



# 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.

October 2008

<http://Idaho.humanists.net>

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

## President's Message

### Discussion of Korten's "Great Turning"

Our September program was a discussion of David Korten's book "The Great Turning". I think it is fair to say it received mixed reviews. In our discussion, the general consensus was that Korten accurately portrayed some very real problems, and pointed out how some of those problems came to be, and are perpetuated. However, many were also skeptical of some of the broad brushes Korten used to paint some aspects of history. We generally felt that Korten's agenda to get people to turn away from global corporate hierarchies ("Empire") in favor of local cooperative groups ("Earth Community") as the solution to most of the world's problems seemed naïve and utopian.

Korten summarizes Empire versus Earth Community in Table 1.1: The choice:

Empire	Earth Community
• Life is hostile and competitive	• Life is supportive and cooperative
• Humans are flawed & dangerous	• Humans have many possibilities
• Order by dominator hierarchy	• Order through partnership
• Compete or die	• Cooperate and live
• Loves power	• Loves life
• Defend the rights of the self	• Defend the rights of all
• Masculine dominant	• Gender balanced

I liked Korten's exposé of how institutions like the World Bank are used to loan money to poor nations for infrastructure projects that ostensibly help those nations, but often serve only to enrich the large companies hired to build them, enrich the local rulers who receive payoffs, and leave the citizens of the receiving (or loaning) countries saddled with debt. Nevertheless, I am skeptical of Korten's near universal portrayal of corporations as evil by nature.

I like the idea of parents being more nurturing than punishing, people being more cooperative than conquering, living sustainably together on our home planet earth, and many other tactics put forth by Korten to achieve Earth Community. I don't buy in to his portrayal of "Creation" (always capitalized in the book) possessing a mystical cosmic consciousness.

Certainly this book has parts that are worth reading and pondering.

### Bill Maher's Movie "Religulous"

"Politically Incorrect" Bill Maher has made a movie that is at once hilarious and very sobering. He is filmed going all over the world interviewing religious people and letting them do the talking about their beliefs. Maher provides plenty of skeptical narrative, including talks with his own family members about their beliefs and practices. See it soon at The Flicks in Boise!

*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

## 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.

**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**

### October Meeting, Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup>

This month's program will be a speaker from Planned Parenthood of Idaho. A recent email informed us that the protesters are back picketing the Planned Parenthood clinic. I'm sure this will be one of the topics of discussion and a call for help to counter demonstrate.

## Humanists of Idaho Program Schedule

Program Chair – We need a new one!

- November 24 – Open
- Saturday, December 21st – Winter Solstice party at Paul & Nancy Rolig's home.
- January 26– Presentation by Melanie Curtis of Second Chance, a recycled building materials program– Arranged by Mary D Gutierrez
- February 23 – Special Charles Darwin 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Need Help Planning!

### BUUF Discussion Group – Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>

Second Sunday of the Month at 11:00 AM

Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City

Library in the south wing

Everyone is welcome whether you consider yourself a UU or not. The October discussion will be “The Architecture of Framing.” One reference if you want to read up on the subject before hand is One World, Ready or Not by William Greider. We are now meeting in the Library at 11:00 sharp so we can be done with the room at 12:15.

## 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.

## A Reluctant Farewell

“Well, gang - I must pack my tent and depart from the fold. I am too over-committed to continue with HOI. I have had to make a couple of similar decisions lately to get my schedule reprioritized and to reclaim a bit of my time for myself. It was my wish to leave with my HOI job manageable, if not completed.

I have enjoyed the dinner meetings at the Flicks and everyone's company and conversation. I've learned a lot and consider myself smarter for knowing you all. Maybe our paths will cross again in the wild world of Humanism and unconventional belief systems, or at some event. I hope that I have contributed in fair compensation for all that I learned from you. Wally Keltner”

## Save the Planet, Get your Newsletter Electronically!

The discussions at both the October HOI meeting and the November BUUF Discussion Group were on the book, "The Great Turning" by David Korten. In the book is a discussion of preserving the Earth's resources and making our world a better place.. At the BUUF discussion each of us were asked what we each personally are or could be doing towards these goals. Here is a list of what we came up with.

- Join a CSA (community supported agriculture).
- Do no harm
- Don't drive
- Don't heat your house as much
- Live in a smaller house
- Insulate your house
- Live close to work
- When talking with someone you don't agree with, don't "go for the throat", use logic
- Use reusable bags at the grocery store
- Recycle (plastic, paper, metal, etc.)
- Humanist activism
- Give extras from the garden away
- Dalai Lama: "Kindness is my Religion"
- Patronize local merchants (not giant chains)
- Read, stay informed
- Vote
- Support public transportation (funding for trains in CA)
- Grow food; swap seeds as well as produce.
- Rediscover making your own clothes, meals, entertainment..

I want to add one more thing to the list. 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](mailto: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.

## New Ways to Deal with Religious Rituals

Letter to the Editor [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Oct. 1, 2008

(Re: Atheist Alternatives to Grace at the Dinner Table, *Humanist Network News*, Sept. 10, 2008.)

Sweet Reason's column on atheist alternatives to "grace" at the dinner table covered useful ground. For those who would like an example, here is an invocation I composed a couple years ago.

[Please hold your heads up, and keep your eyes wide open.]

As rational beings, let us use our best efforts to discover the truth as shown by observable evidence.

As emotional beings, let us follow our passions to create things and relationships of beauty, and avoid senseless conflict.

Let us choose those human values that maximize happiness for ourselves and others.

Let us be competent, productive, cooperative, and compassionate.

Let us have the courage to stand up for what we believe in, and to listen sincerely when others express their beliefs.

Let us build the kind of world where people can find happiness here on earth.

--Amen.

I've used this to good effect at a Thanksgiving Dinner with family and friends, and at an interfaith prayer breakfast.

--[Paul D Rolig](#), Boise, Idaho, president of Humanists of Idaho

## Evolution is So Over

By RUTH N. GELLER [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Oct. 15, 2008

Is this as good as it gets for the human race? Award-winning geneticist Steve Jones thinks that we are as smart, fit, healthy and strong as we are going to be. According to Jones, the evolution of the human race, if not stopped dead in its tracks, has at least slowed to a snail-like crawl. Jones puts a large part of the blame on the fact that there are fewer men becoming fathers past the age of 35 than in earlier times.

There are three components to evolution—natural selection, mutation and random change. The reduced number of older men fathering children in the Western world, along with use of contraception and marriage patterns, are affecting our genetic future, according to Jones. In a BBC Today radio interview on Oct. 7, Jones said, "...we've made evolution stop almost by accident....evolution turns on inherited differences in the ability to reproduce, it turns on errors in DNA, and variations in the number of children people have. And all its components which we understand pretty well now at least for the time being and at least in the developed world, seem to have lost some of their power."

"No variation equals no natural selection," Jones said later in the interview. According to Jones, in Charles Darwin's day, half of all British children were dead by the age of 21; in present times 99 percent of them are still alive. Many of the children died from genetic reasons, making them raw material for natural selection. Jones thinks that because of global movement and interracial mixing, the face of the future will be "brown." He doesn't think that our brains will be bigger in the future or that we are in fact smarter than our ancestors—just that our brains are more capable of making greater connections.

Jones has been making the rounds to express his views. On the same day he gave the radio interview, he spoke to the *The London Times*. That evening, he presented a lecture at UCL entitled "Human Evolution is Over."

Jones is a professor of genetics and head of the Genetics, Evolution and Environment department at University College London (UCL) who is well known in the U.K. He has written or co-written six scientific books. *The Language of the Genes* and *In the Blood* have seen multiple reprints. Perhaps his most heralded work is *Darwin's Ghost: The Origin of Species Updated* (1999), which was published in the U.K. as *Almost Like a Whale*. Jones has spent years researching the ecological genetics of snails, fruit flies and humans in an attempt to answer a question. On his UCL faculty web page, he asks, "Without variation there could be no genetics and no evolution so why is it there? Perhaps surprisingly we have no real idea..."

Evolutionary biologist and philosopher Massimo Pigliucci told the *Humanist Network News* that he has no idea why Jones thinks human evolution is grinding to a halt. While he finds *Darwin's Ghost* a brilliant work, he finds a lot of holes in Jones' current theory.

Pigliucci said that the idea that older fathers are better for evolution is "quite debatable to say the least," pointing out that "for most of human evolution fathers rarely got to the ripe age of 35." Pre-agricultural age Homo sapiens didn't have the means to sustain multiple sexual partners and there is no proof that polygamy was typical of early humans. Yet human evolution proceeded just fine, nonetheless, wrote Pigliucci in an e-mail.

Addressing Jones' prediction of a "brown future", Pigliucci said that "humanity is nowhere near the level of completely random mating that would be necessary to achieve that." Later in his e-mail he wrote, "...to complicate matters, it may be that small populations can undergo rapid random evolution (though the extent to which that happens is still under debate), but it is also true that large populations (and ours is huge!) also respond quickly to natural selection because of the much higher degree of genetic variation present."

*Ruth N. Geller is the editor of Humanist Network News, the weekly e-zine of the Institute for Humanist Studies.*

## Coming Out as a Non-Believer? Test Your Comfort Level First

COLUMN By DOUG THOMAS For [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Oct. 15, 2008

Even though I grew up in a community full of religious groups – five churches in a community of five hundred people – I escaped the problem of "coming out" as an agnostic there. I simply headed off to university some distance away. Yes, one or two of my closest friends knew, but they were involved in their own personal searches and weren't about to mess up our friendship with revelations that might involve them.

Compared to others I was lucky, or so it seems to me now. I often encounter reticence on the part of non-believers to become publicly involved. Since we have had an enforceable charter of rights and freedoms only since 1982, there is a vague sense that some discrimination might occur. Indeed, there is a systemic assumption that everyone is some kind of believer.

For the most part, we Canadians are a live and let live bunch, thinking that if someone is doing something that does not affect others negatively there is no cause for comment. Of course, whether what one is doing is harmful or not is open to some subjective interpretation.

Fundamentalists of all stripes, including fundamentalist atheists, seem to have the most problem dealing with someone who differs in philosophy from them. While Puritans may live with the agonizing sense that somewhere, someone is having fun, fundamentalists suffer the same fear that somewhere, someone disagrees with them. Perhaps, although relatively small in number, these folks are intense enough to cause people to hold their philosophies close to their chest.

Since the only workable definition of a Canadian is "an immigrant with seniority," I suspect that a considerable factor in this reticence to "come out" is experience in less tolerant countries. This reticence seems to carry on for a generation or two. The meme set of a non-believer, probably accounts for this since one tends, even without knowing it, to have the same cultural memories as one's parents.

Of course, many non-believers are out when their believing parents are not around and are wary of public association with other non-believers since their involvement might get back to their believing parents. Surprisingly, this effect seems to last well beyond the point where they have their own separate lives and families. Perhaps this is just a matter of not wishing to hurt their parents in some way.

Since some people are not comfortable being "outed", some of our humanist activities are curtailed. Mostly this means that we don't put up banners over every event.

Positive experiences like having waitresses prefer our Solstice gathering to a Christmas bash in the next room and having people who meet our Camp Quest kids being impressed with their polite demeanor certainly ameliorate much of our uncertainty and give us examples to encourage others to come out.

No doubt, the issue of "coming out" will disappear in time. However, at the moment we have to respect the comfort levels of people who don't want to come out just yet.

*Doug Thomas is an English teacher and novelist, an agnostic member of SOFREE (Society of Ontario Freethinkers), and a Canadian nationalist fanatic who has written a Humanist version of O Canada in both official languages. His novel, The Bloody Boy, is available through Keltoi Publishing.*

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

## ANNOUNCEMENT: Calling All Non-Believers: Express Yourself in a HumanLight Design Contest

STAFF REPORTS [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Oct. 1, 2008

HumanLight is a holiday celebrated around Dec. 23 specifically to acknowledge reason, family, friendship, and other shared, secular values of humankind. To learn more, visit the website: <http://www.humanlight.org>.

The HumanLight Committee is hosting a HumanLight holiday card and ornament design contest for secularists of all ages. Contestants should design an artistic expression to positively address these questions or some aspect of the HumanLight holiday.

What do we have to celebrate during the winter holiday season? What do you hope for in the future? What's the Humanist view/perspective?

**ELIGIBILITY:** All are welcome to enter! One entry per artist. All media, (painting, printmaking, collage, digital art, photography, or perhaps something even more creative?) is accepted.

Category 1: Ages 11 and under.

Category 2: Ages 12-17.

Category 3: Ages 18 and up.

**TO APPLY:** E-mail the image as a high resolution (at least 300 dpi) JPEG to: [HumanLightContest](mailto:HumanLightContest). In the body of the email, include the artist's name, age, what country and state (if it applies) he or she is from, and what method he or she used to create the image.

**DEADLINE** for entries is November 1, 2008.

**Judge:** Martha Knox is a fine artist, humanist celebrant, art teacher and director of the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia.

**Prizes:** Three images will be selected, one from each age category. Cards and ornaments displaying all three winners will be available for purchase at the HumanLight merchandise webpage. Each prize winner will receive an ornament and set of cards with their image, as well as some HumanLight candy! The winners and their designs will also be featured on the main HumanLight website.

All images in this contest are owned by the artist. By submitting images to this contest, the artist agrees to grant the HumanLight Committee the right to print or otherwise re-publish the submitted images in marketing or web materials for the purpose of promoting HumanLight so long as credit is given to the artist as the original creator of the image(s). All proceeds from HumanLight merchandise sales will go toward further promotion of HumanLight.

*Humanist Network News is a weekly e-zine and monthly podcast of the [Institute for Humanist Studies](http://Institute for Humanist Studies). The Institute for Humanist Studies promotes humanism, a non-religious philosophy based on reason and compassion. IHS advances human rights, secular ethics and the separation of religion and government through advocacy, innovation and collaboration.*



# 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

**President:** Paul Rolig .....377-0535 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 Rowe .....376-5475 or janiejolee1@aol.com

### Auxiliary Positions

**Webmaster/Yahoo Group Administrator:**..... Van Van Curen  
376-5475 OR saw2thking@aol.com  
**Newsletter Editor/membership Administrator:**.....Nancy Rolig  
377-0535 or nrolig@spro.net  
9877 W. Ripley St. Boise 83704  
**Charitable Giving Coordinator:** .....Kari Rowe  
353-4301 or justkari143@hotmail.com  
**Program Manager:**.....OPEN  
**Permanent Building Fund:** .....Paul Rolig  
9877 W. Ripley St., Boise 83704

### Organization Information

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

### Website:

<http://Idaho.humanists.net>

**Yahoo Group:** idaho-humanists@yahoogroups.com

### Email Address:

**Idaho@humanists.net**

## 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



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Boise, ID 83711-0913

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**Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup> - HOI Meeting**

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

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**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)**

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**Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup> , 11:00 AM – BUUF Humanist Group**

**Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6200 Garrett, Garden City,**  
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