

New Billboard Design Now Available

Because Internet discussion has revealed that some people are getting tired of the billboard image using the blue sky and fluffy white clouds, which has been in use since January 2008, the UnitedCoR board of directors has now approved a fresh new graphic design. It is in direct response to online suggestions that a sunrise or sunset might look good. This new design can be used either with the slogan below or with “Are you good without God? Millions are.” Effective immediately, therefore, local CoRs now have this or the blue-sky design available as options.



And, of course, the local CoR URL will be placed where it says “UnitedCoR.org.” (Special thanks to Lisa Zangerl of the American Humanist Association for the graphic design.)

Despite, however, these calls by some to replace the blue-sky design, the original remains popular with other people. For example, the following message was received via Detroit CoR from Murray Suters in Sydney, Australia.

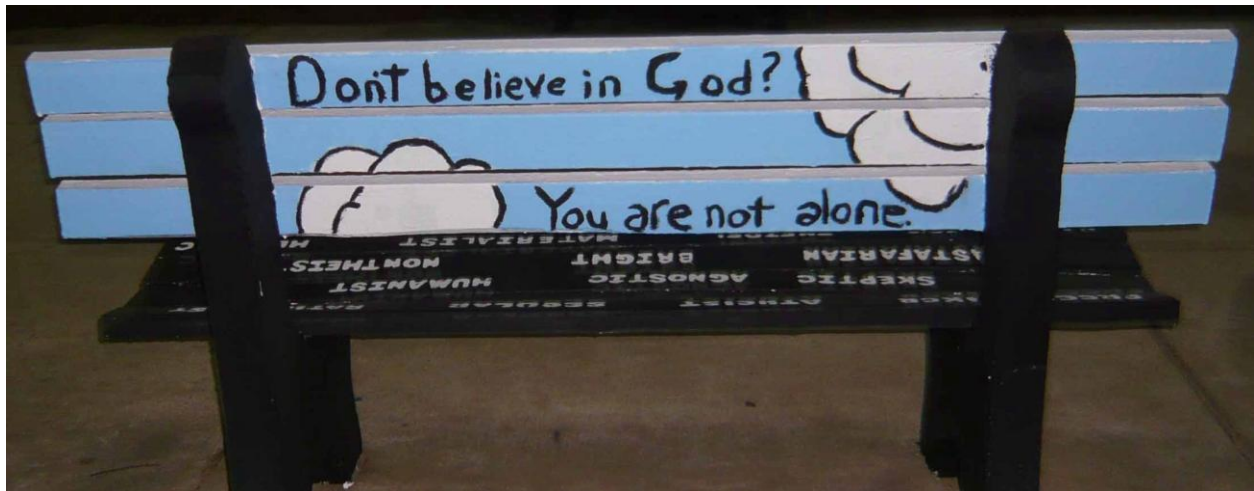
I read with interest your bus campaign. Unfortunately our transport system has a neutral advertising policy. No church ads but also no secular adds either.

In Australia we are currently fighting a federal government decision to federally fund the allocation of chaplains into all public schools. I was thinking that a way of fundraising was to print up a number of bumper stickers and sell them to my fellow atheists. I then saw you ads on the sides of the buses.

I would like your permission to use your artwork.

He then provided a bumper sticker design for www.atheistfoundation.org.au that is essentially the same as the UnitedCoR “Don’t believe in God?” billboard, and requested permission to print up 2,000 of them. UnitedCoR was happy to approve.

Meanwhile, back in the USA, at George Mason University in northern Virginia, members of the Secular Student Alliance group there painted the following bench on campus. (Thanks to Shelley Mountjoy for the nighttime photo—and some of the painting!)



National Day of Reason Gets Attention

A number of local CoRs observed the National Day of Reason—held annually on the National Day of Prayer—with some notable results.

Tampa Bay CoR encouraged members of its participating organizations to “donate blood in the name of reason” by finding Florida Blood Services locations near them. They were asked to then “make sure to let them know you are doing this as part of the National Day of Reason celebration.” And on May 6 a number of them did so. In particular, Rob Curry, executive director of the Atheists of Florida, and Gina Harvey, president of the Atheist Student Alliance at the University of South Florida, went together with atheist Jason Rodriguez. All three sported their Atheists of Florida T-shirts. And much to their delight, one of the staff members at the blood bank actually asked them if they were members of the Tampa Bay Coalition of Reason. They responded with a boisterous “Yes!” Clearly, the word gets around.

The New Orleans Secular Humanist Association, the only such group in that city and a friend of UnitedCoR, went to the city council and secured an official proclamation (see the next page). Moreover, this isn’t the first time that the group’s president, Harry Greenberger, has pulled this off. He got Mayor C. Ray Nagin to issue a similar proclamation in 2009.

NEW ORLEANS
City Council



Proclamation

Whereas, the City of New Orleans is renowned for its food, festivals, famous citizens and foreign visitors; and

Whereas, the City Council takes great pride in paying tribute to events and activities; now, therefore

Be IT PROCLAIMED BY THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS that the Council recognizes:

**a citywide
DAY OF REASON**

In the name of and by the authority vested in the Council of the City of New Orleans

At the request of Councilmembers
Arnie D. Fielkow & Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson
May 6, 2010

Arnie Fielkow
Council-At-Large
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson
Council-At-Large
Shelley S. Midura
Council District A
Joseph B. ...
Council District B
James Carter
Council District C
Cynthia Hedge ...



Arizona CoR spokesperson Matt Schoenley was quoted in the May 4 *Arizona Republic* along with Marc Victor, a local member of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, criticizing Arizona's observance of the National Day of Prayer. The paper reported, "The coalition of atheist, agnostic and humanist groups 'is interested in keeping religion and government separate,' Schoenley said. 'For government to urge Americans to pray is a slap in the face.'"

San Diego CoR Active on Earth Day

In San Diego, California, Earth Day was celebrated in a big way at EarthFair 2010 in the city's famous Balboa Park. And San Diego CoR was there as a number of the participating groups in the coalition set up separate exhibit booths and tables. This approach not only helped each group present its own environmental message, it gave the massive number of attendees multiple opportunities to come in contact with some part of the community of reason. (To see a collection of photos from this activity, visit <http://sandiego.unitedcor.org/node/7>). Moreover, San Diego CoR handed out about 500 of its flyers listing all the coalition groups and was both surprised and thrilled by the enthusiastic reception it received.

Each year in San Diego, EarthFair features more than 350 exhibitors, special theme areas, a Food Pavilion, a special Kids' Activity Area, three entertainment venues, the Children's Earth Parade, the eARTH Gallery art show, and the Cleaner Car Concourse. Perhaps your city has something similar that your coalition can latch onto next year.

John Birch Society Takes Dim View of UnitedCoR

The Cold Warriors at the John Birch Society are still active in these United States. And now UnitedCoR seems to have secured a place on the organization's blacklist. Raven Clabough, writing on April 30 in the online edition of the *New American* magazine, a biweekly published by the Society, was commenting unfavorably about those who oppose religious symbols on public property when she drew the following conclusion:

As long as "civil rights" groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and atheist groups like the United Coalition of Reason are in existence, Christians can expect to remain in the defensive position.

Some say it's just as important to have the right enemies as it is to have the right friends.

Handy Tip: Use Google Alerts

Keep track of the publicity your CoR or local group is getting by using Google Alerts. Just log onto <http://www.google.com/alerts> where you'll see an easy-to-use form. Then fill in the search term you have in mind (which can be the name of your CoR, your group, or your own name) and indicate which e-mail address you want the information sent to. It's that simple!

Vandalism Damages Entire Billboard Structure

Northeast Florida CoR announced two billboards on March 24, one in Orange Park, a suburb of Jacksonville (pictured in the last issue) and one in the St. Augustine area (pictured twice below).



The St. Augustine billboard went up March 29, as shown on the left. But on or shortly before April 11 it was apparently vandalized, as shown on the right. By all appearances, it would seem that someone tried to push the structure down from in front by ramming a truck's bumper into the pillars holding it up. But the trees in back may have prevented it from going down vary far. In any case, the vinyl bearing the message wasn't damaged at all and so remained visible.

In response, UnitedCoR issued a second press release, on behalf of Northeast Florida CoR, announcing the damage. Extensive additional news coverage followed. Then, after the billboard owner, CBS Outdoor, send a crew out to examine the situation, it was apparently determined that the matter was a lost cause, because the billboard structure was soon removed entirely.

UnitedCoR Joins in Critique of Census Bureau

The United Coalition of Reason was one of thirteen national organizations and one international organization in the community of reason to sign onto a letter to the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the administration of a religious oath to those securing employment as census workers. The May 7 letter to Robert Groves, director of the bureau, says in part:

As directors of organizations committed to the rights of humanists, atheists, and other freethinkers, a number of us have received complaints from persons who were hired by the U.S. Census or sought Federal employment as Census workers. They complain that they were asked to take a religious oath that ends in "so help me God."

We, the undersigned, write to urge you to remove such superfluous and divisive language from the oath you administer. As it stands this practice leads hires and applicants to believe that Census has a religious test for public office in violation of U.S. Constitution,

Article VI, clause: “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.” . . .

Please inform us by June 1, 2010, of any action you intend to take to make Census’ oath comply with the constitutional requirement for religious neutrality.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Buckner, President, American Atheists
Katharine Archibald, Executive Director, American Ethical Union
David Niose, President, American Humanist Association
Stuart Bechman, President, Atheist Alliance International
Amanda Metskas, President, Camp Quest
Tom Flynn, Executive Director, Council for Secular Humanism
Dan Barker, Co-President, Freedom From Religion Foundation
Warren Wolf, President, Institute for Humanist Studies
Matt Cherry, Director, International Humanist and Ethical Union
Jason Torpy, President, Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers
Herb Silverman, President, Secular Coalition for America
Hemant Mehta, Chair, Secular Student Alliance
Louis Altman, President, Society for Humanistic Judaism
Fred Edwords, Director, United Coalition of Reason

In the next issue of *Hard CoR News* we will apprise you of the outcome.

Spring Picnic Video Shows Value of Coalition Activities

At a May 8 coalition picnic of DFW CoR in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas, Zachary Moore made a significant video. Through the candid comments he captured on the subject of “What do you like best about DFW CoR?” viewers are able to discover in a very personal way the importance and value of such CoR activities. The five-minute video is available on both Vimeo and YouTube. Just go to:

<http://vimeo.com/11616342> or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFhWHvFP8aI>

And the video will soon be posted to the “What’s New” page of the UnitedCoR website.

Other local CoRs are encouraged to make their own videos and post them online, thus spreading the word and inspiring the rest of us.

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E-mail news items to Fredwords@UnitedCoR.org – visit the website at www.UnitedCoR.org .