Hard CoR News

The insider bulletin of the United Coalition of Reason

Volume 2 ~ Special 2011 Year-end Wrap-up

Coalition Launches in 2011

Although UnitedCoR started the year with enough funding in its budget to cover nine CoR launches with ad campaigns, the funding was increased in May to allow more such launches. As a result, over the course of the year, new coalitions were launched in Orlando, Florida; Orange County, Fresno, and Stockton, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; Spokane, Washington; Little Rock, Arkansas; Reno, Nevada; Springfield, Missouri; and Columbia, South Carolina. Also paid for in 2011 is the launch of a new CoR in Fredericksburg, Virginia, the very first week in January 2012. This totals eleven coalitions in all.

Adding these launches to the count since UnitedCoR was founded at the beginning of 2009, we get a grand total of 39 established coalitions in 24 states and Washington D.C. If you add the 15 additional coalitions that have their websites up but haven't yet launched, the number becomes 54, the geographic spread of which can be seen by viewing the map page on the UnitedCoR website at http://www.unitedcor.org/national/page/map .

Additional coalitions that have formed but aren't yet ready for a website total 10. This means there are 25 coalitions—with and without websites—that have been formed but not yet publicly launched. They exist in Central Illinois; Fargo, North Dakota; Las Vegas, Nevada; Lexington, Kentucky; Kansas City, Missouri; Madison, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Moscow, Idaho; Omaha, Nebraska; Rhode Island; Rochester, New York; San Antonio, Texas; Wichita, Kansas; Vancouver, British Columbia; Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area of California; the cities of Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Tallahassee in Florida; the Triad and Triangle areas of North Carolina; the Lehigh Valley and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Greenville, South Carolina; and Lynchburg, Virginia. This all makes for a grand total of 64 local coalitions in the UnitedCoR national network.

UnitedCoR Files Suit and Wins

The Little Rock, Arkansas, bus ads—originally slated for mid-May—are of particular interest. This is because they required UnitedCoR to litigate through the Appignani Humanist Legal Center of the American Humanist Association in order to get the municipally-owned bus company to comply. The upshot of this, however, was that we were able to secure three times our normal publicity for Central Arkansas CoR, spread over a five-month period. The first publicity came when we filed suit on June 1. The second round was after our successful court appearance on August 11. And the third was when the bus ads actually ran, beginning October 2.

A side benefit of this followed when we received resistance from the bus system in Spokane, Washington. We again asked the Appignani Humanist Legal Center for help, they took immediate action, and the transit authority caved, allow the bus ads of the Spokane Coalition of Reason to run on time on August 30.

Unfortunately, however, we received resistance again from the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, transit authority, which prevented the scheduled launch of Pittsburgh CoR in mid-December. So we are once again forced to look into the litigation possibilities.

Individual Groups Assisted

In addition to funding the launch of coalitions, UnitedCoR also assists individual, isolated, non-coalition groups by providing billboard graphic design services and public relations advice. This was done twice in 2011. The cities were Duluth, Minnesota, and Missoula, Montana.

The Fair and Festival Initiative

A new item in the 2011 budget was a pilot project for funding fair and festival exhibit booths to benefit some of our local coalitions. This wasn't widely announced because we wanted to test the idea on a cross section of our CoRs. Those tested included CoRs that had launched earlier, CoRs wanting to include a fair or festival exhibit with their launch itself, and even two that wanted to participate in an event prior to their launch. For this effort, UnitedCoR made around $1,000 available to each selected CoR to aid in paying booth rental fees at state fairs and city events and for the purchase of exhibit elements, such as banners and tents. Parade banners were included as part of this effort where parades were part of the fair, festival, or launch. A total of $10,000 was spent on this in 2011. (See the two example photos below: Louisville CoR and Triad CoR).

Among the coalitions that benefited were CoR Spokane, Fredericksburg CoR, Louisville CoR, Reno CoR, San Diego CoR, Triad CoR, Triangle CoR, and Utah CoR. This program becomes available in 2012 to all interested CoRs that haven't already participated. And UnitedCoR has budgeted double the 2011 amount—or $20,000—to make this a real success.

Sponsorship of Regional Conferences

Another pilot program tested in 2011 was a conference initiative. In this effort, UnitedCoR invested thousands of dollars in statewide and regional conferences to help organizers cover speaker expenses, hotel costs, and other big ticket items. The conferences selected were those that supported a wide range of local groups in the community of reason and thus were neither national in scope nor branded with the identity of a single national organization.

The five conferences cosponsored by United CoR were the Midwest Humanist and Freethought Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, on August 12-14; the Texas Freethought Convention in Houston, Texas, on October 7-9; Freethought Day in Sacramento, California, on October 22; the Carolinas Secular Conference in Wilmington, North Carolina, on November 11-13; and Skepticon in Springfield, Missouri, November 18-20. This aid is seen as a natural part of UnitedCoR's mission of building cooperation among local groups in the community of reason.

Exciting Local Coalition Programs

Over the past three years, local coalitions have sponsored some innovative programs that, if more widely known in our network, might be emulated by others. Moreover, coalitions have also created unique ways of conducting many of the special celebrations that UnitedCoR encourages its local CoRs to unite around, such as the winter solstice, Darwin Day, and the National Day of Reason. So, in the next issue of *Hard CoR News*, we will provide details on many of these.

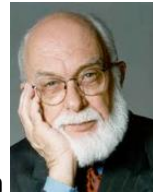## Get Ready for the Reason Rally!

Richard Dawkins

P.Z. Myers

Taslima Nasrin

Randi

Back in the April 2010 issue of *Hard CoR News*, it was announced that UnitedCoR was represented on the Unity Event Planning Committee that was working to develop a mega conference in 2013. Well, over the course of time, this idea morphed into a plan to hold a one-day rally in 2012. And so the Reason Rally was born, with United CoR pitching in as a major charter sponsor. The event will be held on the National Mall in Washington DC on March 24, 2012. It will be free to attend and will run from 10:00AM to 4:00PM. There will be music, comedy, speakers, and much more. Full details are available online at www.ReasonRally.org. More information will be provided, along with ideas on how local coalitions of reason can mobilize participation, in the very next issue of *Hard CoR News*.