



The Idaho Humanist

The Humanists of Idaho is a chapter of the American Humanist Association and the Council for Secular Humanism. We are a nonprofit corporation organized to promote ethical, democratic, and naturalistic Humanism in the state of Idaho through public awareness, education and community involvement.

April 2008

<http://Idaho.humanists.net>

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President's Message:

America's Relationship to the World

Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. It affirms the dignity of each human being and supports individual liberty consonant with social and planetary responsibility. Humanism advocates participatory democracy, the open society, human rights, and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as part of nature and holds that all values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political—have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological and ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

—*The Humanist*,
Official publication of the
American Humanist
Association

Several events this month have me contemplating the place of the United States in the world as a whole. The US is my homeland, and I plan to reside here the rest of my life, apart from occasional sight-seeing trips abroad. I love my country and what [I think] it stands for. While I love my country, I certainly do not love some aspects of its foreign policy!

So, what do I think the US stands for, or should stand for? I think of America as a nation of immigrants, founded by Enlightenment thinkers who wanted a limited government that would protect the “**inalienable rights**” of individuals to be free to seek “**life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**” I like the idea of participating in a worldwide marketplace of ideas, goods, and services, trading and interacting freely with other peaceful people.

Nancy and I have been watching the “**John Adams**” mini-series on HBO, getting another dose of the early history of the US government. I feel my vision of the US is what those founders who won out wanted it to be. However, the series has also portrayed many of the critical issues of those days in a way that makes it seem as though nothing has really changed. By this I mean that besides George Washington and John Adams steering an independent course largely neutral toward other nations, there were partisans favoring alliances with Britain or France. Some genuinely felt that would be best for the new nation. Some would benefit financially one way or the other. Some advocated war against France in 1802 because it would help assure the re-election of President John Adams and his partisans! No, Virginia, the Bush-Cheney oil families were not the first to push for war for personal or political gain!

I attended a lecture by **Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian peace activist** and international leader in many areas. Her articulate portrayal of the plight of the Palestinians under the current movement by Israel to build huge walls to seal the Palestinians into distinct, separate areas was quite a revelation to me. Here was a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, who has served in the governing councils of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), who was calmly marshalling observable facts and making quite reasonable demands for the rights of Palestinian people. This is not a point of view that is portrayed positively in the American press that I am exposed to. Indeed, it made Jimmy Carter's recent embrace of the term “Apartheid” to describe Israel's fencing in of the Palestinians seem rather appropriate. There are nasty people who launch explosives at each other on both sides of this dispute, and there are decent, reasonable people on both sides, as well. We cannot sit by and witness another Jewish Holocaust, and we cannot let Israel continue to bulldoze the Palestinians, either. (*Continued on page 2*)

(Continued from page 1) Some of us in HOI attended a recent lecture by **Marjane Satrapi**, author of the autobiographical comic book, and now animated movie, *Persepolis*. Ms. Satrapi came of age in Iran, under the Islamic revolution, spent time in Vienna as a teenager, and moved to Paris when she was 24. She had a very interesting range of viewpoints about events in Iran, and reactions to it. The name Persepolis was given to the capital city of Iran by the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great. Satrapi chose this title to hint at the 4,000-year history of Persia, as Iran has been known for much of history. She painted it as a place where people of many religions, skin colors, and ethnic backgrounds have lived basically peacefully among themselves for thousands of years. Their relations with outsiders are not always so peaceful, but many of those outsiders have been invaders. Much of the 20th century saw meddling by foreign governments, such as Britain, the US, and Iraq.

The current **war in Iraq**, initiated by George Bush on the pretext of protecting our country from Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, serves as a shining example of everything this country's foreign policy should *not* be: lies, conquest, embroiling our nation in the internal affairs of Iraq and in the international struggles between Iraq and Iran, torture, and abandonment of such humanistic international treaties as the Geneva Convention rules of war. It will take many decades for this country's best leaders to rebuild the proper role of America on the world stage and regain the trust and respect of other people in the world.

Our HOI meeting program for May will feature a speaker from the **Agency for New Americans**, discussing the problems faced by those immigrants who do come to this country legally to build a life in a place that is still, relatively speaking, a safe haven and land of opportunity. I hope you will join us!

I also hope that other members will contribute essays on how you view America's place in the world.

Humanists of Idaho Monthly Meetings

We have instituted a new format for our monthly meetings. From 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM we are now the Humanist Supper Club. We invite everyone to arrive whenever they can at the Flicks, try some of their delicious food for dinner and join the group upstairs for informal discussion and socializing. At 7:30 we will start our program.

4th Monday of the month
The Flicks in Boise
646 Fulton, at 6th and Myrtle
6:30 PM Humanist Supper Club
7:30 PM Program

**Because Memorial Day falls on the 4th Monday of May, we will be having our
 May Meeting - Tuesday, May 27th at the Flicks!!!**

HOI Meeting - Monday, April 28th

**Program: Ed Keener, of the Interfaith Alliance and Kessler-Keener Lectures
 Update on Sanctuary and Upcoming Lecture by Joanna Macy**

A retired Presbyterian minister, Ed Keener now serves as President of the Board of Interfaith Sanctuary Homeless Shelter and Services; on the board of Ten Thousand Villages; President of the Board of Kessler-Keener Lectures; is active in the Collister Neighborhood Association; works for public transportation on a citizens ACHD Advisory Committee and with the City of Boise on the State Street Transit Corridor Study. An avid vegetable and flower gardener, and bee keeper he has created a retreat place on the 3 acres of his north Boise property which includes a labyrinth for public use. "I retired early so I could return to Boise to work for social justice and peace in our community."

Ed will be discussing the progress of Sanctuary as well as the upcoming Kessler-Keener Lecture by Joanna Macy "The Great Turning to a Life Sustaining Society" Thursday, May 1st and workshop "Taking Heart in tough Times" on the weekend May 2nd - May 4th. For reservations contact Ed by phone 429-0266 or edmakeener@cableone.net.

"For peace, justice, and life on Earth, fresh ways of seeing arise, and ancient ways return." J. Macy.

HOI Officer Nominations in April

It's that time of year again. May is the time we elect board members and special chairs. These are the people who keep our organization going. Right now there are only four of us holding all the positions. We all would gladly hand over some of our responsibilities to anyone who would like to help out.

The board of Humanists of Idaho consists of four officers: a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Our bylaws are online at <http://idaho.humanists.net/meetings.html>. The duties of the officers are as follows:

- The President is the spokesperson for the organization and leads the membership meetings and board meetings.
- The Vice President administers elections and assists the president as needed.
- The Secretary keeps the minutes of business meetings.
- The Treasurer checks the mailbox, writes and deposits checks, and gives financial reports for our operating funds account.

The following positions are non-board positions.

- Webmaster. Maintains and updates the web site and email account for the organization.
- Yahoo Group Administrator. Approves users who request to join the Idaho Humanists Yahoo group, and sends email communications to the Yahoo group.
- Newsletter Editor. Publishes and prints the newsletter.
- Database Administrator. Maintains and updates the database of members and prospects used to generate mailing lists. Prints mailing labels for newsletter.
- Building Fund Treasurer. Takes up collection for and deposits checks into our Permanent Building Fund. This fund is a separate account from our operating account. By our rules, this person is not supposed to be a member of the board. 10% of membership dues must go into this fund. This ensures that deposits are made regularly and the fund remains active.
- Charitable Coordinator. Organizing participation in charitable activities such as answering phones for IPTV, sponsoring families for WCA, book drives for the local libraries, etc.
- Publicity Coordinator. Making sure meetings and other events are publicized and get listed in community calendars.

Nominations are open for all offices. If you would like to present yourself for nomination, please contact our Vice President Van Van Curen either by phone (376-5475), by email (saw2thking@aol.com), or at the meeting.

BUUF Discussion Group - Sunday, May 11th

Second Sunday of the Month at 11 AM

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City

3-4 grade room in the north wing

With the change of time we hope more will be able to attend the lively discussion we have in this group. Everyone is welcome whether you consider yourself a UU or not.

This year we are having a series of discussions on the language of faith and how different meanings of words can make for misunderstanding between people. In May the discussion will be the meaning of guilt and shame.

The Humanist Perspective on Channel 11

Tuesdays at 6:00 PM

"The Humanist Perspective" now airs each Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., and then repeats at 8:00-8:30 Wednesday morning on Boise's local cable access television station, TVTV Channel 11 on CableOne. To check on programming schedules, see the website at www.tvpatv.org. The Council for Secular Humanism (CSH) produces a weekly half-hour television program exploring issues of interest from a humanist point of view.

Parenting Beyond Belief: Anatomy of a Frequently Asked Question

COLUMN By DALE MCGOWAN, Ph.D. For HumanistNetworkNews.org April 16, 2008

(HNN's *Parenting Beyond Belief* column provides a forum for humanist parents and parenting experts to share their wisdom, advice and knowledge of parenting and family issues. Edited by Dale McGowan, the monthly column features guest writers and, occasionally, writing by Dale McGowan. All provide information and support about issues affecting freethought parents and children in the 21st century.)

In a recent article in USA Today called "Am I raising atheist children?", author Nica Lalli addressed a common question for nonreligious parents: "**How would you respond if one of your children became religious?**" As the topic went rippling through the nonreligious blogosphere, both the consensus inside nonreligious parenting and the false assumptions outside of it were revealed in comment threads. Like so many questions we hear, the way it is asked is at least as revealing as any answer. Sometimes I can barely hear the question itself for the clatter of the thrown gauntlet. The tone of the question often implies that all my high-minded claims of parental openness are a self-deluding sham--that hearing that one of my kids had chosen to identify with religion would cause me to fly into an icon-smashing, garment-tearing, child-disowning rage, well before the child had reached the stirring refrain of "Jesus Loves Me."

There's a strong consensus among nonreligious parents against putting worldview labels on our children or guiding them by the nose into our own. It's not unanimous; some of the blog comments I've seen since Nica's piece made me wince, like the atheist mother who said she would not "let" her child identify with religion. Fortunately, no hot or staining beverages were in my mouth when I read that. Let? Let? I'm not even sure what that means. But that view is happily rare. Most of us are more committed to parenting our children toward genuine autonomy than churning out rubber stamps of ourselves.

One of the many problems with the question is the implication that religious identification is a single point of arrival, like the day a young adult's daemon takes a fixed form in *His Dark Materials* or palms begin flashing red in *Logan's Run*. Did it work that way for you--or did you pass through a number of stages and try on a number of hats along the way? I thought so. And see what a lovely person you turned out to be.

A close relative of mine went through a period of experimentation with different world views. After being a fairly conventional New Testament Christian for a while, she became something of a Manichaean dualist, believing the world was divided into good and evil, darkness and light. She eventually went through a sort of Einsteinian-pantheist phase before adopting a benevolent, utilitarian-humanism. Then she turned six.

I encourage my kids to try on as many beliefs as they wish and to switch back and forth whenever they feel drawn toward a different hat, confident that in the long run they will be better informed not only of the identity they choose, but of those they have declined. ere I to disown my kids each time they passed through a religious identity, I'd have to keep a lawyer on retainer. Now let's get specific. My child has become "religious," you say. Is it "Love-your-neighbor" religious...or "God-hates-fags" religious? "Four Chaplains" religious...or "Sept. 11 hijackers" religious? Dalai Lama...or Jerry Falwell?

Adding to the difficulties is the almost comic range of meaning of "religion." A good friend of mine has verses from the Book of Psalms scrolling around the walls of his bedroom and believes that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the sole path to salvation--yet describes himself as "not at all religious, really." Then you have the Unitarians--the majority of whom are nontheistic--who tend to insist, sometimes downright huffily, that they *are* religious. st as troubling as the idea that I'd protest any and all religious expressions in my children is the notion that I'd applaud any and all *nonreligious* outcomes. Tough many of the most ethical and humane folks I've known have been nonreligious, some of the most malignant and repugnant S.O.B.'s have been as well. So, then: Is it "Ayaan Hirsi Ali" nonreligious--or "Joe Stalin" nonreligious? Perhaps you can see why I consider the question, "What if your child becomes religious?" as unanswerably meaningless as, "What if your child becomes political?"

I have three compassionate, socially conscientious, smart, ethical kids, with every indication of remaining so. If they choose a religious expression, it's likely to be one that expresses those values. They might become liberal Quakers, or UUs, or progressive Episcopalians, or Buddhists, or Jains, framing their tendency toward goodness and conscience in a way different from but entirely respectable to my own way of seeing things. We could do far worse than a world of liberal Quakers.

If instead one of my kids were to identify with a more malignant religion, I'd express my concerns in no uncertain terms. But the *consequences* of the belief would be the main point of contention, not the fact that it is "religious." And my love for my child, it goes without saying, would be reduced by not so much as a hair on a flea on a neutrino's butt.

*Dale McGowan holds degrees in the arts and sciences from UC Berkeley, UCLA, and the University of Minnesota. Editor and co-author of the 2007 book *Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion*, he is currently at work on a follow-up titled *Raising Freethinkers: A Practical Guide to Parenting Beyond Belief*.*

A Book Report by Wally Keltner: “Reasons to Believe” by John Marks

I have just finished "Reasons to Believe", a 365 page trek through the conservative aspects of Christianity by John Marks. The author started as a journalist, and was a producer for 60 Minutes when he did the research for this book. Marks was born and reared in Texas, and was a "born again" Christian. Late in his teens or early in his twenties, as he puts it, he "lost his faith".

Marks' research work interfacing with today's Christians brought him down a "deja vu all over again" path of his own spiritual journey. He meets, interviews, and has extended visits with the top shelf, front line leaders and key followers within American Christianity, and some believers in Europe and Asia too. These players are the ten percent of the far right Christian community that exclude even their other 90% fellow travelers from being heaven bound. They live their lives in the mysticism and magic of their interpretations of the Bible. Although the book gets a bit over-immersed in some of the characters, it is a great education for the non-believer like me.

I thought I knew the Christian community since I once hailed from the greater Louisville, Kentucky area. I was a deer-in-the-headlight born again Baptist in my teens. John Marks taught me many things that I never knew about the extreme Christian movement. I also gained a much better understanding regarding the inseparable vastness between most of them and us non-believers. The true extreme Christian routinely puts all thought and deeds in the devil's domain unless the doer/believer is totally focused upon the Bible and Jesus. All good thoughts and humanitarian actions are simply a distraction and a slap in the Holy Trinity's face if they don't emanate from a Christian source recognized by them.

Marks describes the three main groups of Christians. First are the fundamentalists. They believe in a strict verbatim reading of the Bible and they have total buy-in to both testaments, Mosaic law, etc. These are the "God-the-Father" wing of conservative Christianity. The evangelicals are the "God-the-Son" bunch, and they spend their time leading us all to recognize Christ as the savior of mankind. The third group are the charismatics, the "God-the-Holy Ghost" group. These are the folks in the dervish-like trances with their hands in the air palms outfacing, eyes closed, and lost in the self-induced rapture that we see on television and in the movies.

There were a couple of traits of the triad of Christians that should concern us on the other side. First is their goal to turn our government back into their pipe dream of what is was and what it must again become. We're talking Ronnie Reagan and Dubya here – the Christian version of shira law jammed down our throats as it was before the American Revolution in a few of the colonies. Science would be controlled and subordinated to biblical interpretation. School prayer would return. Abstinence would become our family counseling and contraception. Stereotypical gender roles and persecution of homosexuals would again be the norm. This is an ugly picture indeed, and Marks brings us face-to-face with the leaders that espouse it, plan it, and attempt its implementation.

Another scary trait was the cunning and guile of the Christian recruiting. Within families, it begins with conception. Blastocysts, embryos, fetuses and infants are imprinted with Christianity with intensity. Youth in school and adults out in the world are all targets. The techniques are deception, mass hypnosis, coercion and browbeating that put the Amway distributors and carnival snake oil salesmen in the bush leagues. Schools are a great fishery for new souls since young folks are so susceptible to peer pressure from their own and the need to emulate respected adults. Any child unlucky enough to be born into this multi-dimensional web of holy-pocus lives in the jaws of a monster and may never escape or know spiritual freedom.

A third area for concern is the vast array of resources focused by Christianity. Billions of untaxed dollars and man-years of labor from the automatons of god and fellow travelers are very tough competitors to the simple logic, science, and tolerance of the non-believing community. And the non-rabid main stream believers often fund the crusade, unaware of the impact of their participation. When these same resources are focused through the lens of the religious right wing of the Republican Party, faith-based initiatives, sympathetic laws, and legal systems that look the other way, then our rights are indeed threatened.

A frustrating aspect of "Reasons to Believe" to me was John Marks' apparently flaccid, shallow personal spiritual tenets as a non-believer. He expressed significant inability to justify his own position, and never built upon his waffled stance. He seemed to have no awareness of the Bible's superstition and magic; its inaccuracies; contradictions; and shallow, narrow focus. He is still wading in the mire of his rejection of Jesus as Son of God, and has never reinforced or educated himself further about non-belief. He is in the grip of a fear of faith-loss, and has not experienced the freedom of thought and fellowship open to so many of us who choose to follow paths less taken.

"Reasons to Believe" is available through the Ada County Library system and well worth the reading. For the less interested reader, its layout is compatible with the scanning, skipping peruser. I recommend it for the studious non-believer wishing to understand a segment of the believing community, or perhaps even themselves.

Sweet Reason

Offering advice and commentary by Molleen Matsumura, "Sweet Reason" deals with the life-concerns and problems of humanists, secularists and nonreligious individuals

Dear Sweet Reason,

As an atheist, I am compelled to respond to questions of morality with reason. Which leaves me baffled as to why certain concepts are still so reviled in our society. I enjoy sleeping around. I'm not depressed, I'm not insecure, I'm not even a "sex addict". (Considering it's not a need, it's a desire which does not interfere with my personal/professional life.) I take every reasonable precaution; I use contraception and protection, with regular health check ups. Is there a legitimate rationale behind moral objection to promiscuity? Or is this a hangover from our Victorian mentality? Ethical Slut

Dear ES:

There's nothing inherently wrong with "sleeping around", but of course there are ethical concerns that go with this activity, and health issues are among them. The basic facts are available in the Guttmacher Institute's "Facts on Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United States".

Considering that some infections can be silent, that some have developed drug-resistant strains, and that it is possible to acquire an infection after your last testing, you cannot be fully ethical unless you make a point of telling each sexual partner that she or he is not "the only one".

I do have something to say about experimentation with multiple partners, but first I want to answer your question about our society's opposition to polyamory (a less judgmental word than "promiscuity"). For thing, any society can be tough on its nonconformists, and sexual nonconformists are no exception. But, the roots of our society's opposition to polyamory are broader and older than the Victorian era. Every society has rules governing the sexual behavior of its members. Two of the main reasons have been that there were not reliable means of contraception, or reliable cures for sexually transmitted infections.

Also, sometimes, access to sexual pleasure has been reserved for those in power--for example, a powerful man who had a harem had multiple partners, but no one else was supposed to have intercourse with these women. Marriage has also been used as a way of solidifying a relationship between the families of the marriage partners. Without reliable contraception, the only way to be sure of a child's parentage is to control the mother's sexual behavior. Even in societies that trace kinship through the mother, or are unaware of the father's role in reproduction, controlling sexual behavior has been a method for keeping social equilibrium.

Men's behavior is also controlled. For example, in some societies, a couple is supposed to refrain from sex for up to a year after birth. In some, men have been expected to refrain from intercourse before hunting. These are important, sometimes life-and-death matters, and it isn't surprising that the social and religious codes concerning sexual behavior are rigid, and deeply embedded. It's less than a hundred years since the invention of (relatively) reliable contraception and treatments for infection. It's going to take time for our society to adjust.

I think there are at least two important factors affecting social attitudes that arose *after* the "sexual revolution". First, there was already a split between those who thought sexual ethics should be liberalized, and those who did not. Sociologist Kristen Luker sums it up very well when she says that some people think sex is "sacred", while others think it's "natural". This split was deepened with the rise of the "Religious Right", and then, by coincidence, the AIDS epidemic occurred in the early days of their rise to power. That coincidence, and just plain politics, facilitated the current dominance of "abstinence only" sex education.

Another factor was a backlash by women. Women of the "boomer" generation generally had not been raised to be assertive. With the advent of good contraception, suddenly women were deprived of an automatic "defense" against the sexual desires of their dates, and it wasn't easy for them to say "no" simply because they felt like it. Also, married women found themselves stuck with the main responsibility for contraception even as they were discovering that the pill and IUD's sometimes have negative effects. These factors gave many women new reasons to feel that men's desires are exploitative. Feminists--and women in general--still have varying opinions about this issue.

In a world without this social background, we would still have to deal with the powerful emotions stirred by sexual attraction and sexual relationships. Frankly, I wish it were safer for young people to experiment while they learn the differences between sexual attraction, sexual compatibility, and love. Would jealousy still be a problem? Probably yes, at least part of the time. That would continue to be one more situation young people have to learn to handle. I get the impression you are older; you don't say whether you are single or married. Even if you are unmarried, or have an "open marriage", you could be playing with emotional fire.(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6) A sexual partner who is comfortable with your activities now could become uncomfortable if circumstances change (for example, if a traumatic event like losing their job makes them feel more insecure). Any time you run the risk of hurting someone, you run the risk of doing something immoral. It depends how you handle the situation. Of course, this is true not only of sexual relationships, but in most areas of life.

For now, it is important for you to be honest with others so at least their health is protected. That doesn't guarantee that someone who doesn't know his or her own heart might not eventually feel hurt by your life choices, but at least you would have warned them. It's also a good idea to watch for signs that someone who says (and maybe believes) that he or she doesn't mind, is in fact unhappy or jealous.

Dear Sweet Reason,

My daughter had a miscarriage in her fourth month, just days after sharing the news with her 4-year-old daughter and showing her ultrasound pictures of the baby. The husband's family is Catholic, but my daughter and husband do not go to church and they know how I feel about religion and stories about heaven and angels so I'm sure they stuck to the facts.

Tomorrow is my day with my granddaughter and I want to be ready with answers. What do I tell her where the baby went? She knows the concept of death and is extremely smart for her age, of course. She is MY grand daughter after all. No Angels

Dear Feet-on-the-Ground Grandma:

Sorry I could not answer your letter before your day with your granddaughter, but it's not too late for me to help you. Your family will continue to feel the impact of this loss, and my advice can still be useful. Meanwhile, I'll take a moment to remind all my readers that I cannot answer a question overnight. I give each question a lot of careful thought, and sometimes there is a backlog of letters to answer. If you are going to need advice for a special occasion, please try to write a few weeks ahead of time.

Your last sentence frames the way we need to look at your question. Yes, she is your granddaughter; but first, she is the child of her parents, who have most of the responsibility for her. In the long run, your relations with them will be better if you work with them on how to handle your granddaughter's questions about life. That doesn't mean you have to stop being yourself; and, you can tell them honestly if there is anything that you can't truthfully say--after all, kids can be pretty good at detecting when a grown-up is insincere.

Another good reason to talk things over with them is that you can avoid confusing your granddaughter with mixed messages, or making her feel like she's in the middle of a battle between the adults in her life.

I'm not so sure that, "Where did the baby go?" is a question that a four-year-old would come up with on her own, but she may hear about heaven from your in-laws (she's their grandchild, too). Don't take the initiative on this one--if it doesn't come up, don't bring it up yourself.

If it does, simply tell her, "Some people think so, and it seems to help them feel better to think so. I think when someone dies, they just stop." Let the conversation move on to talking about *feelings*. For example, is your granddaughter worried about her parents' sadness? Reassure her that they will feel better in a while. Ask her how she feels, too. If she's sad, let her know that she will feel better in a while, too. Hug her or comfort her in whatever way works best for the two of you.

If she had misgivings about the new baby appearing in the family, treat that as normal--it is. Tell her that brothers and sisters usually become good friends; sometimes they fight, but so do good friends. With a child so young, the conversation will probably be short. Move on when she's ready to move on, and don't be surprised if the topic pops up again in a later visit.

A miscarriage is different from other kinds of death. Ask your daughter if she has plans to try again, what she is saying to your grandchild about that, and what would be OK for you to say. Would it be all right for you to say in simple language that not every pregnancy leads to a birth (that happens to be the truth)?

If it's OK with your daughter, you could try planting some nasturtium seeds (or some other large, easily counted seed in starter pots), and let your granddaughter see for herself that not all seeds sprout. You don't need to say anything about it--that might be too heavy-handed; it would just be a parallel that your granddaughter might see for herself.

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To request advice from Sweet Reason, use the anonymous web form at http://humaniststudies.org/ask_sweetreason.html
OR send postal mail to: Institute for Humanist Studies, 48 Howard St., Albany, NY 12207, ATTN: Sweet Reason

Humanists Celebrate Secular Seasons

By DANIEL KUHNS HumanistNetworkNews.org April 9, 2008

Many secularists reluctantly take part in religious holidays simply because they can't find an alternative. But you do not need religious holidays to find a reason to spend time with friends and family. The calendar is full of special secular days to celebrate and enjoy with friends and family. Starting this month, the Institute for Humanist Studies is making it easier to find out about those secular celebrations.

The Institute has adopted the Secular Seasons website in an effort to better equip humanists with alternatives to religious holidays and also to provide information about secular ceremonies for weddings, funerals and other rites of passage. "IHS was created to use new media to promote humanism in positive and collaborative ways, and I have always felt Secular Seasons fit perfectly with that innovative approach," said Matt Cherry, IHS executive director, who has taken the lead in revamping the Secular Seasons website.

"Secular Seasons is a wonderful resource for groups and also for individuals. It gives freethought groups everything they need to organize attractive events, at the same time as providing valuable resources for the general public who are looking for secular celebrations that reflect their positive values." The Secular Seasons website promotes secular celebrations, holidays and events. Many of these are inclusive events that everyone -- religious and nonreligious alike -- can enjoy. Some are designed specifically for humanists, atheists, and other freethinking people who reject religion. All of them provide positive opportunities for celebration for an increasingly diverse society.

Amanda Chesworth, one of the original creators of Secular Seasons, handed over the project to the Institute for Humanist Studies this winter. Since then, Cherry and other IHS staffers have been working behind the scenes to add more information to the site and develop interactive features. The Institute is also inviting people to contribute to the Secular Seasons website.

"We invite freethinkers everywhere to join us by sharing their ideas for humanist holidays and secular celebrations," Cherry said. "It could be an entirely new celebration you have created, or just a sample wording for a secular 'Grace' before dinner. Please share it with us so that we can share it with the world."

Daniel Kuhns is an intern of the Institute for Humanist Studies. He is a senior at the University at Albany, majoring in sociology. As a U.S. Marine 1st Marine Division, 5th Marines in 2003, he was in the second vehicle to enter Iraq and the second vehicle to enter Baghdad as part of "Operation Iraqi Freedom". (In other words, he was one of those atheists in a "foxhole" that preachers and tv newscasters often deny the existence of.)

Rational Day of Thought - National Day of Reason

First Thursday in May

The National Day of Reason is a day when all Americans can come together to celebrate rational thinking. Anybody can take part in this inclusive day, regardless of their worldview.

The National Day of Reason began as a secular response to the federally-supported National Day of Prayer, which is viewed as discriminatory and unconstitutional. In 2003 national leaders from within the "community of reason"-- representing groups identified as atheists, humanists, freethinkers, and Brights --endorsed a National Day of Reason to be held in parallel with the National Day of Prayer, on the first Thursday in May. The goal is to celebrate reason and to raise public awareness about the persistent threat to religious liberty posed by government intrusion into the private sphere of worship.

Idaho's Official State Observance of Holocaust Remembrance

Thursday, May 1, 2008. Noon,

Ada County Court House, 200 Front Street in downtown Boise, Commissioner's hearing room.

HOI Membership

We have 41 full memberships and 3 newsletter subscribers.

To those of you who have received this newsletter complimentary, I hope you will decide to join our group. Please fill out the form below and send in the payment for the level of involvement you wish to the address below.

Nancy Rolig, Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Membership Administrator

<p style="text-align: center;">Humanists of Idaho Board</p> <p>President: Paul Rolig377-0535 or roligpd@spro.net Vice President: Van Van Curen:.....376-5475 or saw2thking@aol.com Secretary: Nancy Rolig..... 377-0535 or nrolig@spro.net Treasurer: Jan Rowe376-5475 or janiejolee1@aol.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Auxiliary Positions</p> <p>Webmaster/Yahoo Group Administrator:..... Van Van Curen 376-5475 OR saw2thking@aol.com Newsletter Editor/membership Administrator:.....Nancy Rolig 377-0535 or nrolig@spro.net 9877 W. Ripley St. Boise 83704 Charitable Giving Coordinator:Jan Rowe 376-5475 603 or janiejolee1@aol.com Publicity Chair:.....Van Van Curen: 376-5475 or saw2thking@aol.com Permanent Building Fund:Paul Rolig roligpd@spro.net 9877 W. Ripley St., Boise 83704</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Organization Information</p> <p>Your support of this local chapter with your membership, donations and ideas is greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Mailing Address: Humanists of Idaho P.O. Box 44913 Boise, ID 83711-0913</p> <p>Website: http://Idaho.humanists.net Yahoo Group: idaho-humanists@yahoo.com Email Address: Idaho@humanists.net</p>
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Humanists of Idaho Membership and Donation Form

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City, state, zip code _____

Phone and e-mail address _____

- \$25 **Individual** annual membership and Newsletter subscription
- \$45 **Couple** annual membership and Newsletter subscription
- \$15 Newsletter subscription only
- \$___ donation to help promote public awareness of Humanism
- \$___ Humanists of Idaho Permanent Building Fund Donation

Mail to:
Humanists of Idaho
P.O. Box 44913
Boise, ID 83711-0913

**Because Memorial Day falls on the 4th Monday of May, we will be having our
May Meeting - Tuesday, May 27th at the Flicks!!!**

Moments & Milestones

Weddings and other family celebrations Custom designed to suit the needs & preferences of the participants located in Boise, but serving most of Idaho

*Services performed by **D. G. Van Curen***

A Celebrant, Ordained through the Humanist Celebrant Certification Committee

www.angelfire.com/id/vancuren/weddings.html



Humanists of Idaho
P.O. Box 44913
Boise, ID 83711-0913

Monday, April 28th – HOI Monthly Meeting

6:30 PM Humanist Supper Club, 7:30 PM Program: Ed Keener/Sanctuary

Thursday, May 1, Noon

Idaho's Official State Observance of Holocaust Remembrance

Ada County Court House, 200 Front Street in downtown Boise, Commissioner's hearing room

Thursday, May 1, 7:30 PM “The Great Turning to a Life-Sustaining Society”

Cathedral of the Rockies, Joanna Macy Cost is \$10.

Friday, May 2, 2008, Interactive Workshop: “Taking Heart in Tough Times”

Joanna Macy will begin a 2 ½ day Coming Back to Life Practices. \$125.

Sunday, May 11th , 11:00 AM – BUUF Humanist Group

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City,