

Press Releases and Press Conferences

Press Releases

Relevance (important or interesting, timely, catch the wave, freethought connection)

Timing (hit while story is hot that day, early in week, early in day)

Attention-getting (striking headlines, exciting subject, visual ops)

National Day of Prayer vs. National Day of Reason

Celebrating the Holidays without God: A Humanist Alternative

Humanists Slam Repressive Taboos

New Center Launches "Secular Sunday Schools"

New Center to Teach Godless Ethics

Overall, be clever and counterintuitive.

Written in AP news style, as an objective article, with all opinion in quotes from you.

This is your idea of a perfect article about your organization that you'd like printed as-is.

The "lede" must answer who, what, where, and when. It should tell why the reader should care now. It is your basic sound bite.

Quotes should be accurate, short, pithy, and *memorable*.

All press releases and media advisories should be sent in *plain text* with no file attachments.

Target your press releases (the correct reporters, don't bother too often)

Followup (phone calls, pitch story):

When you call reporters mention that you sent them a press release but don't ask them if they got it, they see this as rude. Also most all reporters are going to try and get you off the phone as soon as possible, as if you were a telemarketer. You

have to make your point up front and quickly. Skip the “How are you?” question.

Forming Relationships with Reporters (let them advise you, cultivate)

Remember, you’re helping them do *their* job. So make it good for them so they can make it good for you.

Press Conferences

Relevance (Best for a launch. Is a press conference needed?)

Timing (10 AM Tuesday, make sure your story is ready to roll)

Location (convenient, newsworthy, photo-op)

Brevity (three 5 minute speeches, Q & A)

Visuals (posters, graphs, objects, people)

Logging in reporters (sign-up sheet, cultivate reporters)

Filling Room (pad room with other representatives, but don’t worry if only one reporter comes—they like an exclusive)

Media Advisory

Media Advisory: Godless Billboard and Humanist Conference Coming to Phoenix May 29, 2009

At a June 5 press conference, PZ Myers--the popular author of the science blog, *Pharyngula*--will speak out about being awarded Humanist of the Year at the 68th Annual Conference of the American Humanist Association and will be available to answer questions. In addition, the Arizona Coalition of Reason and the American Humanist Association will unveil an atheist/agnostic billboard on a major Phoenix highway. The billboard will beckon nontheistic motorists by reminding them they aren't alone. Its launch coincides with the 68th Annual Conference, held in Tempe, which is one of the largest gatherings of humanists and freethinkers in the United States.

WHO: PZ Myers, Jim Lippard, Maggie Ardiente and Fred Edwords will speak at the press conference.

-- PZ Myers is an associate professor of biology at the University of Minnesota-Morris and author of the popular science blog, *Pharyngula*, which covers culture, politics, religion, and most notably, the evolution/intelligent design debate. He received the 2005 Koufax Award for Best Expert Blog, the 2006 Weblog Award for Best Science Blog, and was named the world's top science blogger by *Nature* magazine. He is an outspoken member of the scientific community against creationism and the promotion of "intelligent design."

-- Jim Lippard is the media representative for the Arizona Coalition of Reason (Arizona COR). He previously served as the president of the Internet Infidels from 2003 to 2005. He is also former editor of the Arizona Skeptic and founder of Phoenix Skeptics, of which he also served as executive director.

-- Maggie Ardiente is the director of development for the American Humanist Association and editor of the organization's membership newsletter, *Free Mind*. She is also a former member of the Secular Student Alliance board of directors.

-- Fred Edwords heads the United Coalition of Reason (United CoR), an organization that promotes local cooperation among humanist and freethought groups in cities across the United States. He is also a former executive director of the American Humanist Association and former editor of the *Humanist* magazine.

WHERE: Tempe Mission Palms Hotel
Cavetto Room
60 East Fifth Street
Tempe, Arizona 85281

WHEN: Friday, June 5, 9:00 am

WHY: Nontheists--atheists, agnostics and others who subscribe to no religion--may feel they have no voice in a time when traditional religions dominate public discourse. They may also feel alone--that they aren't respected in their communities and are vilified simply because they don't believe in a god. But now they have a place to turn. Come learn more about people who don't believe in a god and why such a pointed billboard and public conference is needed to change common perceptions of secular Americans.

The Arizona Coalition of Reason (<http://arizonacor.org/>) is a group of secular-oriented organizations in Arizona that represent a worldview grounded in reason over superstition and scientific truth over revealed truth.

The American Humanist Association (www.americanhumanist.org) advocates for the rights and viewpoints of humanists. Founded in 1941 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., its work is extended through more than 100 local chapters and affiliates across the United States. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism, affirms our responsibility to lead ethical lives of value to self and humanity.

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Press Release

Humanists Speak out about Godless Billboard in the Phoenix Area

For Immediate Release - Contact Karen Frantz at (202) 238-9088
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(Phoenix, AZ, June 5, 2009) "Don't believe in God? You are not alone."

These words are part of a coordinated multi-organizational advertising campaign designed to raise awareness about people who don't believe in a god. And now the nationwide campaign has come to the Phoenix area. The prominent ad appears on a highway billboard and can be read by motorists traveling north of the Sky Harbor Airport, at the intersection of 44th and Washington, just outside of Phoenix. It has been placed by the Arizona Coalition of Reason, with funding from the United Coalition of Reason and logistical support from the American Humanist Association. It features an image of blue sky and clouds with the words superimposed over.

"The point of this national billboard campaign is to reach out to the millions of humanists, atheists and agnostics living in the United States," explained Fred Edwards, head of the United Coalition of Reason, speaking at a press conference today. "Nontheists sometimes don't realize there's a community out there for them because they're inundated with religious messages at every turn. So we hope this will serve as a beacon and let them know they aren't alone."

The billboard's sponsors will hold a press conference tomorrow, Friday, June 5, to discuss the issues raised by the billboard's unconventional message. The conference coincides with the opening of the 68th Annual Conference of the American Humanist Association (AHA), at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel. "The American Humanist Association has funded a number of these billboards in the past, and this annual conference is among the nation's largest gatherings of humanists and other nontheists each year," said Maggie Ardiente, director of development for the Washington, D.C.-based AHA. "It allows our community to communicate, thrive and strategize."

The press conference will be held at 9:00 AM in the Cavetto Room at the Tempe Missions Palms Hotel, which is located at 60 East Fifth Street. Special guest PZ Myers, the popular author of the science blog, Pharyngula, will also be present at the press conference to express his thoughts and answer questions on being named 2009 Humanist of the Year.

The billboard is one of many that have gone up around the country this year, including those in places as far flung as Charleston, South Carolina; Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas; Moscow, Idaho; and New Orleans, Louisiana. The United Coalition of Reason plans to fund billboards in as many as 16 additional states before year's end

In addition, during the past winter holiday season, the American Humanist Association ran an ad campaign on city buses in Washington, D.C.—an effort that garnered both applause and controversy from around the nation.

The American Humanist Association (www.americanhumanist.org) advocates for the rights and viewpoints of humanists. Founded in 1941 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., its work is extended through more than 100 local chapters and affiliates across America.

The Arizona Coalition of Reason (www.arizonacor.org) is a group of like-minded member organizations from throughout Arizona that share a worldview grounded in reason over superstition, and scientific truth over revealed truth.

The United Coalition of Reason (www.unitedcor.org) exists to raise the visibility and sense of unity among local groups in the community of reason by providing funding and expertise to help them cooperate toward the goal of raising their public profiles.

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For more information contact:

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NOTE: To read the speeches delivered at the press conference, go to <http://www.unitedcor.org/20090605.htm> and scroll down to the bottom of the page to click the links.

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