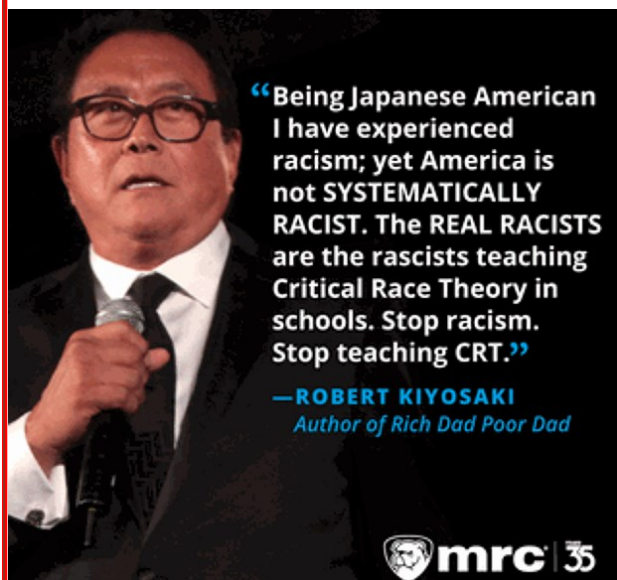
- ◆ Have RCOCC Members attend wearing RCOCC T-Shirts

Halloween: October 31:

- ◆ Have RCOCC Volunteers pass out Candy
- ◆ Collect Candy in September from volunteers

Christmas:

- ◆ RCOCC Parade
- ◆ Wreaths at Fort Sam or another military base
- ◆ We could partner with other Republican Clubs for the wreaths



Kerry J. Ledford, Ph.D.



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Volunteer,
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