

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.

July 2002

<http://go.to/hoi>

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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

Phone Changes

The Board of Directors has voted to discontinue our business phone line. For the past several years, Humanists of Idaho has had a business number that rang at the Fosters' house, and a listing in the yellow pages under weddings. Most of the calls in the past few years have been for Nicolle's wedding services. Very few were inquiries about the group. Most inquiries for the group have come through the web site.

Recently the Fosters decided to disconnect their home phone line. We tried several options for continuing the HoI line, such as splitting the cost with Unity, Nicolle's wedding and salon business. This turned out to be expensive, and presented other problems. It was decided to discontinue the HoI phone number and transfer the listing to Nicolle under a different number.

This will free up funds for more cost-effective outreach efforts. Nicolle will continue to promote the group by displaying HoI brochures in her business.

Members wanting to contact the group can call Nicolle Foster at 440-4622 or LeAnne Struble at 229-6427. A complete phone list for current members is also enclosed.

New Meeting Day

Based on input from the membership, Humanists of Idaho has permanently moved the date for its monthly membership meetings to the first Wednesday of every month. We will continue to meet at the Flicks theater in Boise at 7:30 PM. Our next meeting is on July 3rd.

The old meeting date was conflicting with First Thursday, an activity where downtown Boise merchants stay open late. We hope this change will increase attendance and new inquiries at meetings.

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Letter to the Governor

Governor Kempthorne,

Our family attended the rally at the statehouse on July 1st concerning the recent federal court decision on the Pledge of Allegiance. We would like to express concern about your comments at the rally, and more importantly what you did not say that should have been acknowledged.

You and the other politicians who spoke characterized the court's decision as outrageous, absurd, unpatriotic, and "out of step" or words to that effect. Your only concern seemed to be with the perceived impact of the decision on religious families. In fact your language excluded the possibility of any other kind of family being considered Americans at all.

The issue is not what the founding fathers believed. They were complex men who can be made to support almost any position on the subject of church and state depending on which founders and which writings one selects. What matters is what Americans believe today.

For your information, a growing number of American families do not believe in any supreme being. According to a recent study by the City University of New York, 14 percent of Americans (over 30 million people) and 20 percent of Idahoans are secular or non-religious.

Our family is among them. We are secular humanists and we intend to raise our two daughters in accordance with our beliefs and values, as any parent has the right to do, so long as those values include ethics and tolerance for others whose beliefs are different.

The issue is also not whether religious families may say the Pledge of Allegiance. No one wants to deny religious families that right, and this decision does not do that. The issue is whether religious families may force the children of secular families to say the Pledge of Allegiance (or to expose themselves to public ridicule by refusing to do so), in its current religious form, against the wishes of their

parents. Do parents have the right to direct the religious education of their children, or not? That's the issue here, and your speeches did nothing to address it, except to imply that only religious parents have this right, not secular parents.

I am also concerned about the organizations you invited to join you on the statehouse steps. The Boy Scouts of America, originally open to all American boys, has become a religious organization that discriminates against gays and atheists, and boys whose parents are members of these groups. If we had boys, they would not be allowed to join any Boy Scout troop because of our religious beliefs. As for the Knights of Columbus, they are a religious secret society with similar discriminatory policies. By having these organizations on stage with you, you show contempt for the Idaho families they discriminate against.

I am also concerned that you appear to be ready to commit state tax monies for an expensive, and at the moment unnecessary, legal fight. At a time when the legislature is unable to fund its existing commitments to public schools, spending taxpayer dollars to support a policy that discriminates against many Idaho families is not good leadership.

I was pleased to see that only a few hundred people attended your rally. Three years ago, when you organized a somewhat larger rally to defend the Table Rock Cross from a non-existent legal threat, the religious hatred you stirred up had far reaching consequences. Members of our community who spoke out publicly during that time were fired from their jobs because of their secular beliefs. I can only hope that members of the religious community here are not encouraged to similar acts of bigotry by your current efforts.

In short, we stand in complete opposition to your position on this issue, and further we consider your efforts to be a direct assault on our

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Last meeting

At our June meeting we met briefly to discuss the phone line and the meeting time change (see page 1). We also had a nice visit with several new people along with some members we hadn't seen in a while, such as the Hayes' of Coeur d'Alene. After the meeting, several members walked to downtown to participate in First Thursday activities.

Parade pullout

Humanists of Idaho has decided not to march in the Boise July 4th parade this year.

The main reason for the decision was insufficient member response. Also, the recent decision to drop our phone line meant we would have to remove the phone number from our banner before we could march, and there was not enough time to make the change.

Letter (cont.)

rights as parents to direct the religious education of our daughters as we see fit. We hope you will reconsider your position and adopt a more tolerant course that is more consistent with the demographic realities and which will reflect more positively on this fine state of Idaho.

Chris and LeAnne Struble
Boise, Idaho

Next Meeting

The next membership meeting will be on Wednesday, July 3 at 7:30 PM, at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton, Boise.

There will be a discussion of recent court decisions, including the Ninth Circuit court of appeals decision ruling the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional,

and the Supreme Court ruling in favor of vouchers for private schools. What does humanism have to say about these issues? What position should we take as a group?

We hope to have a discussion topic or speaker for each meeting. If you have any articles or books that would support a discussion topic, please bring them to a future meeting or let us know.

Secularism and Justice Conference

On April 11-13, 2003, the Council for Secular Humanism will hold a conference called "One Nation Without God? Secularism, Society, and Justice" in Washington, D.C.

The conference will focus on political issues related to secularism, including: religious-political extremism, discrimination against non-theists, threats to secular education, faith-based initiatives, impact of religion on scientific research such as stem

cells, and media bias against the non-religious.

More information about the conference including speakers will be available on the Council for Secular Humanism web site at www.secularhumanism.org as the conference date approaches.

Member News

Two new members joined HoI at the June meeting: Nicole Wallace and Miles McDaniel of Boise. Welcome!

Ventura body slams pledge

from The Humanist, July/August 2002

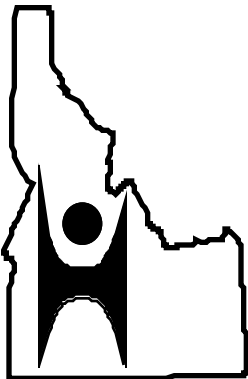
"Patriotism is voluntary" declared Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura as he vetoed a bill that would have required the state's public school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at least once a week.

Patriotism "is a feeling of loyalty and allegiance that is the result of knowledge and

belief. No law will make a citizen a patriot". he added. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, half the states now require the pledge as part of the school day, half a dozen more recommend it, and several are considering making the oath mandatory.

Upcoming Events

- July 3, 2002 Meeting at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton,
7:30 PM (details inside).
New night (Wednesdays).
- July 4, 2002 “We the People” 4th of July Parade,
Downtown Boise, 6:30 PM. (HoI will not
march this year, but its still worth a look).
- August 7, 2002 Meeting at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton,
7:30 PM. Humanist philosophy discussion.



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