



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.

March 2009

<http://HumanistsOfIdaho.org>

CelebrantVan@aol.com

President's Message

'Beware of Dogma' Billboard Reaction

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

Our 'Beware of Dogma' billboard went up March 4, and will be up through April. The best way to see it is to drive to the intersection of Fairview Avenue and Maple Grove Road in west Boise. Drive east on Fairview past Lithia Ford on the right. As you approach the Confucius Chinese Restaurant, also on the right, the billboard is plainly visible just above. It is lit at night.

Arrangements for the group picture were publicized in email lists of HOI, Atheist Meetup, and Boise State Secular Student Alliance, and in a postcard to local members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Details were not available for publication in our February newsletter.



Media Coverage

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (www.ffrf.org) put out a press release to local media. It included comments from its national leaders.

"We're interested in taking our campaign wherever an irreverent billboard or bus sign is needed--which is practically everywhere!" says Annie Laurie Gaylor, Foundation co-president. "We want to reach the unmassed masses," adds Dan Barker, Foundation co-president, and author of the new book, *Godless*, about leaving the evangelical ministry and becoming an atheist. "We want there to be an alternative to all that religion on the roadsides."

The Idaho Statesman published a small blurb mentioning the billboard. The Idaho Press-Tribune in Nampa did a story on it after fundamentalist Christian activist Bryan Fischer criticized it in a press release by his Idaho Values Alliance. Both newspapers had accounts in both their print and online editions.

Fox 12 News in Nampa interviewed Paul Rolig and Doug Van Curen about the billboard, and then got Bryan Fischer's comments. Other local TV stations apparently ignored the issue. The Fox 12 news clip was one of their top stories at 9:00 p.m. Sunday, March 8, and on Monday morning. The clip was archived on their website at www.ktrv.com. Such clips usually are not archived for very long, so view it sooner rather than later (*Continued on Page 2*).

(Continued from page 1) Van and I each got about 10 minutes with the camera rolling as the reporter asked various questions which we answered. The reporter asked a number of good questions which allowed Van and me to give good answers explaining various aspects of humanism as a philosophy, what activities we do as a group, and why we prefer opinions based on evidence and reason in favor of blind dogma. It became clear from her questions that the reporter herself holds a very dogmatic, biblical view of the world.

I'm OK with the editing job they did. I would have liked them to include the part where I said what we wanted to do with the billboard (reach out to like-minded folks to make them aware of our groups) but that did not sound controversial enough, I guess. I really like the clip of Van explaining that what we really object to is how some religious people use dogma to persecute and discriminate against minority groups. The specific example he gave was the use of bible quotes to justify the anti-gay-marriage amendments in many states. Thus, the overall story ends up focused nearly exclusively on our defense of lesbian and gay rights. I'm proud to stand publicly with any downtrodden minority, but I would have liked to have seen the broader humanist message on display.

Right after interviewing us, the reporter met up with Bryan Fischer. They included a clip of him making his usual, dare I say *dogmatic*, claim that our Constitution's guarantee of freedom *of* religion does not include freedom *from* religion.

I was wondering if Fox would do a real hatchet job in the video editing, but they did not. They tried to make it sound like a way bigger controversy than it really is – both the "random people" they talked to said they were OK with the billboard, that everyone should be free to express their opinion. I thought it was hilarious the way the reporter ended the clip, "Like it or not, it will only be up for two months." Not exactly my idea of "Fair and balanced," but not a negative on us.

Responding to Opponents

First let me reiterate that our main, positive purpose in sponsoring this billboard is to reach out to other freethinkers who may not be aware of the existence of organizations promoting their point of view. We hope to attract some of them to join Humanists of Idaho or allied groups. Another purpose of this project is to educate the public at large, including religious folks, that people really can live purposeful, ethical, happy lives without belief in a deity. The FFRF website at www.ffrf.org contains some excellent material on this subject.

It is my priority to build up the many positive aspects of an explicitly humanistic approach to life here on earth. As a means to that end, I am willing to confront the beliefs of religious fundamentalists by standing up in public to say, "Beware of dogma" and to promote the catchphrase, "freedom *from* religion." In my opinion, this is a necessary part of defending against those who would enact their religious dogma into law.

I am totally opposed to engaging in juvenile name-calling in which we slander anyone and anything connected with religion. If we want to be taken seriously as responsible, mature people, we must always take the high road and engage our opponents respectfully and in a dignified manner. We claim we have observable evidence and reason and rationality on our side. Those are potent weapons. To be persuasive, we must argue skillfully. That means using techniques that make a positive impression on those who hear us.

Unfortunately, one person (*not* a member of Humanists of Idaho) sent an email to Bryan Fischer which contained nothing but name-calling. Guess what? Mr. Fischer (quite gleefully, I am sure) posted that email, including the sender's name, on the Idaho Values Alliance (IVA) website, together with Mr. Fischer's dispassionate (if not very logical or factual) response.

What has that accomplished? The fundamentalist religionist comes across as the more reasonable one. The freethinker comes across as juvenile and irrational. This has already been hashed out in great detail in the local atheist meetup email list. The gory details are posted for the world to see on the IVA website:

- www.idahovaluesalliance.com/pressreleases.asp?id=131 – IVA's press release
- www.idahovaluesalliance.com/news.asp?id=1033 – pointer to above press release
- www.idahovaluesalliance.com/news.asp?id=1034 – pointer to Fox 12 news story
- www.idahovaluesalliance.com/news.asp?id=1035 – name-calling email and response

The end result has been to hand Mr. Fischer a propaganda victory.

The lesson to be learned is that no matter how stupid or bigoted someone is, or their arguments are, you absolutely, positively cannot say in so many words how stupid or bigoted they are, or their arguments are. If you do, people see that as name-calling. Why? Because it is! Furthermore, people do not readily change their minds because someone calls them nasty names. On the contrary, they tend to become more firmly set in their opinions when they are attacked.

If your opponents start the name-calling, then that is even *more* reason *not* to respond in kind. By calling you names, they have handed you the advantage of being the reasonable one, and they have taken on the role of the unreasonable one.

(Continued on Page 4)

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.

March Meeting, Monday, March 23rd

Jeannette Ross will be presented the program on culture and violence. There should be a lively discussion.

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

Volunteers needed!

HOI needs volunteers to take on two specific responsibilities:

1. Program Chair – Leads the effort to identify programs for future meetings. The Program Chair does not do all the programs, and does not line up all the programs. The Program Chair finds volunteers to take responsibility for preparing one program, which may be as simple as picking a topic of discussion or inviting a speaker from a local group that humanists support, or just want to learn more about.
2. Hyde Park Street Fair Chair – Hyde Park Street Fair is a wonderful place for a booth for HOI and allied groups to make people aware of our existence. It will be Sep. 18-20, 2009, and deadline to apply is Jun. 1, 2009. Chairperson will be responsible for coordinating volunteers to staff the booth. HOI Board members will submit the application and fees. This is a fabulous outreach opportunity for us!

If you are interested, please let us know either by email to roligpd@spro.net or come to our meeting.

BUUF Discussion Group – Sunday, April 12th

Second Sunday of the Month at **11:00 AM**

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Library, 6200 Garrett, Garden City

Everyone is welcome whether you consider yourself a UU or not.

April's discussion will be lead by Al Null who will continue a discussion on the subconscious.

In March Nancy Rolig lead the discussion about finding comfort when suffering a loss without a god or a religious community. She had four parts of the topic - 1. Answering "Why did this happen?" 2. Answering "What will happen next?" 3. Thanksgiving and remembering and 4. Goodwill and comfort. We had a good discussion and only discussed the first topic. Nancy had some reference materials that may be helpful.

- [Affirmations: Joyful and Creative Exuberance](#) by Paul Kurtz, Prometheus Books, 2004
- [Compassion in Dying: Stories of Dignity and Choice](#) edited by Barbara Coombs Lee, NewSage Press, 2003 - from [Compassion and Choices](#), www.compassionandchoices.org, PO Box 101810, Denver CO 80250
- Humanist Funeral Services at www.spiritualhumanism.org/funeral.htm

Boise State Secular Student Alliance

For details contact Lloyd Low at loweb1@gmail.com or go to BSSSA [boisestate@secularstudents.org]

Spring 2009 Semester Schedule

Friday, March 20th - YouTube

March 4th Week - Spring Break

Friday, April 3rd -Game 7pm

Sunday, April 12th 1pm - TBD

Friday, April 24th - Movies 7pm

April 4th Week Debate (Student Group – Popular Christian)

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.

(Continued from Page 2) The only thing that is accomplished by name-calling is that the person doing it has blown off some steam. So if you want to blow off some steam, go where no one else can hear you, and then shout all the nasty things you want to. When you are done, if you are feeling better, then you can take some deep breaths, sit down with a paper and pencil, and begin outlining a rational argument against that person's positions. Identify the key concepts in the argument. Explain the errors. Look up references to check your facts. Draft a well-reasoned reply. Show the errors or contradictions in their positions, and do not apply labels, no matter how tempting. Stay cool, calm, and collected. Let it sit overnight, or have someone else review it. Then go public with it. If your evidence and reasoning are very well done, then the readers of it will see for themselves how stupid your opponents are: you do not have to say it for them.

Oh, yeah, one other thing. It is a grave mistake to assume that your opponents are stupid, no matter what outrageous thing they may say. Assuming they are stupid leads you to underestimate them, and that will come back to bite you. George W. Bush is not an impressive speaker, so some people conclude he is stupid. But he was smart enough to get himself elected President not once, but twice. Are you smart enough to do that? Numerous leaders of the religious right get paid handsome sums of money to direct multi-million-dollar-a-year organizations. Are you smart enough to do that? Never, never underestimate your opponents!

Beware of Media

Hmmm... haven't I heard a similar phrase lately? ☺ Here are some things I've learned about the media over the years. You must collect your thoughts and choose your words carefully. A rambling, incoherent statement will make a big impression – unfortunately, a big negative impression. People will not appreciate or remember your points. They will remember how badly you came across. At worst, they will associate “bad” with your point of view.

News stories are designed to get people's attention, in order to sell papers or air time. That is most effectively done with short, shocking, surprising statements, not long, drawn-out, step-by-step rational analysis. So that is what news outlets publish and broadcast. I personally think that is too bad, but I recognize that is the way it is. Sure, there is some investigative reporting that delves deep into certain stories, but that is a small percentage of what gets published or broadcast. That leads to the concept of “sound bites.”

For a TV or radio interview, it pays to have some sound bites all ready to go in your head. A sound bite is a short, meaningful statement that can be said in no more than 15 to 20 seconds. That's about all you are going to get in an edited news story. When we prepared for the Fox news interview, Van and I jotted down a few basic thoughts we wanted to get across prior to the arrival of the reporter. Having thought them through and written them down helped us say what we wanted to say more smoothly when the reporter asked a relevant question.

Also, you should remember that the news outlet may have its own slant. If they like you, they will more likely run the clips that show you at your best. If they don't like you, they may run the clips that show you at your worst. Even if they are neutral, they will use only a short edited clip, which may quite innocently end up changing the message you had hoped to deliver. If you send nasty email to your opponents, they will use it against you in a way they control, and you do not control. Don't ever do that! You will not win.

Finally, remember that religion is a sensitive issue. We get excited when religious fundamentalists propose using government to impose their dogma on us. They get excited when we resist those efforts. People get *really* excited when religious arguments devolve into name-calling. Who benefits? The media, who get more attention when people get excited. Who loses? We do, because we need people to be rational and reasonable to accept our point of view.

Opportunity

If you really love to spread the word on humanist ideas, you would be most welcome to work with HOI to write material for this newsletter or to post on our email list or website. Maybe even do press releases and interviews! Please contact Van or me if this interests you. We'd love to have the help.

Our opponents have a well-oiled media machine right here in Boise. They put out regular press releases and have well-cultivated contacts in the media. They get their message out very effectively. We may disagree with the content, but it does get delivered.

Imagine what we could do with an effective media presence. We would **NOT** just argue with Mr. Fischer. That puts us in a negative, reactive role, setting our sights way too low. We could and should chart a positive, proactive course to fulfill the mission of Humanists of Idaho:

- To educate Idahoans about Humanism,
- To encourage rational thinking,
- To demonstrate Humanist values and fellowship in our activities, and
- To provide a support system for freethinking Idahoans.

American Religion Identification Survey Result

Reported by D. G. Van Curen

The new "American Religion Identification Survey" is out, and things look better than anyone could ever have imagined. Here are some of the key numbers:

Vermont took the "No Religion" category, with 34% of residents claiming to have no religion. Imagine 1/3 of the population as non-believers. That I find encouraging. Also encouraging, this is the first year that the survey has documented gains in the "No Religion" category in ALL 50 states. With the exception of mainline Protestant denominations, all other Christian denominations in America have declined percentage of population, since 1990.

But the three numbers that are most encouraging: "No Religion" now tops 15% of the American population, up from 8% in 1990. "Other, Non-Christian" now sits at 10% of the population. This would include Islam, Buddhism, Hindu, Jewish, etc. In 1990, Christians comprised 86% of the American population. Today Christians account for less than 75% of the total population.

If the pace continues, Christianity will become a minority religion in America by 2050. While Catholics have grown in total membership since 1990, primarily due to the influx of Mexican illegals who are predominantly Catholic, the percentage of Catholics compared to population has still declined.

Just thought the numbers were worth sharing. Source is the American Religion Identification Survey conducted by Trinity College.

Dissecting a Bible

A Critical Analysis of the Holy Scriptures

By D G Van Curen, Celebrant HSCCC

To purchase a copy directly from the Author:

Paperback: \$9.95 ea Hardbound: \$17.95 ea.

Shipping: \$2.95 for 1st book + .50 for each additional

Free shipping on orders over \$150

Send check or money order to:

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1506 Rand St
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Victory! Senate Passes Fix For Affordable Birth Control

Cecile Richards, President Planned Parenthood Federation of America

We finally did it. It wasn't easy, but after two long years of working with Congress, I'm happy to report that yesterday the Senate passed a legislative fix to existing law that will **restore access to affordable birth control for millions of women.** This crucial provision of the Appropriations Act has been a long time coming — more than two years since a legislative error made birth control prices skyrocket by as much as 900 percent. That's two years of working with legislators, raising awareness and a tremendous — and tremendously important — wave of support from people like you who care about protecting women's health.

On behalf of Planned Parenthood and the millions of women who will find affordable family planning services once again within reach, thank you.

In this difficult economy, access to basic health care, including birth control, is more important than ever. And yet, low-income women and college students most in need of access to affordable family planning were cut out under previous legislation. Now more than ever, government needs to remove — not create — unnecessary barriers to health care services. Thanks to your vocal support, Congress took a huge step forward yesterday.

Believe it or not, there was opposition even to this commonsense provision that costs the federal government and taxpayers nothing while restoring access to affordable birth control to millions. But with your strong backing, Congress stood up for women's health by including the fix for affordable birth control in the Appropriations Act. The next and final stop is President Obama's desk!

We have no doubt that the president will sign this bill, finally restoring access to affordable birth control to millions of college students and low-income women. It's been a long, difficult fight, but we did it. Thank you again for doing your part.

Oppose Pharmacy Refusal

The religious right is on the move in the Idaho state legislature. Just as President Obama has started to move to rescind one of President Bush's last acts in office, our state legislature is considering a state law to carry out the Bush agenda.

The Pharmacy Refusal bill is an effort to shut off availability of contraception and "morning-after" pills, or anything any individual pharmacy employee does not like.

Idaho House Bill 216 has been assigned to the House State Affairs Committee. It has not yet been scheduled for a hearing as of March 15, but may come up any day now.

Information on the bill is online at <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2009/H0216.htm> . The gist of the bill is Section 3, on Page 5, lines 24-37.

"541718A. FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE FOR PHARMACISTS, PHARMACIES AND INSTITUTIONS.

- (1) No person shall be required to provide for any pharmaceutical care or drug that violates his or her conscience.
- (2) No person shall be civilly, criminally or administratively liable for declining to dispense or distribute pharmaceutical care or a drug or drugs that violate his or her conscience.
- (3) It shall be unlawful to discriminate against any person based upon his or her declining to dispense or distribute pharmaceutical care or a drug or drugs that violate his or her conscience.
- (4) The provisions of this section do not allow a pharmacist, pharmacy or institution to refuse to provide pharmaceutical care or a drug because of the patient's race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

Here are ideas I've had as talking points to argue against this bill. Anyone is welcome to use these ideas.

1. Truth in labeling: Section 3 of this bill really should have the title, "Special Rights for Religious Zealots Not to Do the Jobs They Were Hired to Do"
2. This bill will give legislative encouragement for neighbors to judge, condemn, and refuse to wait upon one another for alleged sinful behavior when they meet patient-to- pharmacist or patient-to-cashier at a pharmacy. Pharmacies are often grocery stores as well.
3. If this misnamed "Freedom of Conscience" is such a good thing, why not extend it to **ALL** people, in **ALL** professions?

Here is a link to the American Humanist Association background on the similar federal rule imposed a couple months ago by President Bush, and about to be rescinded by President Obama:

<http://www.americanhumanist.org/press/HHS-Info.php>

I encourage everyone to contact their state legislators and urge them to vote against H216.

Save the Planet, Get your Newsletter Electronically!

Receive your HOI newsletter by email. I already make a .pdf file of the newsletter each month. Email me, Nancy Rolig at nrolig@spro.net and I will add you to my recipient list. I will notify you of your membership expiring by email. I will continue to mail the newsletter to everyone I don't hear from.

Parenting Beyond Belief: Teaching Engaged Coexistence

COLUMN By DALE MCGOWAN, Ph.D. For HumanistNetworkNews.org March 11, 2009

Astrology survived Copernicus. That's my simple response whenever someone suggests to me that science will eventually put religion out of business. By all rights, astrology should have been forced out of business in 1543. Among other things, astrology is founded on the necessary condition of an Earth-centered universe. So long as the other planets and the constellations of the Zodiac were arrayed in reference to an Earthly center, the idea that they determined our personalities and controlled our destinies had at least a snowball's chance of respectability. But with the publication of Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* in 1543--followed by two centuries of theological arm-wrestling--Earth was decisively removed from cosmic center court. At this point, astrology, shorn of its most essential assumption, should have followed geocentrism into obscurity. The fact that it did not -- that it has endured several centuries goofily unaware that new knowledge has rendered it null and void -- is enough to make it wincingly ridiculous.

Yet there's still an astrology column in the *New York Times*. And the Harris poll shows Americans' belief in astrology going up, not down: 25 percent in 2005, 29 percent in 2007 and 31 percent in 2008. So when even so bright a light as Richard Dawkins says that the discovery of a Grand Unified Theory would "deal an overdue death blow to religion and other juvenile superstitions," I say, with the utmost respect and admiration, *pfift*. The confident demise of religion has been predicted for centuries. These predictions fail to realize that few religious believers are assiduously poring over facts to be sure their worldview still holds water. They stick with it because it is such a dynamite cure for what ails them (adjective meant in all possible ways). Add to that the fact that a large part of humanity will always lack access to knowledge and security, not to mention the simple awareness of any Grand Unified Theory we might discover, and I can't avoid the conclusion that religion will always be with us.

There's reason to hope that it will be less influential in the developed world and (on the whole) less fanatical and intolerant, thanks in part to increased access to knowledge and security, but new religious movements pop up at an estimated rate of two or three **per day** in developing countries. And in the developed world, the thing continues to (ironically) evolve, keeping pace with both our ever and our never changing itches. For the record, I'd prefer this not be the case. Since it *is* the case, I do what I can to hasten the evolution of religious expression and practice toward the less fanatical and intolerant. It's a process that is already going full steam in Europe, by the way, at least as far as Euro-Judeo-Christianity goes.

So how do these conclusions influence my parenting? Among other things, I'm raising my kids for what I call "engaged coexistence" with other worldviews. This posture rejects both the "*Everbuddy's gwine tuh hail ceptin' me an my dawg*," attitude of the fundamentalists and the "*I hold all religions in deep respect as multiple manifestations of the True*," of the New Age.

The trick is to sort out the word respect. Respect for individuals and respect for their ideas are quite different and must be separated. People are inherently deserving of respect as human beings, and no one can be faulted for shutting you out if you declare disrespect for their very personhood. Ideas are another matter. I feel too much respect for the word "respect" to grant it automatically to all ideas.

Even if I disagree with it, I can respect an opinion if it is founded on something meaningful, like rational argument or careful, repeatable observation. The other person may have interpreted the information differently, but I can still respect the way she's going about it. Suppose on the other hand that someone says Elvis and J.F.K. are working at a laundromat in Fargo and offer a dream or tea leaves as evidence. It would render the word "respect" meaningless to say I respect that opinion. I both disagree with it and withhold my respect for it. And that's okay. No need to degrade the other person. I know all sorts of lovely, respectable people who hold a silly belief or two—including myself, no doubt—and wouldn't think of judging them, or me, less worthy of respect as human beings.

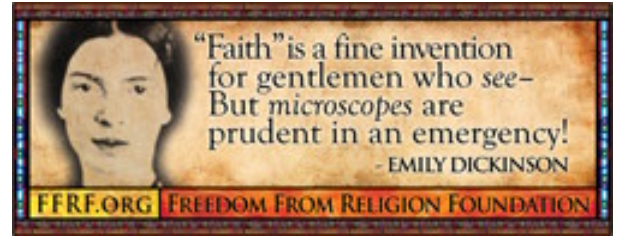
Ideas are another thing entirely. It's not only wrong to grant respect to all ideas, it can be downright dangerous. So I teach my kids to work toward a better, saner world by challenging all ideas AND inviting the same challenge of their own, explicitly, out loud, no matter what worldview they adopt. That's engaged coexistence—recognizing that we're going to be sharing this apartment for the long haul and working together to keep each other's feet off the furniture.

Dale McGowan, Ph.D., holds degrees in the arts and sciences from UC Berkeley, UCLA, and the University of Minnesota. He is the editor of the 2007 book Parenting Beyond Belief: On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion.

Women's History Month: Emily Dickinson

By RUTH N. GELLER HumanistNetworkNews.org March 4, 2009

Emily Dickinson, the reclusive 19th New England poet, can be seen riding the city bus in Madison, Wis. and will be on board for about another six weeks. Curious passengers can gaze at an attractive likeness of Dickinson and ponder one of her typically pithy poems, which they can see posted above their heads as an interior bus sign



Dickinson is one of six freethinkers and atheists featured on bus signs in Madison. Along with the poet, there are bus signs of author Mark Twain, attorney Clarence Darrow, contemporary evolutionary biologist and atheist spokesperson Richard Dawkins, and "Gone with the Wind" actress and atheist Butterfly McQueen. Hollywood screen legend Katherine Hepburn is also featured with a typically feisty quote: "I'm an atheist, and that's it," but without a portrait. The freethought bus sign campaign is sponsored by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), a Madison-based non-profit organization that says its goals are to "promote the constitutional principle of separation of state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism." Its web site states that it represents almost 14,000 non-believers nationwide. The FFRF is engaged in fundraising in order to expand the bus sign project to other cities, with a goal of eventually being visible on the New York City subways.

Quiet Questioner

Dickinson, unknown and almost unpublished during her lifetime, became one of the best known and best loved poets in the world following the posthumous publication of her poetry. Her deceptively simple, eccentrically structured and deeply felt works are thought to herald the modern poetry of the 20th century.

Dickinson, (1830-1886) resided in her family home in Amherst, Mass., for her entire life, aside from a year spent studying at what was then called the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary nearby. The seminary, which was founded by a woman, had as one of its goals, training women to be missionaries and teachers, in order to bring Christianity to the Native-American "heathens." Dickinson, according to women's history scholar Jone Johnson Lewis, "found herself unable to fully accept the religious orientation of those at the school," suffering a kind of spiritual crisis. This, along with social difficulties, caused the sensitive introvert to drop out and return to her family home in Amherst.

She gradually retreated into her home, family life, gardening, books, and especially her writing. She was a voluminous letter writer as well as poet. After awhile, her contact with the outside world was almost solely through the written word. In her early work, she wrote of God and belief in rather conventional terms. However, as she matured philosophically and as a poet, she moved towards expressing more frankly skeptical beliefs. By her late twenties, she had stopped attending church with her family. This was at odds with the strict Calvinist belief system of her family. Calvinism, a form of Reformed Protestantism, emphasizes the sovereignty or rule of God in all things—in all of life, as well as in "salvation."

Dickinson published only ten of her poems in her lifetime. After her death at age 56, her sister and two of her long-time friends discovered a huge sheaf of work stashed in her room. Together, they "edited" her poems for publication, and eventually published three volumes of her poems. Her reputation as great poet was established by these three volumes. Dickinson's punctuation was as original as her poetic vision. She favored dashes and inventive use of capitalization. Her poems didn't conform to the nineteenth-century notion of poetry—verse that adhered to regular meter and rhyme. Most importantly, her poetry was strikingly internal and explored her own fears, desires, and philosophy with courage:

In the 1950's, her poems were finally published more as she intended them to be read, not as her well-meaning friends and family thought they "should" sound to the public.

Ruth N. Geller is the editor of [Humanist Network News](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org), the weekly e-zine of the [Institute for Humanist Studies](http://InstituteForHumanistStudies.org).

*That it will never come again
Is what makes life sweet.
The Supernatural is only the Natural disclosed.
Those who lift their hats shall see Nature as devout
do God.
Faith is Doubt*

HOI Membership

To those of you who have received this newsletter complimentary, complimentary subscriptions are for 6 months maximum. I hope you will decide to join our group. Membership in Humanists of Idaho entitles you to voting rights in the organization's elections and the privilege of holding an office. Membership dues go towards the group's charitable works projects, Humanist awareness, sponsoring the Humanist Perspective on TVTV and contributions to community organizations with humanistic interests.

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;">Humanists of Idaho Board</p> <p>President: Paul Rolig377-0535 or roligpd@spro.net Vice President: Doug Van Curen:.....376-5475 or CelebrantVan@aol.com Secretary: Nancy Rolig..... 377-0535 or nrolig@spro.net Treasurer: Jan Rowe376-5475 or janiejolee1@aol.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Auxiliary Positions</p> <p>Webmaster/Yahoo Group Administrator:..... Van Van Curen 376-5475 OR CelebrantVan@aol.com</p> <p>Newsletter Editor/membership Administrator:.....Nancy Rolig 377-0535 or nrolig@spro.net 9877 W. Ripley St. Boise 83704</p> <p>Charitable Giving Coordinator:OPEN</p> <p>Program Chairman:.....OPEN</p> <p>Permanent Building Fund:Paul Rolig 9877 W. Ripley St., Boise 83704</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Organization Information</p> <p>Your support of this local chapter with your membership, donations and ideas is greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Mailing Address: Humanists of Idaho P.O. Box 44913 Boise, ID 83711-0913</p> <p>Website: http://HumanistsOfIdaho.org</p> <p>Yahoo Group: idaho-humanists@yahoogroups.com</p> <p>Email Address: CelebrantVan@aol.com</p>
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Humanists of Idaho Membership and Donation Form

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City, state, zip code _____

E-mail address and phone _____

- \$25 **Individual** annual membership and Newsletter subscription
- \$45 **Family** annual membership and Newsletter subscription
- \$10 Newsletter subscription only (U.S. Mail or Electronic)
- \$___ donation to help promote public awareness of Humanism
- \$___ Humanists of Idaho Permanent Building Fund Donation
- I would like my newsletter sent electronically.

U. S. Mail:
 Humanists of Idaho
 P.O. Box 44913
 Boise, ID 83711-0913

Newsletter/Membership Email:
nrolig@spro.net

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
P.O. Box 44913
Boise, ID 83711-0913

Monday, March 23rd - HOI Meeting
6:30 PM Humanist Supper Club, 7:30 PM Program

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

Sunday, April 12th , 11:00 AM – BUUF Humanist Group
Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City,