



# 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.

January 2008

<http://Idaho.humanists.net>

[Idaho@humanists.net](mailto:Idaho@humanists.net)

## President's Message: 2007 in Review

Happy New Year 2008! I want to take this opportunity to review what Humanists of Idaho accomplished in 2007, and to ask for your continued support throughout 2008 and beyond. We should be proud of what we accomplished this past year.

We staffed the phones for Idaho Public TV's spring pledge drive.

Doug Van Curen, as ordained Humanist Celebrant, conducted several weddings.

We continued sponsorship of "The Humanist Perspective," Council for Secular Humanism's half-hour talk show, weekly on TVTV Channel 11, Boise's community access cable channel.

Paul Rolig and Doug Van Curen were guests on two segments of Idaho Atheists' TVTV program, "Uncommon Sense." We discussed the essentials of humanism.

Doug and Paul also participated in a BSU symposium on the acceptance of gays and lesbians by people of faith and conscience. We represented Humanism as welcoming to those in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. Other panelists represented several of the more liberal religious congregations locally.

Paul Verhage, HOI member, is active in the Boise Astronomical Society.

Wally Keltner, HOI member, is promoting a freethinkers' Alcoholics Anonymous group.

Paul Rolig, Doug Van Curen, and several other members of HOI have had several letters to the editor published in the Idaho Statesman. In some, Paul and Van have identified themselves as HOI officers to promote awareness of our organization. This has attracted some new members.

Nancy and Paul Rolig attended the American Humanist Association's annual national convention, held in June in Portland, OR, and reported back on the many speakers. Nancy's report to the "Senior Sages" group loosely affiliated with Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (BUUF) resulted in us cross-advertising their meetings.

Several of us who attend the monthly humanist discussion group at BUUF participated in a group presentation on Humanism. This was presented at BUUF, HOI, and the Pacific Northwest annual general meeting of the Unitarian Universalists.

Nancy and I, at least, participated in "National Night Out," in which neighbors are encouraged to have a cookout or other activity in their front yard, driveway, stairway, or whatever. We had a very enjoyable time socializing with a number of our neighbors.

We joined Idaho Atheists to cosponsor a booth in the Hyde Park Street Fair, and handed out a bunch of literature.

Paul, Doug, Jan Rowe, and several members of Doug's and Jan's families participated in CROPWALK, raising several hundred dollars for anti-hunger programs locally and globally. (*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) HOI was a \$250-level sponsor of Planned Parenthood of Idaho's annual fundraising banquet. HOI contributed \$1,000.00 and a carload of miscellaneous goods and supplies to the non-sectarian Interfaith Sanctuary homeless shelter.

We had our annual Darwin's Birthday Party potluck in February, joined Idaho Atheists in a Summer Solstice Picnic in June, and had a successful Winter Solstice potluck party in December.

Many thanks to all of you who supported our efforts in 2007! We hope you will see fit to continue this support in 2008. *Better still, we would love to see your faces at our parties, meetings, and other activities!*

## 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.

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

## HOI Meeting - Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

### Discussion: Humanist Outreach

At our January meeting, I plan to focus discussion on Humanist Outreach. This includes the possibility of lobbying for, or taking other action on, issues of interest to us, as well as identifying people who are Humanist but just do not know it yet. We can discuss the process of lobbying the Legislature or other public officials, writing letters to the editor, joining demonstrations in support of human rights, planning programs for the upcoming year, and other topics "by popular demand."

## BUUF Senior Sages

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the Month, 9:30 am at the Kopper Kitchen (2661 Airport Way)**

This group of Humanist/Freethinkers meets over a cheery, no-host breakfast and discusses a variety of topics. They would welcome new members to join the discussion. If you would like more information or to get on the email list and/or phone tree contact Tom von Alten at 378-1217 or [tva@fortboise.org](mailto:tva@fortboise.org).

## 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](http://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

## BUUF Discussion Group - Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>

**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 December we discussed "worship", "awe", "reverence" and "prayer". In January we talked about words to describe those who do not believe in a supernatural being: atheist, agnostic, nonbeliever, disbeliever, godless, skeptic, non-theist, deist, heathen, heretic. Coming up for February will be the nature of "evil".

## Darwin Day Celebration

. CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN (February 12, 1809 to April 19, 1882)

Darwin Day is an international celebration of science and humanity held on or around February 12, the day that Charles Darwin was born in 1809. Specifically, it celebrates the discoveries and life of Charles Darwin -- the man who first described biological evolution via natural selection with scientific rigor. More generally, Darwin Day expresses gratitude for the enormous benefits that scientific knowledge, acquired through human curiosity and ingenuity, has contributed to the advancement of humanity

### Charles Darwin as a Symbol for the Celebration of Science and Humanity

Celebrations are an important part of every culture. They provide a tradition and a common bond to be shared among those who make up their culture, permitting them to experience a meaningful connection to one another and to the principles to which they subscribe. Unfortunately, most celebrations are based on ancient traditions that are relevant to only a specific country or culture, and they have often been, and continue to be, the source of serious conflicts.

At this juncture in history, the world has become so small and interdependent that we need a Global Celebration to promote a common bond among all people. The Darwin Day Celebration was founded on the premise that science, like music, is an international language that speaks to all people in very similar ways. While music is both intellectual and entertaining, science is our most reliable knowledge system, and it has been and continues to be acquired through human curiosity and ingenuity. Moreover, evolution via genetic variation and natural selection, introduced by Darwin, has become the central organizing principle in biology. In addition, evolution also plays a central role in astronomy and cosmology, where it refers to the way that stars, galaxies and the entire universe 'change over time.' To study biology while neglecting evolution would be like studying physics without Newton's laws that govern the universe or chemistry without the periodic table. Clearly, Darwin himself has become an internationally acclaimed figure, whose influence on progressive modern thought continues to be both profound and pervasive (Ernst Mayr, [Darwin's Influence on Modern Thought](#), Scientific American, July 2000).

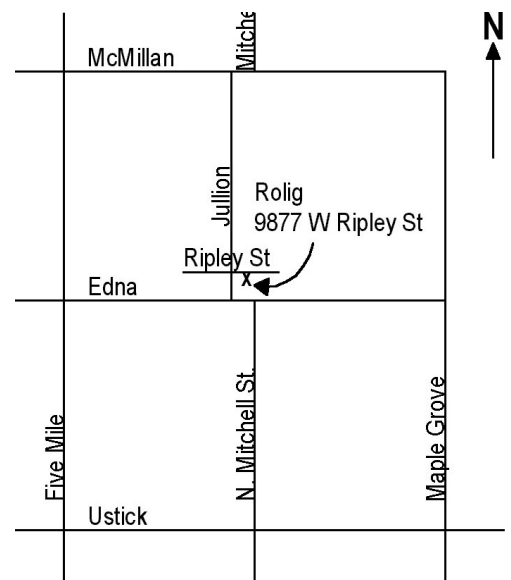
Current research in the field of genetics, including that on the human genome, has conclusively shown that all humans are essentially identical and that we are genetically related to all other living things on this planet. Thus an enlightened view of genetics is one of unity and equality among all humans and also one that fosters a deeper sense of respect and appreciation for all life. Today the validity of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection rests in our understanding of the molecular mechanisms of genetics. Therefore, we conclude that Charles Darwin is a worthy symbol on which to focus, in order to build a Global Celebration of Science and Humanity that is intended to promote a common bond among all people of the earth.

**HOI Darwin Day Party  
Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Paul and Nancy Rolig's home at  
9877 W. Ripley St. at 6 PM**

Bring a salad, side dish or dessert. The Roligs will provide the sub sandwich and soft drinks

**RSVP: 377-0535 or [nrolig@spro.net](mailto:nrolig@spro.net)**



# Lobbying the Legislature

Reported by Paul Rolig.

January 12 I attended a “Grassroots Lobbying Workshop” conducted by United Vision for Idaho. UVI promotes various progressive causes, a number of which align with humanist values. The workshop was open to the public regardless of political affiliation, and focused more on the mechanics of the process, rather than on any particular viewpoint.

Special guest speaker was **William McNary, President of US Action**, a national network of progressive organizations (see [www.usaction.org](http://www.usaction.org)). He spoke about how to “make government work for the people – regardless of political party.” He pointed out that for every single “public” lobbyist, i.e., volunteer, working for this cause or for that cause, there are several paid corporate lobbyists promoting the interests of those who pay them. Therefore, it is essential for individuals to form alliances to promote each others’ causes as a united front.

Mr. McNary gave the following “**3 C’s of Lobbying**”:

- **Courteous** – No matter how distasteful a public official’s position on a given issue may be, every such official is still a person, a human being. They have feelings and will likely react as you would to the way others treat them. They are much like you, but they ran for office and won an election. Be civil and courteous in your dealings with them. Be firm; state your opinions forthrightly, even play hardball when appropriate. Above all, be courteous, show respect, and avoid name-calling.
- **Confident** – The best way to boost your confidence is to know what you are talking about, so do plenty of research and be thoroughly prepared on your chosen issue. Also, if you are questioned on a point, and do not know the answer, just say so. Commit to finding out the answer later, but admit it when you don’t know something, rather than bluffing your way through. Keep your integrity.
- **Concise** – Plan carefully what you want to say, and prepare short, to-the-point sound bites. Give more information only when time and audience permit. You might have to summarize in one or two sentences. Testimony before a hearing may be limited to just two or three minutes.

McNary cautioned against telling elected officials things like, “We put you in office, and we can take you out of office!” This just stirs up animosity. If you want to turn someone out of office, don’t tell them – just get to work behind the scenes and make it happen!

McNary also offered his analysis of “**3 Kinds of Legislators**”:

- **Vote their Conscience** – “They’re the best!” Whether you agree with their position or not, they have principles that guide their positions. They can be swayed by facts and logic. Find out their priorities, research the facts and arguments behind them, and you may be equipped to persuade them to vote your way.
- **Vote their Constituents** – The reality is that they vote the way their organized constituents want them to. Therefore, to sway them, you must organize a seemingly broad base to lobby them for your positions.
- **Vote the Money** – Their votes are mostly governed by those who supplied the money to put them in office, or, in extreme cases, by those who can pay them off directly. The good thing with this kind of legislator is that they have to at least appear to serve the people some of the time, so you can try to position your issue as one that will make them look good to the public.

McNary closed as being for “citizens becoming more players in their own government.”

**Pam Baldwin of The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho** ([www.tiaidaho.org](http://www.tiaidaho.org)) spoke on “**The Rules As They Say They Are.**” She highlighted material in the *2008 Guide to the Idaho Legislature* published by the Idaho Statesman on Monday, January 7, 2008. This covered the steps to a bill becoming law, from conception to printing, to committee hearings, to votes in the House and the Senate, to being signed or vetoed by the Governor. Individual citizens can observe, and testify at, legislative committee hearings, but lobbying efforts really should begin way before then. A serious effort to pass legislation should start at least a year ahead of the legislative session in which action is desired. This gives legislators and lobbyists the time they need to become well informed about the issue, and to craft appropriate language for the bill itself. (*Continued on page 5*)



(Continued from page 4) Baldwin mentioned that 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations (of which Humanists of Idaho is one) may lobby for causes or issues related to the primary purposes or values of their respective organizations. However, they are *not* allowed to endorse, support, or campaign for specific candidates for public office. If they do, the IRS can revoke their tax exemption.

**Roger Sherman** of **United Vision for Idaho** ([www.uvidaho.org](http://www.uvidaho.org)) and **United Action for Idaho** ([www.unitedactionforidaho.org](http://www.unitedactionforidaho.org)) spoke on “**The Rules As They Really Are.**” He described a number of the activities needed to get legislation passed that are not mentioned in the textbook accounts of the steps in the process. Sherman described the “**Wellstone Triangle,**” named for the late Paul Wellstone, U.S. Senator from Minnesota. The three points of this are:

1. **Build the Base** – Identify, organize, and mobilize members or supporters.
2. **Electoral Process** – Beyond just getting out the vote, this may entail long-term political activities designed to ensure a friendly majority on a given legislative committee, for example.
3. **Public Policy** – The end result of efforts, or the motivation to lobby for change.

Sherman also presented the **Midwest Academy Strategy Chart**. Published by the Midwest Academy ([www.midwestacademy.com](http://www.midwestacademy.com)), it guides the user through a step-by-step process to help a group identify its goals, strategies, and tactics for accomplishing some desired action. It calls for writing down long-term and short-term goals, listing available resources, needed skills, analyzing the power structure controlling the process, identifying allies and opponents, planning specific tactics to use, and targeting those whose help, or votes, are needed for success.

Another handout was entitled “**How to Influence Public Officials.**” I didn’t get a copy of that one, but there are several available online, including this one: [www.npaction.org/resources/WORC/HowToInfluence.pdf](http://www.npaction.org/resources/WORC/HowToInfluence.pdf)

Finally, attendees were led on a tour of the Idaho Legislature’s temporary quarters in the old Ada County Courthouse. The Statehouse, of course, is closed for two years for renovation. Our tour was conducted by Representatives Nicole LeFavour and Sue Chew. A large amount of information on the Idaho Legislature is available online at [www.legislature.idaho.gov](http://www.legislature.idaho.gov)

## *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.anaelfire.com/id/vancuren/weddings.html](http://www.anaelfire.com/id/vancuren/weddings.html)*

## **Planned Parenthood Events**

### **Roe on the Rocks - Join us for Cocktails, Food, and Fun!**

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, PPI will host Roe on the Rocks: A Gathering of Pro-Choice friends. The event will mark the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision. Please join us at [Satchel’s Grill](#) (705 W. Bannock, Boise) from 5:30-7:30pm for free food and musical entertainment by [Rebecca Scott](#). Your first drink is on us! No RSVP is necessary.

### **Dr. Kenneth Edelin to Visit Idaho - February 8<sup>th</sup>**

Planned Parenthood of Idaho is proud to host a very special guest, Dr. Kenneth Edelin. Dr. Edelin is the 2007 recipient of the Margaret Sanger Award. The award is given to an individual who has spent his/her life fighting for the reproductive rights of others.. The doctor will deliver a moving speech on the importance of protecting reproductive rights in America. Join us February 8 at noon at the [8th Street Wine Company](#) for a donor luncheon featuring a keynote address by Dr. Edelin. For tickets, please contact [Autumn Kersey](#), 208-376-2277 ext. 13.

## **Interfaith Sanctuary Update**

The building’s sprinkler system is now throughout the building, so more beds have been moved into the additional space.

HOI collected a variety of donations at the Solstice Party from checks, peanut butter, toiletries, books, to socks. Thanks everyone for your generosity.

## Powerful Civil Rights Group Calls Atheism a Civil Right

By RUTH N. GELLER [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Jan. 4, 2008

The right to not believe in a higher power is now considered a civil right to be defended like any other by one well-established civil rights organization in Washington, D.C. The Secular Coalition for America (SCA) is the first nontheist group invited to join the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR).

"It's an amazing civil rights group," said Lori Lipman Brown, director of the SCA. "I can't overestimate the importance of being officially included in civil rights movements. We now have 190 plus groups as potential allies." SCA, which is a national lobbying group for atheists, humanists, freethinkers and other nontheistic Americans, is now a member of an organization which has fought on behalf of every major civil rights law since 1957.

The LCCR was formed in 1950 by three powerhouses of the civil rights movement: A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; attorney Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; and Arnold Aronson, a leader of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. The Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968—were all were pushed to passage with the help of LCCR and the coalitions it helped to form and mobilize. More recently, the LCCR has contributed to the first-ever White House Conference on Hate Crimes and worked to strengthen federal legislation in this area. It has also helped obtain significant increases in federal funding for civil rights enforcement.

The Conference has a diverse body which includes secular, political, and religious organizations such as the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church – Public Affairs Office and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, among others.

The SCA seeks to bring more attention to the presence of the non-theistic community in the U.S. and lobbies for separation of church and state. Brown said they applied for membership to the larger organization because they found some of their issues overlapped. For example, both the LCCR and the SCA lobbied against the Defense of Marriage Bill and against the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Alito. "They are very active in dealing with judicial nominations," said Brown of the LCCR.

SCA sent a detailed information packet about their group in the fall of 2006. They were accepted as a member organization by LCCR's board in 2007 along with seven other groups. Brown said she was not aware of any LCCR members opposed to accepting the SCA as a member. However, as free thinkers are, by their very definition, free to think, at least one prominent atheist on the SCA's on advisory board, questions the need to fight for the civil rights of non-believers at all.

This October, noted atheist-author Christopher Hitchens, told Humanist Network News (Re: [The New Atheists](#), HNN, Nov. 28) "...we are not an oppressed minority and shouldn't act with self-pity or complaint as if we were..." Hitchens said, that, to him, "it's not a civil rights question."

"It depends on how you define civil rights," responded Brown. "To demand that we be treated equally is not calling ourselves victims."

Attorney Derek Araujo, who is affiliated with both the American Humanist Association's legal center in Washington, D.C., and the Center for Inquiry's First Amendment taskforce, [told HNN](#) last year, "I think in a way that it is, and this is not to trivialize other civil rights issues. It's not to say that atheists have suffered the same amount of discrimination" as racial minorities. "But I think in many ways it is a civil rights issue because there is a common perception in the public, contrary to what the Constitution says, that an atheist should not be electable to public office," said Araujo.

"I think it is important, of course, to litigate in the courts. I'm all for standing up and defending the Church-State separation and defending our rights in court," said Araujo. "...but I think that needs to be done in parallel with a broad political organization," he added.

It appears that a large secular group such as SCA joining up with The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, with its diverse member organizations, is a step in that direction.

*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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

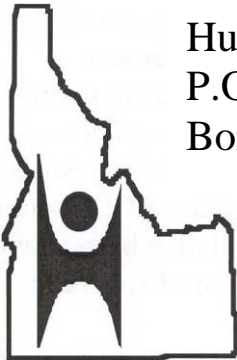
Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

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



Humanists of Idaho  
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Boise, ID 83711-0913

**Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> , 9:30 AM BUUF Senior Sages**  
**Kopper Kitchen, 2661 Airport Way, Boise**

**Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> – HOI Monthly Meeting**  
**6:30 PM Humanist Supper Club, 7:30 PM Program**

**Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> – 11:00 AM – BUUF Humanist Group**  
**Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City,**

**Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup> , 9:30 AM - BUUF Senior Sages**  
**Kopper Kitchen, 2661 Airport Way, Boise**

**Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup> , 6 PM – Darwin Day Party**  
**Rolig's home at 9877 W. Ripley St.**