



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.

August 2008

<http://Idaho.humanists.net>

Idaho@humanists.net

President's Message:

Church-State Separation and Presidential Politics

Last month in this space I recounted some Idaho issues involving church-state separation. This month I will recap the August 16 appearance of major party Presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain at the "Civil Forum" hosted by Rick Warren's Saddleback Church.

Rick Warren is the best-selling author of books such as "The Purpose-Driven Life." He has built his Saddleback Church in the city of Lake Forest, in Orange County, California, into a 20,000+ member evangelical Christian mega-church. He invited Obama and McCain, but none of the minor party candidates, to a discussion of their faith and how their worldviews would guide them in the Presidency.

Warren held hour-long conversations with each candidate. The questions were selected personally by Warren, and supposedly neither candidate had prior knowledge of the specific questions. Obama had won the coin toss and got the first hour. McCain had to wait where he could not hear the questions or Obama's answers. The event was broadcast live on CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC.

There was quite a bit of advance criticism from various quarters about one minister in one conservative, evangelical church being in such command of a rare joint appearance of the major party candidates. "Candidates should appeal to the voters based on their qualifications for office and their stands on the issues, not their religious beliefs," said Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "This event continues the campaign spiral into religious matters. Americans want to hear the candidates' views on important issues such as constitutional rights, public education, the Iraq War and the economy."

Warren brushed off such criticism in his opening statements. I was *somewhat* relieved when Warren stated at the beginning, "I believe in the separation of church and state, but I do not believe in the separation of politics from religion." It's a pretty fine distinction, but I take that to mean that Warren would not say, "Government must enforce my religious dogma," but that he would say, "My religious beliefs say abortion is wrong, so I am going to vote for, and campaign for, a candidate who opposes abortion." At least that should keep the government from explicitly basing laws on religious doctrines. It keeps the abortion debate in the realm of democratically elected lawmakers in legislatures. For my part, I base my political votes on my humanist ethics, so I cannot say that religious folks aren't allowed to decide how to vote based on their beliefs.

That being said, it pains me to see so much being asked and said about the candidates' faith and religious beliefs because I know very well that millions of voters do not grasp the fine distinction I made above. Many voters base their choices on whether a candidate is a Christian, and the right *kind* of Christian at that. (Continued on page 2)

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

(Continued from page 1) Witness the anti-Mormon sentiment that kept the evangelicals from supporting Mitt Romney, and the persistent right-wing whispers that Barack Hussein Obama really is secretly a Muslim, not a Christian.

Both candidates made it perfectly clear that they accept the central tenets of Christian theology, namely, that there is a god, that Jesus is part of the holy trinity, and that human beings need salvation, and that they can be “saved” by accepting Jesus, and that they find strength in that belief. Obviously, that is at odds with the humanist worldview that we have to use evidence, reason, and rationality to understand the world, and to figure out how to behave in civilized society. We’re neither cursed nor blessed; we’re here on earth, and it’s up to us to deal with that reality. There is no “strength” to be found in make-believe characters.

In their answers to other questions, however, the candidates did distinguish themselves from one another. The difference, in my view, is summarized very well in George Lakoff’s idea that Republicans tend toward the “strict disciplinarian” approach while Democrats tend toward the “nurturing” approach. Obama emphasized how Jesus taught people to be kind, and to take care of the poor. McCain emphasized belief in Jesus and defeating evil.

In fact, one of the questions Warren asked each candidate was, “Does evil exist, and if it does, do we ignore it, do we negotiate with it, do we contain it, or do we defeat it?” Both candidates cited actions as examples of evil existing in the world.

Obama answered, “Evil does exist. I mean, we see evil all the time. We see evil in Darfur. We see evil sadly on the streets of our cities. We see evil in parents who have viciously abused their children and I think it has to be confronted. It has to be confronted squarely and one of the things that I strongly believe is that, you know, we are not going to, as individuals, be able to erase evil from the world. That is God’s task. But we can be soldiers in that process and we can confront it when we see it.”

McCain answered, “Defeat it. Couple points. One. If I’m president of the United States, my friends, if I have to follow him to the Gates of Hell, I will get Osama bin Laden and bring him to justice. I will do that. No one should be allowed to take thousands of innocent American lives. Of course evil must be defeated...we are facing the transcendent challenge of the 21st century—radical Islamic extremists.”

To me, these answers were typical of each candidate’s interaction with Warren throughout the evening. Obama seemed to give more thoughtful answers. He also seemed to honor Warren’s request at the outset to engage in conversation, not stump speeches. McCain’s answers to Warren’s questions were very short, and then McCain launched into what certainly sounded to me like stump speeches. McCain got more applause from the conservative, evangelical audience.

Both major party candidates made it perfectly clear that they are not humanists. Humanist voters will need to sort out which issues matter the most, and vote based on that. Of course, Humanists of Idaho, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization, cannot endorse candidates for office. Members can, of course, and so can officers, provided they make clear that their endorsements are personal, not on behalf of HOI.

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 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 for dinner and join the group 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

August Meeting, Monday, August 25th

Wally Keltner will continue our production of a Humanists of Idaho Strategic Plan. Below is an article of what Wally gleaned from last month's discussion of our Vision Statement.

Kate Jensen has arranged this month's program. It will be a presentation by a speaker from the American Cancer Society on its "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer" walk which happens in October. Kate has also invited a PlayCamp director from Boise Parks and Rec. to tell about the scholarships that we contributed to.

Humanists of Idaho Program Schedule

Program Chair – Wally Keltner

- September 22– Book Discussion - “The Great Turning” Arranged by Paul Rolig:
Paul will have books available for sale at the August meeting
- October 27– Presentation by Planned Parenthood Arranged by Jan Rowe
- November 24 – Open
- December – No meeting; Winter Solstice party.
- January 26– Presentation by Melanie Curtis of Second Chance, a recycled building materials program– Arranged by Mary D Gutierrez
- February 23 – Special Charles Darwin 200th Birthday. Need Help Planning!

Idaho Equality Committee Presentation

At our July HOI meeting we had speakers Rachel Greer, the community organizer of the Idaho Equality Committee and Dawn Wade who is the executive director of the Idaho Women's Network. The IEC was formed from statewide “Idaho Vote No” collaboration effort to defeat the Idaho Constitution Marriage amendment. In 2007 the Committee was formed with the IWN and the Interfaith Alliance “to ensure LGBTQIA people are afforded dignity, respect, and full equality and protection under the law.” They are working on including gender equality in the Employment Non-Discrimination Acts.

The Idaho Women's Network will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary with a fundraiser October 10th. The Bread and Roses Banquet will be at the Rose Room in downtown Boise and tickets are \$20.

For more information on IEC you can go to www.idahoequality.org or call Rachel at 208-724-5753. For the IWN go www.idahowomensnetwork.org or call Donna at 208-344-5738.

BUUF Discussion Group –Sunday, September 13th

Second Sunday of the Month at 11:15 AM

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City

3-4 grade room in the north wing

Everyone is welcome whether you consider yourself a UU or not. In September the group will be planning the next year's program and is looking for ideas and volunteers. At the August discussion Al Null presented some interesting findings in brain research.

Get Involved in our HOI Programs

Our latest meeting schedule shows an interesting collection of activities appropriate for such an August assemblage as HOI. We still have a few openings, including this November plus March, April and May for 2009. And we really need someone to take the proposed Darwin's 200th Birthday idea for February 2009 and do it. Anyone with ideas, willingness to volunteer, or both can call Wally Keltner at 286-0764 or email to wallykeltner@msn.com.

Each month's program activity is provided by a volunteer HOI member. When you volunteer to be a meeting manager, you are delegated the authority and responsibility to support your fellow Humanists at a monthly meeting. This includes all aspects of the meeting - getting the participants, providing their audio/visual needs, obtaining final approval of your plan from Paul, Van or Wally one month before the meeting date, providing program information for the newsletter to Nancy, introducing presenters, etc. Have a ball and bathe in the glory and accolades you will earn from your fellow Humanists!

Volunteers can use these ideas directly or as brain food for more innovative thoughts. The idea is to involve more HOI members in the meetings. Also, we want to raise the fun quotient while raising our group and individual knowledge about and awareness of Humanism. Here are some ideas.

- Darwin Meeting in February - The meeting manager or management team will plan a meeting around Charles Darwin and his 200th birthday. This will require some ingenuity and brainstorming. Boise must be loaded with professors, zoo scientists, museum managers and who knows what else that can be fodder for a truly great meeting. The opportunities can include presentations, visits to other sites than just the Flicks meeting room, attending special movies that may be presented around Boise, a balloon launch of tiny toys or booklets relevant to evolution with a tag and message from HOI. Could we of HOI sponsor a movie showing as a fund raiser? The list becomes endless. Think outside the box with those highly evolved brains and use those prehensile digits and opposed thumbs!
- ACLU – Obtain an ACLU representative for a speaker. Describe the local chapter of the ACLU. Who are the movers and shakers? What is the source of funding and human resources? Who are the key adversaries? What types of cases occupy the resources? What are some recent successes and setbacks? What are the key active cases in Western Idaho right now?
- Web Sites – Get one member to serve as compiler. Have that person get each group member to bring the URL for their most favorite web site for Humanist topics, information, insight or news to the next meeting. Get each attendee to discuss their submittal for a couple of minutes. The compiler will assemble the web site URLs and provide them on a sheet of paper at the meeting.
- Magazines and Other Written References – Get one member to serve as compiler and have that person contact all group members. Compile a list of the members' favorite magazine or book on a Humanist topic. Get the contributors to present their favorite item at the next Humanist meeting.
- Book Discussion – Compile a set of book reviews on Humanist topics. Get HOI members to select a book through voting. Then we can read and discuss. Discuss the book or part(s) of it at a monthly meeting and/or conduct the discussion on the Yahoo bulletin board site.
- Guest Speaker Ideas – Monitor the speakers at organizations other than HOI and invite speakers for our monthly meeting.
- Fund Raiser in Disguise – Have a sale or auction at a meeting. Offer for sale books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and items of value to Humanists. All proceeds go to the group's general fund for use as the group decides. Whoever manages this venture should develop some guidelines on subject matter for the media and ideas for any items to be sold. There must be some fun and games that can accompany the activity to spice up the meeting.
- What's Happening on the Other Side – Have a member attend an activity that is obviously non-Humanist in nature and report back to the group with a presentation. Wouldn't we all like to know what Allan Keyes et al had to say at the church in Nampa a couple of weeks ago?
- Remembrance Theme - Devote a meeting to someone of stature, deceased or alive. For instance, we could do a George Carlin meeting with readings, video, audio and a handout of some of his best quotes.

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. The Council for Secular Humanism (CSH) produces a weekly half-hour television program exploring issues of interest from a humanist point of view.

HOI Strategic Plan

Wally Keltner has been hard at work facilitating a strategic plan for the Humanists of Idaho. At our July meeting he led a brainstorming session of ideas as to our vision statement. Here is Wally’s initial attempt to consolidate our discussions into strawmen for a vision, a mission, and a set of values. He thinks he may have captured the essence of our discussions, although we will undoubtedly have to tweak here and there. Note that the following are only a work in progress and that the last three are only notes to aid the development of our final product - a list of those actions worthy of our expending resources upon them

- **Vision** – “Humanists of Idaho will be recognized and respected as the State’s prime organization for the practice, promotion, and support of Humanism.” This may be an appropriate and realistic vision for our group.
- **Mission** – “The mission of Humanists of Idaho is to educate and inform Idaho stakeholders about Humanism, and to demonstrate Humanist tenets of in its activities”
- **Values** - Wally built a list of nine values. We probably need to group-think this a bit more, but he sure likes the draft. Charity, Compassion, Learning, Open Minds, Democracy, Reason, Ethical Behavior, Tolerance, Human Rights
- **Strategies** - Building from the mission, Wally noted some things for us to do in each of the three areas of educate, inform and demonstrate. We have some of this already in motion. It certainly won't hurt to sort through what we now do and what we think we ought to, what we want to do and prioritize, select and delegate.
 - Educate the members of HOI and outside interested parties about Humanism, including its tenets, values and history with Meeting activities (speakers, book studies, etc.) and Maintain & promote the library
 - Inform the HOI membership and interested stakeholders about news relevant to Humanism and its values. Outreach to the public and other organizations, Operate the HOI Yahoo! bulletin board, Maintain the HOI web site.
 - Demonstrate to the HOI membership and stakeholders the values derived from the practice of Humanism. Charitable activities and Volunteer activities

Come to the August meeting to help further work on this strategic plan!

Infosnacking with The Friendly Atheist

A weekly digest of atheist-related news and commentary by Hemant Mehta, adapted from his blog

For HumanistNetworkNews.org- August 13, 2008...

Double coupons for doubters

In Wilson County, Tennessee, people who brought in church bulletins could get discounts to a county fair on "God and Country Day." It sounded discriminatory toward atheists. However, it seems that those running the fair are revising their policy. Anyone who prints out a page from the website of a non-religious website will be offered the same discount! friendlyatheist.com/2008/08/11/wilson-county-will-not-discriminate

Hemant Mehta is the Chair of the [Secular Student Alliance](http://SecularStudentAlliance.org) (SSA) Board of Directors. He has worked with the Center for Inquiry and is also an SSA representative to the [Secular Coalition for America](http://SecularCoalitionforAmerica.org). Hemant received national attention, including being featured on the front page of the Wall Street Journal, for his work as the "eBay Atheist." Hemant's blog can be read at FriendlyAtheist.com and his book "I Sold My Soul on eBay" (WaterBrook Press) is now in bookstores everywhere. He currently works as a high school math teacher in the suburbs of Chicago.

Deep in the Church Closet: Mormon Freethinkers

By RUTH N. GELLER HumanistNetworkNews.org July 23, 2008

Last month, I received an e-mail in my editor's inbox for the *Humanist Network News*. It had "Mormon Humanist" in the subject line. The writer said that he had been enjoying the HNN Audio Podcast and wanted to share some of his personal history. In a couple of paragraphs, he illuminated the painful dilemma of being both a freethinker and a member of the Mormon Church. He wrote:

I was raised Mormon (officially Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints). If you are familiar with this religion, it has many social mechanisms for squashing out dissent and has a lot of demands on one's time, money and personal behavior. While I am an atheist and humanist now I find myself in a situation where I would lose the love and support of my wife, children, friends and extended family if I chose to honestly express my worldview and so I remain silent and continue to attend Mormon meetings and do most of the outward practices of Mormonism (which include paying 10 percent of one's gross income and fulfilling assigned Church responsibilities).

If I ever chose to cease these practices I would never be allowed to attend one of my relative's weddings again as they generally occur in Mormon temples. Also, if I cease these practices and/or express my disbelief in the religion my family would consider me an apostate, which in our religious culture would mean I am a complete failure as a son, husband and father. It is discouraging but I hope that movements like yours will someday create changes which will lead to fewer situations like mine.

I would prefer, for obvious reasons, to remain anonymous. The name that appears with my e-mail is a pen name but is known by a few friends/relatives.

I wrote back and asked if I could interview him for HNN as I thought that his story was both fascinating and important. He wrote back to say that he wasn't sure as he feared that an interview with our 'zine could, potentially, have disastrous consequences to his personal life—citing divorce and loss of custody of his children as possible outcomes.

Only the most heartless newshound would press for an interview under those circumstances. I am not the most heartless newshound. So, instead, I asked whether he knew of any fellow Mormon humanists who might feel freer to speak. He gave me the names and contact information of two other individuals whom he thought might be good interview subjects. Both agreed to a phone interview.

"Paul" is a sixth generation Mormon who still lives in Utah. He and his wife attend church services, which last about three hours, every other week. He describes going to church as an "extremely ambivalent experience." While he enjoys the hymns and the sense of community, he says that he has lost all of his "literalist" beliefs. In his youth and young adulthood, he said that he was a fervent almost dogmatic believer. He describes his current belief system this way: "I don't think of myself as an atheist. I like the idea of some higher power or sense of meaning/purpose—but that's as far as I go with it. I have no interest in anthropomorphizing God in any way, and of course I'm completely open to the idea that there is no God at all (and consider this to be the most likely scenario)..." What I love about humanism is that it says you've just got one life and all you've got is you and the people around you. There's sufficient opportunity, joy and challenge in what's here all around you," Paul continued. He says that his wife shares his skepticism about Mormonism. When they speak with their friends and relatives, "People are generally tolerant, but we're careful about the things we say."

At the end of our 45 minute conversation, Paul began to wonder whether he should stick with the answers he'd given me or call me back with more "positive responses" about Mormonism. He was worried about repercussions from the Church, much as the original e-mailer had been. I offered to take out some identifying features in his personal life and work in exchange for keeping his original candid responses. "It's important to hear your truth," I said. He agreed, and so he became "Paul".

It is his view that the Church of Latter Day Saints is a "dying breed" because they believe that they alone have the one truth. "We still claim to be the one authorized church on the planet. We have God's authority" said Paul. (*Continued on page 6*)

(Continued from page 5) The Mormon religion was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr., whom followers believe is a latter-day prophet. Smith wrote the Book of Mormon, published in 1830. Mormonism is an offshoot of Christianity and has controversial beliefs and practices. While there are 13.5 million Mormons listed in church records, according to Paul, it is commonly understood that only about one-third of that number are active believers. Paul says that two-thirds of Mormons either do not consider themselves practicing Mormons or are listed on the church rolls as inactive. According to the [U.S. Religious Landscape Survey](#) by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Mormons make up 1.7 percent of the religious population in the United States, the same percentage as Jews.

While growth rates for the religion have ebbed in North America and Europe in recent years, the church is making new converts in some Third World countries. Paul, like all Mormon young men, went on a two year mission. He feels that until the current Bush Administration, part of the attraction for those in impoverished countries was simply wanting to be associated with America and all it represents—affluence, influence, and status as a world power. He also feels that tall, healthy young Mormon missionaries are a draw for those in poorer countries.

"The Church is good at creating community and support. They provide counseling, service to poor communities and bring a message of hope," said Paul. He'd like to find a local humanist organization that would provide him with the fellowship and "tribal sense" that the Mormon Church does.

Thomas Gessel calls himself an "Ex-Mormon" although he hasn't yet officially resigned from the Church of Latter Day Saints. Twenty-nine years old, he was "born into the covenant," as they say. His father's ancestry goes back to Anson Call, a Mormon leader, settler, and polygamist in the early days of the church.

He came to Cambridge, Mass, to attend Harvard School of Dental Medicine in 2004. Prior to that, he had done his two year mission in Italy and came back to graduate from Brigham Young University. While at Brigham Young, he had frequent experiences during his religious studies when things "didn't make sense" to him. During his first year of dental school, he came to realize that he no longer believed in the tradition in which he had been raised. Gessel describes this experience in an essay called "My Personal Story: the Transition of Mormonism, which was published on the Humanist Chaplaincy of Harvard www.harvardhumanist.org/profiles/tom-gessel/

"I had a lot of fear about coming out," Gessel told me. "You become excommunicated when you're openly critical. People just don't share their views—they're excommunicated." Gessel had a tearful session pouring out his feelings to a Harvard counselor after his dark night of the soul, which he describes as a "reverse conversion" experience.

"My wife and my parents were convinced that I had gone crazy, and sometimes I really felt crazy. They flew me home as soon as possible to try to resolve my problems. My mom mailed me over 10 books and about 300 pages of other church literature that was supposed to answer my questions. To them, I had changed overnight, but it only seemed this way because I didn't feel I could talk about my doubts with them before it was too late," Gessel writes.

His wife and he split up after it was clear to her that his faith was not going to come back. His relationship with his parents was also rocky for awhile. He managed to keep many of his Mormon friends. He says that approximately 10 friends and family members have confessed their own doubts about their faith to him.

Now, almost four years later, he says that it feels like he's finally living his real beliefs. "There's a certain comfort in believing in paradise in an afterlife, but I'm not sad about losing it," said Gessel. "All the best parts of Mormonism I realized were encompassed in humanism."

And so, an "X-File-ish" adventure which began with an anonymous e-mail, led to an anonymous interview, and finally concluded with someone able to speak to me purely as himself, ended.

Ruth N. Geller is the editor of [Humanist Network News](#), the weekly e-zine of the [Institute for Humanist Studies](#).

The Changing Games

By RUTH N. GELLER HumanistNetworkNews.org Aug. 13, 2008

Many of us have been swept up in the pageantry and drama of both the opening ceremonies and the extraordinary athletic competitions going on since the start of the Beijing Summer Olympics last week. Host country China says that the 2008 Summer Games espouse the principles of unity and harmony between nations. The official theme of the [Beijing Summer Olympics](#) is "One World One Dream."

China is promoting the 2008 Summer Games as the "Humanistic Olympics." What does that mean, exactly, to China, and to the rest of the world?

Huge economic growth, and with it, a much increased standard of living for many of their people, has wrought enormous social changes in China. A populace that is expecting a higher standard of living and more freedom has also brought more instability to the social structure. The Chinese face problems like pollution and overpopulation as well as strong criticism of their human rights record by the world at the same time they are becoming a major player on the world's stage. This has led the Chinese government to make their next goal creating a "harmonious society." They see being the host country for the 2008 Summer Olympics as being an integral part of reaching that goal. According to a paper written by Prof. Hai Ren, of Beijing Sport University, called "Humanistic Olympics: Where will it lead to?," the Chinese expect the Beijing Olympics to provide a unique function: promoting a harmonious society internally and facilitating the formation of a peaceful international environment externally.

The spirit of the Olympics is to promote peaceful cooperation between nations even as they compete against each other for gold medals. Traditionally, it has been a time to lay down arms even during war time. Ren says that the Chinese are hoping that this spirit will help facilitate social cooperation amongst the many factions within their own country, cooperation between individuals, and even, among human beings and nature. Concerned with maintaining tradition and orderliness even amongst great change, Ren says that the government feels that there is a "decline of social morals, which has already jeopardized the system of social trust." The government hopes that the massive volunteerism needed to make the 2008 Olympics possible, will improve social morals, according to Ren. The presence of thousands of foreign visitors is an opportunity for China to meet the world and the world to meet China. Hopefully, cross-cultural communication, another sought after value, will be stimulated. Other humanistic values that the Olympics are expected to foster are: openness, tolerance, friendship and care of the environment. Quite a tall order for any nation to fulfill.

It has been less than a week since the Games began. There has been the outbreak of a bloody battle between the countries of Russia and Georgia, which apparently, has just been resolved. On the first full day of competition, the in-laws of an American volleyball coach were attacked while sightseeing, by a, most likely, deranged middle-aged Chinese man. The husband was killed and his wife and their Chinese guide were seriously injured before the man jumped to his death.

It is clear that the Olympic Games were never a simple sports competition. The *Humanist Network News*, asked Alonzo Fyfe, who writes a blog called the [Atheist Ethicist](#), for his thoughts on the changing nature of the Olympic Games:

Quite obviously the Olympics serve a number of secular purposes – values that a person who does not believe in God has reason to share. One of those purposes has been peace. The Olympics provide an arena for countries to get together for purposes other than war. Another purpose is admiration and respect for human potential. It is a demonstration of the amazing things that a human can do if he or she is dedicated enough to that end."

...It is a mistake to think that, once we set up an institution or a practice and assign it to a god or goddess, that we cannot give up the deity without giving up the practice. If we have good reason to continue the practice, there is no reason not to do so.

The Games have begun and are in progress. What they look like and what they mean will continue to change to fit the values of the times.

Ruth N. Geller is the editor of [Humanist Network News](#), the weekly e-zine of the [Institute for Humanist Studies](#).

HOI Membership

We have 40 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

Humanists of Idaho Board	Organization Information
President: Paul Rolig377-0535 or roligpd@spro.net Vice President: Doug 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	Your support of this local chapter with your membership, donations and ideas is greatly appreciated. Mailing Address: Humanists of Idaho P.O. Box 44913 Boise, ID 83711-0913
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- \$15 Newsletter subscription only
- \$___ donation to help promote public awareness of Humanism
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Humanists of Idaho
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Boise, ID 83711-0913

Monday, August 25th - HOI Meeting

6:30 PM Humanist Supper Club, 7:30 PM Planning Meeting

BUUF Senior Sages

2nd and 4th Thursdays of the Month, 9:30 AM at the Kopper Kitchen (2661 Airport Way)

Sunday, September 13th, 11:00 AM – BUUF Humanist Group

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City,