



Humanists Of ID, ID Atheists, Sages, BUUF Humanists, BSU SSA, West Valley Freethinkers, ID Society of Reason, Cosmos Coffee Club, HumanKind, Sunday Assembly Boise

Free Thought Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason [www.tvcor.com](http://www.tvcor.com).

November 2016

*If our planet is experiencing changes that impact us in negative ways, and if we humans can do something about this, shouldn't we pay attention?*

## **Carbon Fee Climate Protection** Nancy Basinger

Citizens' Climate Lobby is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. It was created in 2007 around the consensus between climate scientists and economists that putting a price on greenhouse gas pollution is a key component of moving to a low carbon energy economy. CCL then developed the Carbon Fee and Dividend legislative proposal as the simplest and fairest plan to price this pollution in the U.S. and to provide leadership across the global economy for effective carbon pricing.

A gradually and steadily increasing fee on carbon pollution can be levied on fossil fuel companies when their products enter the economy. This creates a strong market signal for entrepreneurs, businesses and individuals to invest in cleaner energy technologies and energy conservation.

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Revenues collected from these fees are held in a trust and returned equally to all U.S. households. The result is that households that pollute less than the average coming out ahead financially, and those who pollute above the average pay more through higher prices than they receive in the dividend. Because lower income households use fewer products and less energy from fossil fuels, the great majority of lower and middle income families come out even or ahead financially.

A border adjustment levies a similar fee on imports from countries without carbon pricing and compensates exporters to those same countries. This acts to protect U.S. businesses and encourage all our trading partners to adopt equivalent carbon pricing.

## **A Bipartisan path to Cleaner Energy**

**Nancy Basinger**

The Citizens Climate Lobby has 355 active chapters in the U.S. and internationally. Chapters are organized by Congressional district, and members work to develop respectful, ongoing relationships with our elected officials.

We strive to emphasize common values, and find common ground toward solutions. CCL was instrumental in the creation of two committees in the House of Representatives devoted clean energy and climate change. One, the Bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, now has 10 Republicans, and 10 Democrats meeting regularly to discuss climate change solutions. CCL works to create political will for our politicians to act on climate change.

CCL had an active presence at the recent Paris climate talks. They are a member of the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, international leaders from government, industry, and civil society working to identify and promote the most effective carbon pricing policies.

Citizens Climate Lobby believes that climate change should not be an issue of partisanship, and people across the political spectrum have reasons to care about climate change and support development of clean and locally produced energy. We meet with our elected representatives or their staff several times a year to educate them about our carbon pricing plan, write letters to the editor, and meet with business and community groups.

This organization is a way for the average citizen who is worried about climate change to learn how to become an effective citizen lobbyist for action on solutions at the national level.

**West Valley Freethinkers, Nampa** Contact Charlie B  
[deepbluesigh@gmail.com](mailto:deepbluesigh@gmail.com) or [wvfreethinkers@gmail.com](mailto:wvfreethinkers@gmail.com)

**C of Southern Idaho Secular group** see Facebook "Secular Student Alliance at CSI". For Freethinkers Twin Falls Contact is Erica,  
[erical@eaglemail.csi.edu](mailto:erical@eaglemail.csi.edu)

**COSMOS COFFEE CLUB conversation** begins at 6:30pm 1st & 3rd Mondays at Papa Joe's. Contact Sander Karas at  
<http://www.meetup.com/CosmosCoffeeClub>

**Humanists in Idaho Falls** meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Ask Doug at [gerstner\\_doug@yahoo.com](mailto:gerstner_doug@yahoo.com)

**Idaho Society of Reason** is part of Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason. <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events> 2nd in Boise, 4th Sundays Nampa at noon. Check meetup for summer changes, events.

**Local Objectivists** meet monthly, last Wed 6pm at varying restaurants. Ask Tim Scharff at [scharffdesignworks@icloud.com](mailto:scharffdesignworks@icloud.com)

**Meet An Atheist** or several, socialize 2nd Tuesdays, typically at The Reef. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IdahoAtheist/>

**Human KIND project** <http://www.human-kind-project.com/>

**Sunday Assembly Boise:** music, presentations, activities; see Fb

## "The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam"

Reviewed by Wally Keltner

Author Ann Marie Fleming provides her readers with an interesting look at her great-grandfather using a literary genre she calls "an illustrated memoir". She derived the book from a documentary film that she produced about her ancestor and she prepared this adaptation at the urging of some friends. For those readers not captured by the book's story, a researched biography, there are other aspects to be considered and thus provide other value to the reading experience. And one of these was probably not among the author's objectives for her work. For Fleming leads the reader to consider the meaning and impacts of human lives in general through her look a single individual - her great-grandfather.

Fleming's research efforts for this book were conducted during a series of trips to other countries and continents. Long Tack Sam was a Chinese acrobat and magician born in a small village at the end of the Nineteenth Century. But her hunt for information was a global quest because Long Tack Sam was a very successful traveling entertainer who led his troupe throughout the world during the first half of the Twentieth Century.

The biography documents Long Tack Sam's humble beginnings, his mistreatment as a child, his escape from his home village, and his rise from a performing child in a magic show to a master entertainment star with his own very successful troupe of acrobats and magicians.

The book also covers his love affair and marriage to a European beauty who joined his troupe, their beautiful daughters, and some interesting times spent in central Europe during the growth of fascism and in China in the early years of the Mao government.

It concludes with stories from his retirement. The author builds her story from interviews with people who knew her relative, from artifacts of his life and career that she found scattered among various sources, and from books and magazine articles. The book is well researched and richly detailed. Other aspects of "The Magical Life" are as interesting as the biographical story line. One of these is the author's way of telling her story. Beginning with her documentary film, she transposed it to a second medium – the "illustrated memoir". The book incorporates many types of visual presentations to document the biography. There are historical photographs and still shots from movies, reproductions of important documents such as posters for magic shows and magazine covers, plus cartoons, drawings, and snippets of text. Several parts of the book are presented in comic book format, a handy aid to the reader (observer) who could otherwise become a bit confused. The reason is that there is no single source that tells Long Tack Sam's story. Despite his fame during his lifetime, his story was segmented by his travels and the twists and turns of his successes across the globe. As a result, his life is revealed from many sources with no single long term narrative.

A timeline, usually sidebars on pages containing the visual olio of graphical information, provide bullet points of the history and culture prevalent and coincident with the life and times of Long Tack Sam. Readers familiar with the "USA Trilogy" of John Dos Passos will recall that author's use of several textual devices to achieve the same effect almost a century ago. Fleming's cartoon images of herself lead the reader through the myriad of graphics. They also explain the author's feelings of frustration or satisfaction with the storyline and its associated research activities. A life leaves behind an anonymous cascade of cause-and-effect ramifications that span time. Each of us will affect the generations that follow because of what we do and say, even as our identities evaporate. Attempting to attach our personal identities whether to artifacts or ideas may be of tertiary importance.



**Humanists of Idaho**, a chapter of American Humanist Association & Council for Secular Humanism, is a nonprofit corporation promoting ethical, democratic, and naturalistic Humanism through public awareness, education and community involvement. We meet 3rd Mondays, Jan-Nov, upper room of the Flicks, Boise. Open discussion and dining at 6:30pm; business 7pm; program at 7:30pm We next meet November 21. *Find more at our meetup page, address below.*

## President's Message

Charles Taylor, President of the local chapter of the NAACP, was our featured speaker at the October meeting. Much of his discussion revolved around human rights issues and how they are more visible in today's world, because of the prevalence of recording devices. Cameras are everywhere, and people are taking the time to record key events. He also addressed the divisive rhetoric that has emerged in this election cycle – a sad indictment of the current political climate. He stressed that the solution depends on everyone coming together to embrace and celebrate diversity, rather than try to vilify “others”. Visit their website for more information on NAACP Treasure Valley and their Human rights commitment to our community: <http://www.naacp-treasurevalley.org/>

We will again sponsor a family through Women and Children's Alliance. This is an annual project, providing presents and gift cards to a family in need – usually a single mom escaping domestic violence. This has become a multi-group effort, including all member groups of TV CoR. Last year we collected gifts at the annual Holiday Party, and hope to do the same this year. It is tentatively set for first Saturday in December, but I have no specifics at this time. Details will be posted to the Meetup Pages of the various groups.

Women and Children's Alliance (WCA) was originally scheduled to present at our September meeting, but wasn't able to make it at that time. We have re-scheduled WCA to our November meeting (November 21, 7:30 PM, Flick's Theater). The theme of the presentation will be domestic violence and the variety of services offered to women and families, including the holiday Adopt-A-Family (mentioned above) that HOI has participated in for many years. For more details on this, or any other, presentation, stop by HOI's meetup page online. Hope to see you all in November.

D G Van Curen  
President, Humanists of Idaho

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### **A Note Regarding the NAACP** Jeanette Ross

*Emancipation, a presidential proclamation that humans could not buy and sell other humans, was followed by new horrors in the lives of former slaves. Those with darker skin coloration were legally and socially isolated, controlled by law and practice. They were not paid equally, housed equally, educated in ways equivalent to those with northern European ancestry. These conditions persisted for native peoples of this country, as well.*

*Leaders among our African American citizens began organizing more than one hundred years ago. They have worked since, in the NAACP, to change federal and state laws. Those areas of our nation north and south, once dependent on the unpaid labor of slaves, controlled access to the vote and instituted laws against vagrancy that were used to keep non-Anglos poor and humble. Protestors were literally hung from trees, shot, imprisoned.*

*Idaho was settled in reverse, by gold hunters, hopeful farmers from the west of us and families escaping the draft during the civil war. They brought their prejudices with them. In the 1950's, months after the family of District 19 legislator Cherie Buckner Webb moved into Boise's north end, a cross was burned in their front yard..*



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## Immigrants and the Common Good

Jeanette Ross

Throughout our history, those who have benefitted from the opportunities to be found on a continent previously unexploited have considered these built-in benefits to be proof of their own superiority and right to remain in control of their opportunities.

Contract law and property rights combined with written systems of law. Newcomers and indigenous people are still considered threats to privileges, witness the exploitation of natives in North Dakota and the blanket condemnation of immigrants seeking work and safety here and elsewhere.

One candidate for leadership of this nation has built his campaign on the proposition that new immigrants, legal or not, are a threat to those already here. This assertion comes from one whose ancestors benefitted from earlier opportunities to emigrate.

Thomas Edsall, in his columns for the New York Times, regularly gathers information from the best sources available, related to complex economic issues. In September 29 of this year he gathers together the studies that contributed to a report by the National Academy of Sciences, "The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration." This report carefully weighs the economic costs and benefits of immigration.

The report finds "positive net benefits" to our economy." Newcomers, the first generation, need time to find work; they need financial assistance in the form of short term subsidies (some of which, like airfare, they must pay back). First jobs are typically entry level, and so they tend to replace other entry level workers. Extra competition for low paying jobs will depress wages.

Liberals quoted the results; conservative writers interpreted. New arrivals also qualify for food assistance; children will start school before adults can pay their share through taxes.

The report shows that these services are an investment paid back through taxes on wages by the following generations. The report also documents net overall economic advantages. Those who hire workers will get motivated employees for entry level jobs. Investors will benefit as business earnings increase.

This does little to encourage voters who live in areas that have experienced industrial decline and changes in the economy. Fracking, for instance, has produced cheaper fuel and left coal country with ruined land, few jobs. Investment money has fled and former coal workers lack the skills to attract start-ups in growth areas like the cluster of high-tech innovation we see contributing to Boise's economy. Add in the Treasure Valley's geographic advantages: headwaters for the Boise, Snake and Columbia rivers lie north of us in mountains protected by wilderness status or federal and state lands guarded closely by environmental activists. No cattle break down stream beds, no mountain tops have yet been shoveled into streams that lead to populated areas.

Immigration policies in this country do not reflect the facts found in the Science Academy study. Immigration laws have responded to the fears and prejudices of their times. Quotas severely limit the numbers that can apply for legal status. Congress has repeatedly restricted the money needed to process applications. There are long waits, amounting to years, even decades. Emergency applications for immigrants seeking asylum, made in cooperation with international agencies, are complex and overwhelm the need. Millions now wait in refugee camps for the opportunity to start over in a distant and sometimes unwelcoming, safer place. Camp residents now call the lucky ones, on cell phones, and beg, "can you help?" It would be good if we could and would.

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*Donations (tax deductible) through Idaho Atheist website (mailbag@idahoatheists.org), or contact us to donate via PayPal.*

# Boise State

# SECULAR STUDENT ALLIANCE

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advisor Robin W Allen

**BSU SSA is** a home for secular students., encouraging critical thought, open, rational, scientific examinations of the universe and our place in it. We believe ethics and morality can be based on humanistic and rational values. We present a positive view of various-isms and non-religious worldviews through debates, workshops, speakers, movies, book club, discussion, and social gatherings.

## Changing Stereotypes, one at a time

Jeanette Ross

Humanists of Idaho have the benefit of a college education earned by the new vice president of HOI, Britini Gates. In her presentation to our group this fall, Britini and her friend John introduced us to an important direction in diversity education.

Britini's research at BSU supplemented my own background, studying and designing a system of study meant to improve a college student's capacity to process and use complex information. Starting with an obvious premise, that we remember what we believe to be important to us, personally, I came up with a system that starts with reading through interrogation, asking oneself questions, chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph, and then reading for answers to one's own questions.

The second step in my system: record information in a way that allows self-quizzing, with a left hand column holding key words, a right column with summaries of key information in one's own words.

Step three: review frequently, starting before the next lecture, the next shovel-full of new information. The earliest review is the most efficient; it takes less time to re-inforce what you have just learned. And it's much more satisfying. Cramming back what you've forgotten is anxiety-producing and anxiety interferes with memory. Then review by quizzing yourself, starting with key words that correspond to an instructor's likeliest test questions. In other words, use lectures to spot and record likely testing areas.

What I have learned since I set up this simple system: all this is complicated by cultural expectations. Those who were raised to do what they are told, and did it, will be rewarded for their obedience. I'm speaking about clever and good little female children like myself. Those expected to be thoughtful of others, to be cooperative, helpful to peers, good listeners— those allowed to show emotions make good students.. Give them employment opportunities and you have higher college enrollments.

**How this relates to gender stereotypes?** Look at the two candidates for leader of our nation. Make a list of qualifications, attitudes, study habits, and consider likelihood to learn new information, new skills. How do the candidates compare in terms of gender stereotypes? I suggest that they can be loosely characterized as guy who succeeded by turning frustrations into anger-based domination of adversaries, versus a good girl who learned how to succeed in a male-dominated culture.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a culture that still functions with these behavior roles? In higher education, as Britini learned in her small sample of interviews, many young males do not want to be judged as 'grinds.' College is an opportunity to be free of previously experienced restraints. Add to this the course requirements of the first two years or so, the introductory courses that provide an overview, a general survey of knowledge accumulated in broadly defined areas that do not reflect a student's own interests. Ask yourself, for instance, how much an 18 year old from Rupert wants to know about cell structure or rhetorical structure of the essay as introduced by Montaigne and Anglicized by Francis Bacon?

I didn't mention physics or statistics here. Or learning the languages of parts of the world we might understand better if we knew their culture and language. Arabic, anyone?

A few schools are absorbing the high cost of gender expectations on a student's ability to adapt to the college environment, to focus on and prepare for work in a continuously changing world economy. One of these professors, Andrew Weiner, wrote in the New York Times, April 4, 2016, what he has observed. He says, "how boys are taught, sometimes with the best of intentions, to mutate their emotional suffering into anger," interferes with their ability to succeed in higher education, in competition for jobs, and in personal relationships. From elementary school forward, "girls show higher social and behavioral skills that translate into higher rates of cognitive learning and academic investment."

How do anger and loss of male privileges relate to sexual assaults? To the inability to recognize personal or national errors, need for change? Maybe we should talk about this.



*BUUF Humanists meet on our 3rd Sunday November 20, 11:15:am, in the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library. Sages meet 2nd Thursday this month, 9:30am, Nov. 10, at the Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport.*

**BUUF Humanists October 16 2016** A full room—What do we call ourselves right now, and what does it mean to be a humanist, full of faith in humanity—in the current election cycle? **I'm raising up John Munson's statement, taken from his most memorable professor, George Axtell, a former president of the American Humanist Association. Axtell provides the 'why' as well as the answer to who we are: "As a society, WE ARE NO BETTER OFF THAN THE LEAST AMONG US."** This is our shared condition enhanced by global trade and communications.

Someone asked how many humanists are a part of BUUF? The last survey was some time ago, so, dunno.. and what does the word mean? Should we ask persons to define it for themselves? In our group of 14 some words used: I am a ..."realist; rational person; I look at how the world actually works; interested in what's observable in the natural world, what's measurable." Maybe ask for theist or nontheist, but then which gods are rejected, what possible overarching moral force suspected (like karma). Lynden, when self-describing, uses three labels, "UU, humanist and atheist" to be more specific.

We took a jaunt into a short history of humanist thought in western Europe, how the Ottoman takeover of Constantinople forced Greek scholars to retreat to western Europe, and their translations interested scholars in the Greek admiration for a balanced life that blended life's pleasures with pursuits that earned admiration of one's peers. Add to that the general appreciation for investigations into our ideals, limitations to our understanding of the real—Plato's cave—investigating and challenging assumptions—Sophocles on the street with friends—and organizing observations in logically defensible ways—Aristotle's system of definitions *still quite useful, see any dictionary. I've only listed my own favorites, here. Someone added that 'Ottoman' wasn't very specific, either, since anyone Jewish or Christian could pay their extra tax and consider themselves residents of that enormous empire.*

*Woody added that, in regard to those who provided important contributions to science, the Egyptians observed the movements of moon, tides, sun and their relationship to the flooding of the Nile, which renewed fertilization of agricultural land.*

Next question: what are our sources of morals, ethical values? Christians over-attribute this to the collection of booklets they label old and new testaments. Rick was first to provide some derision and objections to this, which prompted me to point out a similar error of logic and or ignorance of what is disliked/disbelieved [*such a human problem!*] the tendency among nonbelievers to deliver an all-inclusive knock against said collected works, which show an evolution in morality and notions of a deity worthy of worship, from the protector of one's tribe (still evoked in certain places) to the rebel who calls out corrupt officials and calls for purifying fire (Jesus in various gospels, especially book of Thomas.)

I mentioned my favorite, Psalm 150, whose words we sing in a favorite UU hymn. I can tell that this was just one more stick on a large fire, so let it pass. Robert pointed out that the Bible in its written form for many generations affected very few believers—written language, especially when only available to scholars of Latin—could read. He suggested 3% readers, which sounds plausible. *Continued next page*

For our November 20 meeting the **Humanists at BUUF** will hold a group recapitulation of election results and what they imply for humanists.

**Sages meet once, November 10**, for a presentation by Robert Franklin, based on his research and travel. His subject: the connections between pagan traditions and witchcraft in Germany. Meet for no-host breakfast at Kopper Kitchen, 9:30 am.

## November 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Cosmos Coffee club	8 Meet an Atheist	9	10 Sages	11	12
13 ISOR	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27 ISOR	28	29	30 Objectivists			

*BUUF humanists, continued from previous page*

*What prevents us from being governed in a reasonable way? Robert brought in 'corruption, dictatorships, kings.. which prompted me to ask for some unpacking. Shakespeare, in Richard III, shows how an evil ruler gains power, not just by deceiving the populace but also by the assistance of men with their own many motives. They are derived from what makes sense in any particular culture, tribe, time, place.*

We exist, after death, in the mind of other humans, and so for a short time, most of us. The rest: residual of our effect on others. And what expectations follow from recognizing our finiteness, while we can still do something about it? Just that knowledge is an incentive. Lyndon: from the above follows the urge to make this a better place (while our value/contribution is an estimate based on faith..). As for what we *should* do? First we need to have goals, desires, ideals in mind, something to aim toward. Woody characterized our present US behavior as a return to the tribal, with each tribe agreeing on what will help the nation thrive.

**Robert** thinks of these as ideals of equality and equity; his examples are found in the Declaration of Human Rights, which sets goals like a minimal living income, minimums for food and access to clean water.

*Karen agrees and insists that we nations and peoples of the world who are aware of themselves as a part of a larger humanity have a shared sense of morality.*

Karen and Jean both led us to root sources of right and wrong, in the birth of self consciousness and earliest sense of separateness, pain and pleasure. The pain of individual existence, the pleasure of security and having one's needs met—must shift, as we explore and seek, into self-regulation, the enrichment of understanding as we gain language and capacity for self-regulation.

Jean started with the trip through the birth canal; Karen spoke of emotional intelligence. Jean spoke of her job as a psychotherapist, to help people gain a capacity to help themselves. She gave an example of an attorney who obsessed on gaining control of the fate of his children by killing his wife, their mother. She says "I could see people change in front of me.. a sacred moment." Robert reflected, with a kind of saddened irony, on how "our circle of awareness is much larger than our circle of influence. "Yes, aka the information overload problem requiring selectivity and judgement..

John M adds focus: "What can we do to reduce poverty, ameliorate ignorance? How do we identify those who are a danger to us?" To which I added, how do we recognize and cope with our desire for revenge, substitute "**Restorative Justice?**"

What about the Greek ideal of a balanced life with some pleasure, some accomplishments, some recognition as the measure of a good life? After the deep burden of original sin and standards of perfection laid upon believers, the 1500's direct word from Greek philosophers encouraged new humanism in the West. John Munson provided summaries of the ideals of humanists based on his study under George Axtell, former president of American Humanist Association: After we look around, see the needs of those barely surviving, the odds against escape from that, the interconnectedness of all of us, Axtell concluded that we, as citizens of the world, are no better off than the least among us. *Continued page 8*

*Continued from p 7*

How do we improve the likelihood of conditions that can work toward a peaceful and healthy planet? **Jean**, the psychotherapist, who worked with persons least connected to other humans (ex. A lawyer who wanted to kill his wife so he could take charge of their children without interference) to make the greatest difference we must begin when the human brain is most available to change. We know that we each emerge from the birth canal with a brain ready to experience pleasure and pain, building neurons, connections, with tremendous speed. By age of three, what has been experienced (needs for safety and nurturance, emotional and nutrient, then for opportunity to experience the new within safe parameters) is what can be reinforced; what's not stimulated shrinks away. Even as first needs are being met we need homeostasis, balance, the sense that we are okay (which we ascertain from our needs being quickly met, our new learning affirmed). JR: new research: starting from age 3 the task is to know one's state, stable, disturbed or having been rewarded, comforted; to name one's emotional condition, know how to stabilize, return to stasis. Karen: Those **who** study this suggest that we know what is good for life: it's raising self regulating children with 'emotional intelligence.' Which is, **Robert** adds, "social conditioning," something part of our DNA, see behavior of chimps, who become outliers if they do not participate in grooming others.

Humanists of Idaho

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