

Billboard Battle Brewing in Bible Belt

The above was one of many headlines garnered by the Louisville Coalition of Reason in Kentucky when the CoR put up the following billboard near the city's fairgrounds on August 2, two weeks before the opening of the Kentucky State Fair.



A story and video can be found at www.wlky.com/news/24516076/detail.html as an example of the resulting extensive publicity. Beyond this, one of the organizations in the coalition gained over 60 new members and several donations. But that was before the associated booth went up at the state fair—a booth that will continue through this coming weekend (see photo, next page). So there's more to come.

Religious blogs also featured two-way discussions with Louisville CoR and UnitedCoR leaders. And e-mails of heartfelt support were received, such as this one:

All I can say is thank you for standing up for rationality and reason! . . . I find it frightening in this day and age that there are so many so-called educated adults who buy in to the whole conservative religious movement. . . . I live near Louisville, Ky, and read about your group this morning and the unveiling of the billboard just in time for the Fair.

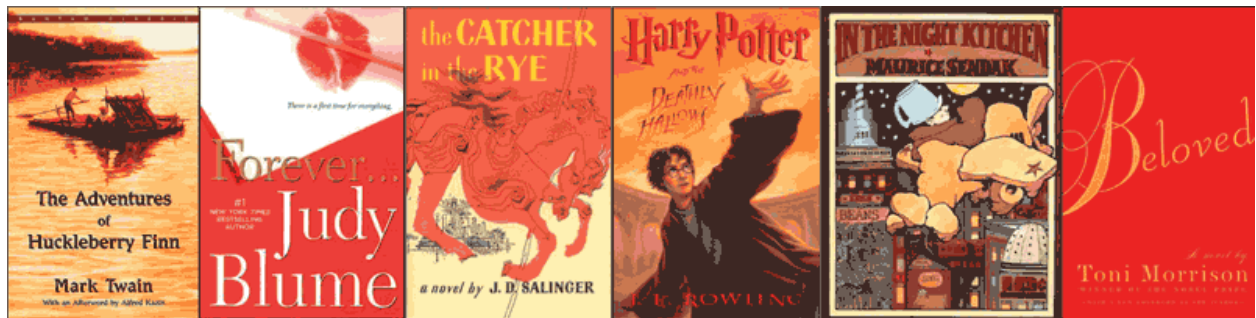
Thanks again for all you do. Your org may just be the next "church" for me.



In the booth at the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville, the large bust of Darwin on the left was made by a local artist who became a member of the Louisville Atheists thanks to the billboard.

Banned Books Week, September 25 thru October 2

With a Florida church planning a Quran burning on September 11th this year, the annual observance known as Banned Books Week has become more important than ever. Thus the board of directors of UnitedCoR encourages all local coalitions to organize activities during the week of Saturday, September 25, through Saturday, October 2.



Banned Books Week is the only national celebration of the freedom to read. It was launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores, and libraries. A number of ideas for events and activities are available on the Banned Books Week website at www.bannedbooksweek.org . To become more aware of the Quran burning and the bigoted attitudes behind it, go to www.doveworld.org and get details from the source.

National Secular Service Day Has a New Date

The Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard University, creators of National Secular Service Day (NSSD), just announced that this year, as well as for all future years, the observance will be celebrated on the first Sunday of October, which falls on October 3 in 2010.

Last year, in 2009, a number of national, local, and campus organizations in the community of reason got behind what was the first NSSD, held on October 18. The goal was to encourage a wide range of nontheistic and nonreligious people throughout the United States to get involved in community service. The stated mission was, and remains, “to unite secular groups across the country in the interest of public service, and to demonstrate our commitment to leading full and ethical lives.” The leadership of UnitedCoR found this mission consistent with its own, which is “to raise the visibility and sense of unity among local groups in the community of reason, to create a national dialogue on the role of nontheists in American society, and to improve the way that nontheists are perceived by average Americans.” Hence United CoR gave its full support.

Some of the ways individual secular organizations got involved last year included book drives, blood drives, and micro-finance loan campaigns. In the Greater Boston area, local freethought and humanist groups combined their efforts through Boston CoR to work together with local schoolchildren to cultivate garden space at Dharma Harvest, a nonprofit organization and farm based in Harvard, Massachusetts.

This year, with the benefit of past experience, the possibilities increase. And if the current six weeks don’t seem like enough lead time, groups may still celebrate the observance this year on the original date on or around October 18, or at any other time of their convenience and choosing. It’s important simply to begin, in the public mind, connecting nontheistic Americans with social service. And it is to reinforce a longstanding tradition in the community of reason of combining reason and compassion to generate action. It is a great opportunity for unified local involvement, both this year and in the years to come.

For more information on National Secular Service Day, particularly regarding last year’s activities, visit www.secularserviceday.org and explore the possibilities.

© Copyright 2010 by the United Coalition of Reason. Fred Edwords, editor.
E-mail news items to Fredwords@UnitedCoR.org – visit the website at www.UnitedCoR.org .