

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.

March 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

Remembering Vi Harms

This past month we lost one of our members. Vi Harms passed away last week. A service was held for her on Thursday February 22, 2001 at the Flicks Theater. Nicolle Foster officiated. The service was a celebration of the life that Vi Harms had led, with family and friends standing to pay tribute to this wonderful woman. A reception followed at the home of Pat and Dale Hall. Vi will be missed in our Humanist Family. Our thoughts go out to John and his family during this difficult time. This newsletter is thoughtfully dedicated to the memory of Vi Harms.

Festival Time At IPTV

Once again Idaho Public Television has asked us to help out at Festival, their annual fund raiser, which raises almost 50% of their funds. We are scheduled to answer phones on March 5, 2001 from 8:00-11:30. We realize this is early but in the past we have had a lot of fun at this event. We need 10 volunteers this year so if you would like to volunteer let us know at the February meeting, or give LeAnne a call at 362-6873. This is an on air event so don't forget to wear your Humanist of Idaho T-shirts if you have one.

Officers needed

Officer elections for the HoI board of directors are coming up in May. Now is the time to start thinking about nominations. Available positions are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary position has been vacant for some time (LeAnne Struble has been acting secretary).

If you would like to nominate someone for any of these positions, please call Nicolle Foster at 344-4622.

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Religious thoughtlessness Threatens our Freedoms

By Joe Voight reprinted from the January 29, 2001 Idaho Statesman

Citizens of the United States are fortunate that those who wrote our Constitution and the Bill of Rights so appreciated freedom of conscience and so explicitly saw the evils of mixing religion and government.

Our new president has made it very clear that he will always favor the Christian religion and does this while arrogantly ignoring the explicit words in the final clause of Article VI of our Constitution which states, "...but no religious Test shall ever be required as a qualification to any Office or Public Trust under the United States."

He was not alone. His opponent selected a running mate based on that person's religious beliefs. Oaths to support the Constitution are concluded with "So help me God" and the solemn promise is promptly forgotten. God and citizens are cheated.

Stupidity and misrepresentation of our history have thwarted Thomas Jefferson's vision of a well-educated citizenry.

Illustrations: (Stupidity) Recently observed on the kiosk of the Northgate Baptist Church in North Seattle was "Truth is truth whether it is provable or not. Worship 11 a.m. to 7 p.m."

(Misrepresentation) Letters of an obviously smug fundamentalist Christian in Nampa have appeared in both major valley newspapers in which he makes statements about the Constitution being "God-given," our country being founded on Christian principles by Christian men, our first presidents being Christian men, etc.

So why did the constitutional convention reject prayer to start each day of its deliberations? Why was no god mentioned in the Constitution? Why was it stated by the founders, and the courts since that time, that the Constitution was "ordained and established by the people of the United States"?

We find in their personal records that Washington was a non-communicant: John Adams was Unitarian: Jefferson was a "freethinker" Madison and Monroe were not believers: John Quincy Adams was Unitarian: and the first president to claim Christian church membership was Presbyterian Andrew Jackson.

Abraham Lincoln, while president, candidly avoided any acknowledgement that he belonged to a church. He was a Deist and strong admirer of Thomas Paine. He would be aghast at the extent his party has soiled itself with religious pandering.

The federal and state constitutions provide all the freedom fundamentalists need. Their attempt to wield political power proves they have been given too much.

It is unfortunate that Idaho's governor did not possess the leadership courage to support the guarantees of religious freedom in these constitutions by vetoing Grant Ipsen's so-called religious freedom act.

That act promotes hatred. Ipsen would better contribute to peaceful and humane conditions by seeking repeal of the special privileges that allow religious persons to abuse and starve their own children.

Shortly after the Philadelphia convention, Ben Franklin expressed doubt that the people could keep the Constitution if it were ratified.

Obviously, he foresaw the gradual deterioration and weakening of individual rights by the despotic elements of Christianity.

There is no honesty, integrity, nor respect among religious people who strive to inscribe their beliefs into public law.

The United States, the state of Idaho and many other states are in a religiously spawned moral decline that threatens to destroy the individual freedom our forefathers provided. Freedom of "kinder, gentler" Christianity,

Religious thoughtlessness cont.
other religions, and ethical associations is ignored. That thoughtlessness has been a major contributor to the so called moral decline some people whine about.

All Christianity should take the advice of Jesus at St. Matthew, verses 1 through 6, chapter 6, and believe as fervently as they wish but avoid their better-than-thou exhibitionism.

True religious freedom could be restored.

Our secular government was established to be unprejudiced toward any persuasions. A sectarian government simply cannot be.

Overcoming Hate Workshop

Idaho Communities
Overcoming Hate: Reclaiming Our Voice workshop will be held on Saturday March 10, 2001 from 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m. at the Red Rock Christian Church, 1124 S. Roosevelt Boise (corner of Kootenai and Roosevelt).

This workshop is hosted by the Idaho Voices of Faith for Human Rights and The Interfaith Alliance of Idaho.

The goals of the workshop are: to bring together Idaho faith communities to learn about the threat of hate groups, to encourage individuals to consider how to respond, and to create community response

March Meeting

This month's membership meeting will be on Thursday, March 1 at 7:30 PM, at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton, Boise.

Agenda will include:
Discussion of resolution opposing Free Exercise of Religion Act and HoI plaintiff status, volunteers for IPTV Festival, OverComing Hate workshop.

and education plans.

There will be three breakout sessions in the third hour of the workshop, Forming a Community Rapid Response Network: Taking the Message to my faith and local communities: Educating Parents and teens about hate on the internet (a teen prepared to be part of a peer-group education or a parent willing to relay the learning)

If you would like to attend or to find out more about the workshop you can contact:

Pam Baldwin 331-7028 (work) or 888-2984(home) or or e-mail at uvipbaldwin@rmci.net. You may also contact Lesley Goranson, 333-1392(home) or leleyg3@yahoo.com.

If you are unable to attend this workshop, the workshop will be held in communities around Idaho at later times in the year.

Member News

Roberta Voight is recovering at home from her surgery. Nicolle has received her first call to officiate at a wedding from the yellow pages ad. The wedding will take place on Wednesday. Congratulations Nicolle!

March Birthdays
9th LeAnne Struble
21st Caitlin Struble
27th Daniel Foster

If you have news on a member or a birthday or anniversary to report, please contact LeAnne at 362-6873

Random Acts of Kindness

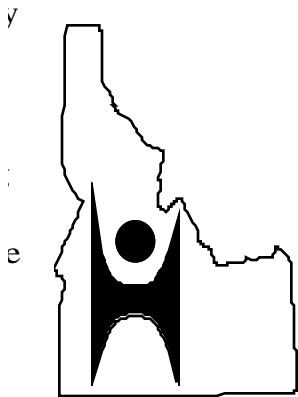
This year we worked on a project for Random Acts of Kindness Day on February 17, 2001. Nicolle and LeAnne headed up the committee to get this project off the ground. Gift bags containing items for babies were put together for the new moms at the Booth Maternity Home. The bags were put together by volunteers at February's board meeting. These volunteers included members of the Idaho Atheists, and Gary Betchan and Rebecca Hale (owners of evolvefish.com) as well as members of the Humanists. We would like to continue this tradition next year, if you have any ideas please let us know.

Upcoming Events

March 1, 2001 General Membership Meeting
7:30 PM at the Flicks Theater, 646 Fulton

March 5, 2001 IPTV Festival (see inside for details)

March 10, 2001 Idaho Communities Overcoming Hate:
Reclaiming Our Voice
see inside for further details



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