

The Idaho Humanist

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

April 2001

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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 super-naturalism, 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

Video Screening

We have obtained a video tape of *The Humanist Perspective*, a weekly TV talk show produced by the Council for Secular Humanism, now showing on cable access channels in four states. We are investigating whether we could sponsor the show to be shown on TVTV, the Boise cable access channel.

A screening of the 30 minute video will be held on Thursday, April 19 at 8 PM at the Struble's house, 7280 Hidden Valley Drive, Boise. For directions call 362-6873. The tape sent to us includes an interview with Paul Kurtz on "Resisting the Transcendental Temptation".

Center for Inquiry Expansion

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) West has purchased a building on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. The building will include a meeting hall for 200-250 people, library, cafe, bookstore, offices, seminar rooms, and a media center for movie and media production. The cost of the purchase and three year renovation is \$2.5 million. The center will provide regional offices for the Council for Secular Humanism and other secular groups. Previously CFI West had been operating out of a rented facility in the Los Angeles area for the past several years.

Officer Elections

Humanists of Idaho will be holding annual officer elections at the May 3 membership meeting. Candidates have announced for President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Candidates are still needed for the position of Secretary. If you would like to be nominated to any of these positions, please contact Nicolle Foster at 344-4622.

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New Humanist Education Initiative on the Internet

The Institute for Humanists Studies (IHS) has announced the Continuum of Humanist Education (COHE), a new Internet-based distance education program to be introduced in 2001. This comprehensive “e-learning” project will provide authoritative, engaging and highly individualized humanistic education opportunities at a range of interest levels, from brief “infotainment” for the mildly curious to in-depth college-level courses for more serious students. The IHS-COHE will also serve a wide range of students, from high school age upwards. These courses will be provided free or at much lower costs than other on-line alternatives. This flagship IHS program is being designed to take full advantage of the new opportunities for educational outreach provided by the Internet.

By using IHS’s interactive web sites, COHE students will be able to take courses, network with fellow students, mentors, and faculty, and have their course work evaluated by experts, all from the comfort of their own homes or offices. The Internet will also enable the COHE to be world-wide in both its faculty and students, and serve the needs of humanists and humanist organizations on a truly global scale.

Commitments to work with the COHE have already been obtained from faculty and student groups in the U.S. and abroad, and many more are expected to follow. In line with the Institute’s emphasis on humanists cooperation, the Institute will also promote and cooperate with the educational programs of other humanist organizations.

Dr. Reid Johnson, a well known higher education consultant and humanist educator, will be Director of the IHS-COHE Program, and is committed to having at least a dozen new courses on-line this year. Prospective faculty, students, and other supporters or interested parties are encouraged to get more information on COHE by contacting Dr. Johnson, IHS

Director of Educational Services at ihsed-dir@humaniststudies.org or coherdir@humaniststudies.org. Future announcements will mark significant milestones in the developments and implementations of the COHE. For more information visit www.humaniststudies.org.

Cosmos: 20 Years Later

By Chris Struble

If I were to compile a list of well-known skeptics and humanists of the late twentieth century, one name would be near the top of both lists: Carl Sagan. Carl Sagan possessed an imaginative mind, a commitment to science and reason, and a compassionate concern for the earth and all its inhabitants.

One of Dr. Sagan’s greatest popular works was the Cosmos video series, originally filmed in 1980. Cosmos comes from the Greek for “order of the universe”.

Cosmos Studios (www.carlsagan.com) has released an updated version of the 13-hour series, including new footage from NASA’s planetary explorations, along with a shorter compilation called The Best of Cosmos. Both feature an introduction by Ann Druyan, Dr. Sagan’s wife and co-producer.

I vaguely remembered seeing the series as a teenager, but until The Best of Cosmos was featured on public television recently, and I bought the entire set, I hadn’t realized how much it must have influenced my thinking. This video series is truly a treasure. If anyone would like to borrow some of the videos, let me know.

In related news, Cosmos Studios and The Planetary Society are sponsoring a space flight. A solar sail will be launched into Earth orbit in October from a Russian nuclear submarine on a former ICBM. Talk about beating swords into plowshares. Dr. Sagan would have been proud.

Member News

Congratulations to Paul Verhage, who has accepted a teaching position at the D.A.D. Technical Center. Paul also has an electronics article published in the current addition of the Circuit Cellar magazine. Paul will also be presenting on his near space project at Astronomy Day, April 28 at the Discovery Center of Idaho.

Congratulations also to Nicolle, who is now scheduled for 7 weddings as of this writing.

Happy Birthday to John Harms (April 13) and Nicolle (May 14).

If you have member news, please contact LeAnne Struble at 362-6873

Chocolat: A great humanist movie!

By Nancy and Paul Rolig

The synopsis in the Statesman said, "An appealing fable about the effect of a new chocolate shop in a conservative French village of the 1950s." Let us fill you in just a bit more. The story centers on a woman, with a daughter, and without a husband, who moves to a small village. She is met with disapproval by the town mayor, who is also influential in the village church -- of course, everyone in the village is expected to attend the Roman Catholic church. This woman does not.

May Meeting

This month's membership meeting will be on Thursday, May 3 at 7:30 PM, at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton, Boise.

Agenda will include: Officer reports, video screening, Humanist Night Out, officer elections.

It is just at the beginning of Lent, and the mayor is concerned that everyone deny himself some small pleasure, to get closer to God. Our protagonist incurs his wrath by opening a chocolate shop and tempting the villagers with sweets, one of life's pleasures.

Finally, some river people tie up their boats near the village. Perhaps you can guess who spreads the accusations and fear that they are evil people, and who befriends them, and treats them as equals.

The final resolution of the conflict made these humanists cheer, and affirmed the idea that life is to live and enjoy, instead of to suffer through and prepare for death. Add to that message some good acting and superb photography, and you get quite an enjoyable movie.

We saw it at Edwards Cinemas, but it is also playing at the Flicks.

April Meeting

Eight members attended the meeting on April 5.

Chris Struble has contacted the CSH about getting their show The Humanist Perspective broadcast on TVTV in Idaho.

Paul Rolig suggested we have a Humanist Night Out instead of one of our membership meetings this summer, so we can participate in First Thursday activities downtown.

Nicolle Foster gave a presentation on her wedding services. There was discussion on whether HoI should get part of the proceeds from these services. It was decided that HoI would continue to pay for the phone line and listing, and that Nicolle was free to donate part of the proceeds from her wedding services as she saw fit.

Progress is being made on our application for non-profit status. We expect to file it this month, and hopefully be able to apply for grants by early next year.

Editorial letters

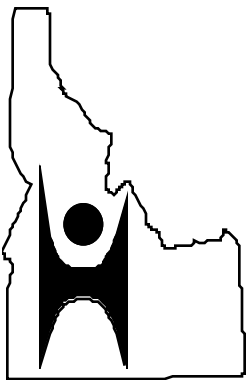
Paul Rolig will be checking the editorial pages of the Idaho Statesman for letters to the editor written by HoI members, and bringing them to meetings. We would like to reprint letters by our members as space permits. If you would not like your letters reprinted in the newsletter, please let us know.

Upcoming Events

April 19, 2001 Video screening of The Humanist
Perspective, 8 PM (see front page for details)

May 3, 2001 General Membership Meeting
7:30 PM at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton

June 7, 2001 Humanists Night Out (see inside for details)
7:30 PM at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton



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