



Humanists Of Idaho, BUUF Humanists,
Sages, Idaho Society of Reason

Free Thought sponsored by Humanists of Idaho, affiliated with www.tvcor.org.

June 2017

President's Message

PRIDEfest is June 16 and 17 at the Capitol Park,

At the corner of Jefferson St and Capitol Blvd. HOI will have our booth up (7th year with PRIDE) somewhere in the park, so if you are there, enjoying the festivities, stop by and say "Hi" to the crew. Besides supporting PRIDE in their quest for equal rights, this is a fundraiser for HOI charitable efforts. There will be a few Freethought items for sale, and a donation jar to help the cause. We are looking for volunteers to help staff the booth during the festival, in 2 or 3 hour shifts. I try to schedule enough volunteers (@ 3-5 per shift) to facilitate conversation and breaks. Speaking to visitors, handing out free literature, and making a few sales is what the volunteers will be doing. The donation jar takes care of itself. A friendly smile is the only job requirement. Anyone who is willing to volunteer 2-3 hours on either Friday the 16th (between 5PM and 10 PM), or Saturday the 17th (11AM to 4 PM), can email me at CelebrantVan@gmail.com.

HOI and Idaho Society of Reason have merged.

Those who are members of either on Meetup, will already be aware of this change. What this means is one meetup group, instead of two, lower overall costs, and combined events. Some of us were already members of both, so the transition means little more than only having to look at one meetup page, instead of two. For those who weren't already aware, Humanists of Idaho is an incorporated, 501c3 non-profit, with tax exempt status, which allows us to raise funds, untaxed, while those donating to us receive a tax deduction for their donation, a benefit that ISOR was lacking. We are excited about this merger, and think it will prove to be a benefit to all concerned.

The Solstice Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, June 21st.

Food, soft drinks, and water will be provided. If you want something a little stronger, then bring it with you. You can bring something to share, if you like, but not required. We will have burgers, dogs, and side dishes, as well as a dessert or two. This is a kid friendly event, in a yard large enough for them to run non-stop. Check the meetup page for more details. Hope to see you all there.

Goddessfest is July 22nd and 23rd.

HOI will have the booth up for that, as well. Mark your calendars and plan to enjoy a festive weekend. Great food and entertainment, as well as a collection of sellers offering some exotic items. After the first of July, I will be putting out the call for booth volunteers. If you have some free time, we would appreciate the help. Details will be posted at our meetup page as soon as they become available.

D G Van Curen

President, Humanists of Idaho

Worth Rummaging

J Ross

Humanists meeting at Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship are participating in a Rummage Sale June 9, from 8 am to 4 pm and and June 10 from 8 am to 3 pm, at 6200 Garrett street, Garden City.

The truly persistent can shop the remainders on Sunday afternoon. Call Harriet 371-3634 to donate or volunteer.

I Don't Know and I Don't Care J Ross

The punch line to an old joke (What's the difference between ignorance and apathy?) gets an update in research recently conducted under the label of "motivated ignorance."

Politics and athletic contests are both subject to a human tendency that runs against an assumption essential to humanism as I understand it. I am predisposed to believe that humans will act in ways that benefit themselves, which seems obvious enough until we start to look at some present day examples.

According to Brian Resnick, writing for VOX.com, we aren't as reasonable or reasoning as we like to believe. What matters is not any set of facts, in themselves, but what facts—or choices, or actions or beliefs—we share with those on our team, 'in politics as well as sports.' Leaders of political parties work constantly at creating a 'shared sense of reality,' says Resnick.

A study that demonstrates this: Participants were to read provided information and then answer questions about it. Each participant could chose—to read something they agreed with or disagreed with. Those who chose a reading they agreed with were entered in a drawing for a few dollars, or pick an opposing opinion and possibly win more.

A good-sized majority preferred to read what they already agreed with. Not known: how much would they have to be paid to be quizzed on a position they believed was wrong? I found the same problem while assisting college freshmen in composition classes. They did poorly with an instructor who did not share their family's politics or traditions.

We resist hearing information that we don't agree with, says psychologist Jonas Kaplan. Changing our mind is somewhat painful; unwelcome facts or opinions are experienced as an attack and our immune system kicks into action—the body fights or flees. We forget, we ignore what could be cognitively dissonant. Our brains protect us from learning what we don't want to know.

When we do attempt to advance our knowledge, we seek what proves how right we are already, and use that new data to reinforce our place with our chosen teams.

Recent polls among those who voted for the current president validate this: a high majority say he's their truth-teller, doing what he promised to do. Compare sources with someone whose vote cancels your own, and you will find that you have accessed two very different resources for any particular factoid or event. And fears, a sense of danger or threat, intensifies this effect. Negative expectations of opponents leads easily to discrediting them, even dehumanizing them. Now we can justify punishment.

Idaho Society of Reason has now joined with Humanists of Idaho. <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events> 2nd Sunday in Boise, 4th Sundays Nampa at noon. Watch for any changes.

Objectivists are affiliated with ISOR. They meet last Wed 6pm, varying restaurants. Contact is Tim Scharff, scharffdesign-works@icloud.com

I know you are, but what am I? J Ross

Reviewing studies of the differences that divide our nation, I've seen many that tell us that conservatives and liberals disagree on how to judge moral behavior.

Really? It's so bad that we can't agree on what's right or wrong? Isn't that what laws (and maybe religious leaders) are supposed to handle for us?

At least we agree on what is immoral. But shouldn't we then be able to agree on the opposite, on what is moral in principle or in deed? What is right, or just, what system of beliefs or actions define 'good' character? If we can't agree on that, how can we have one system of laws governing everyone?

I couldn't resolve that so I picked another word out of the same paragraph in my American Heritage dictionary and followed the word 'virtue' down a different rabbit hole. Don't we agree on what counts as a virtuous life? It's the avoidance of the immoral, there, that was easy. It could be decades of monogamy, perhaps, or being faithful and dependable at work or play. A virtuous person pays taxes as due, mows the lawn and doesn't feed a lot of sugary drinks to children.

But when asked by pollsters, who are intent on forcing us to explain ourselves, liberals define the moral in ways very different from that of self-described conservatives.

Liberals give a high importance to supporting equality and fairness, both in personal life and as a collective effort. They support Planned Parenthood. Conservatives prefer to protect individual liberty and reducing public monies in support of social equity. They see successful individual striving as a good thing, and government should (after protecting public safety) enhance opportunities for those willing and able to earn financial success.

So where could we agree? Looking through the dictionary I ran into 'moral hazard,' as it applies to insurance companies who are concerned about the trustworthiness and dependability of a potential client. Could we measure candidates for public office by evidence of honest dealings, completion of commitments and contracts? Sounds smart, if not moral.



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. On April 17 7:30pm, our guest, answering your questions, is 2nd degree priestess in a pagan tradition, Morgaine O'Hearne.

BECOMING HUMANIST J Ross

"I am my own puzzle and my own puzzle-master"

Woodrow "Woody" Weyerman is third generation descendant of a German family living in Switzerland when they learned about the Mormon promises for a better life, and moved to Salt Lake City. His father was a plumber; "he was flown around to ranches that didn't have indoor plumbing yet, sometimes not even roads." His father was killed while working for Idaho Power, this when Woody was three years old. His mother's family encouraged them to move to Rupert, where family members put together a few hundred dollars that bought a small house and a cow for his mother and two sisters. When he was five years old he was milking the cow, gathering wood and building fires for the stove that provided the only heat in a house entirely lacking insulation. His mother was crippled, from childhood rickets, and was not good at talking to anyone, and so it was his job to walk to town for groceries.

Four years later he was sent to live with Mormon relatives, killing rabbits and chickens, whatever needed done. "I learned a lot about how to do ordinary things, run a farm, work with other people, from listening at the dinner table," he says. He was nearly 19 and driving a tractor in a field when he asked his relative if they would give him a few hundred dollars to start college. His uncle said no. Woody climbed off the tractor and walked away from his childhood.

Woody's education continued to be mostly unorthodox and informal. Early experiences as an outsider left him unprepared for his mission. One man recognized this and gave him lessons from the advice of Dale Carnegie. "He showed me how to remember names, for one. I said, "Nobody speaks to me." He said, "They will. When they ask, 'How are you?' you say, 'Better in every way!' I used that to hold people hostage."

He was sent to British Columbia for his two year mission, where he learned by listening some more. "I was so good at it I thought people liked me. For the first time, I felt invincible. People wondered where I got the confidence. That was when I went from knowing I was not a victim drawing that criticism to me. After that I'd go see my mother often."

After his mission he went to work at the local bean cannery, working a night shift, then sleeping in a farmer's barn. "I told a girl at the beanery that I wanted to go to college; she asked if I had a permit to register and walked me to the registrar's office

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More at www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Idaho.

and I signed up. When I was in college I drove a dispatch car for a bank, driving 500 miles a day for a couple of years. When I went by my mom's I would stop in to see her. I was a janitor, including at Western equipment. I saw that their mechanics made more money and got a job doing that, with no experience, after I bought \$300 worth of tools. I worked there through college. I never did get a degree, couldn't write or spell. I took introductory courses in English, psychology, education so I know all the vocabulary, but didn't have math or English."

He was also enrolled in ROTC. "I was ready to do what was needed for the US. Vietnam was likely." Then an instructor told him that if he couldn't secure his prisoners he should (and the instructor made a gesture of machine gunning across the practice field.) Woody was aghast. Back at the dorm he set down his weapon and never returned.

Later, Woody expanded his education by visiting Rajneesh Purim in Eastern Oregon, by talking his way into a job at another guru's retreat, and by driving down the coast to soak in the hot tub with some of the men who led the New Age movements.

His interest in Native American cultures led him and his wife to adopting two Native infants. He visited local men and from them, mastered flint knapping. After he relocated in Eastern Oregon, word of his skill led officials to invite him to lead sweat ceremonies at an Oregon prison. He did this for five years, and learned a lot. More on all this later.

Learning to Resolve Conflict J Ross

After a prolonged experience with a violent man tangled up with my family, I read about the frequency and intensity of violent conflict between groups who are neighbors and/or closely related, most horrifically at that time in Rwanda. I found more examples: Catholics responding to Martin Luther; sects within faith groups; Native American reservations and whites in the nearest towns.

With other Humanists meeting at BUUF, I focused on bullying behavior among children. For public access television I interviewed counselors and teachers on anti-bullying work in Meridian. We decided to sponsor a symposium, at the Boise Unitarian Universalist building, January 13 2008. One of the invited speakers, Steve Scanlon, spoke of work to reduce bullying and encourage empathy among children as a long term contribution to a more peaceful world; Mary Knodell urged a department of peace for the federal government as an umbrella for change, also. We heard of a variety of efforts in this direction, including grass roots efforts to change the way we settle conflict in our most intimate relationships.

Sharon Strand Ellison has done useful work, as has Marshall Rosenberg. Joanna Macy conducted an intensive set of workshops and demonstrated break-through techniques for opening difficult conversations. A major speaker at the 2007 US Humanist conference, Kendyl Gibbon, spoke on a leadership training project that places discussion leaders in positions of moderating using the nonviolent strategies.

In progressive Christian publications, there's a similar push: I have the short version of Speed Leas' description of characteristics of interaction in conflicts as they escalate from trusting/capable of resolution to violent/full out war, with no resolution imagined other than annihilation of the enemy.

About the time I was producing tv shows on bullying, books were accumulating on the varieties of aggressive behavior of youth, including common differences between boys (more overt and physical) and girls (sly, mean). Girl cliques may be led by a 'queen bee' who maintains power by the Karl Rove/Donald Trump method of attacking anyone who shows vulnerability, building a dividing line from fallen bodies.

This strategy, of clear space around an insider group, punishing willfully, by shunning or damaging-- creating and spreading rumors, making spiteful remarks, betraying secrets, has become common to at least one political faction. Inside such tight organizations, favors are temporary and expensive, bought with loyalty; they are superficial, cruel, and powerful for what seems like forever.

Such organizations have no room for, indeed no respect for collaboration. They settle differences by picking a victim or victim group, and strategies of attack are merciless. Gains tend to be temporary; loss of the primary instigator or leader dissolves the entire enterprise. Witness Franco in Spain, for example.

This line of research began in the 1990's with Finnish professor Kaj Bjorkvist, who demonstrated that 11 and 12 year old girls were as aggressive as boys but in less physical ways but with the same goal, that of damaging relationships or reputations. They use their capacity to connect to control and hurt in complex ways. They can be predatory primarily for entertainment of themselves and admirers, remarks another researcher, Lawrence Owens of Australia. They leave 'bombs' in phone messages, invent and use insulting nicknames.

Owens observes that those who secretly believe themselves powerless or are hostile toward authority are sneaky and take pleasure in making their victims miserable. They went to create suffering before breaking contact. Queen Bee girls rule; their Wanna-bees are insulting as a way to get status.

Work in the area of racism has identified the larger community where this takes place, a 'sociology of privilege.' Bland, overgeneralizing statements ("We have different groups here but all get along") are made by those accepted and admired by others, those so accustomed to approval and a positive response to and interpretation of their behavior that "they don't recognize when they are dominating and silencing others."

Bullies, whether using strategies subtle or direct, physical or verbal, use their ability to dominate in order to gain a pleasurable rush of control and power. They discount and ignore the feelings of others, aren't empathetic. Fighting back energizes them.

Nicki Crick, at the U. Minnesota draws conclusions that sound prescient today. Crick writes that girl aggression is meant to cut the victim out of relationships and the respect of others-- to destroy the capacity for intimacy and sense of belonging. It can be an excess of retaliation that tends to become a recurring pattern once started. Aggressive girls "have more social and emotional problems, more loneliness, depression, negative self perception and peer rejection." They have strong self esteem, however, and enjoy power plays. Bullying tends to be a pattern that seeks new victims as old ones drop away; in one study a majority of adolescent bullies had later legal or criminal problems.

Their victims are tempting targets-- are socially isolated, have no homies to watch their back; they show caution, don't defend themselves or retaliate. Later they report adjustment problems that can last, without intervention, for years-- anxiety, depression, emotional distress. As students they develop negative views of school, are lonely, do less well academically, achieve less, have more physical complaints, avoid school. Later they are more likely to drop out, be delinquent, have higher rates of criminality, teen pregnancy, adult depression, though to a lesser degree than that of bullies, whose behavior accelerates. Bullying damages communities, destroys cooperation, trust, hope, capacity to learn as it increases insecurity. What happens, then, to a nation led by a bully?

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From the Amis people of Vataan, part of Taiwan: This story of creation is a heel-stamping dance of triumph, celebrating a reunion of elders.

A few Alternate Creation Stories shared by JR

We typically know myths that have traveled from the mid-east to us. Here are a few less familiar ones, from South-east Asia. I'm starting with the YaYo story, which had been influenced by visiting missionaries until all Christians were considered a kind of pollution and sent away. The result is a blend that rejects the violence of the book of Genesis.

She Came to Tabedeh

Our first people came from the plantation of the Head Man, over the sea. As for how we know their origin, generation after generation of old people talk about it.

The Head Man of the plantation told the boy and girl, "Do not eat the fruits of kalelenden and pali." "Why would we not eat that?" asked the children. They were beginning to wonder about things. The Head Man would not say why he did not want them to eat those fruits.

Afterwards when they were having breakfast, the younger one would not eat. Instead she looked down and scratched her knee. "Oh, my child, why are you not eating?" her father said. "My knee hurts," said the girl. "My child, you ate pali." "Yes, my father, I ate kalelenden." "Also pali," said the boy.

The Head Man from over the seas was ashamed. He put his children in a wood box. He closed the box and put it into the waters. He let them drift in it.

The children drifted to the shore of the great rock. They washed up on the shore at Tabedeh and the box broke on the hard rock. The boy and girl came out and a child was born and then another. They multiplied. "That is why my knee hurt," the girl said. The people believe that when her skin itches, she will have a child. They prospered in Tabedeh, saying of themselves, "We broke out of the hard rock." They intermarried with the people of our village. Afterward we are all called Si-Mawawa.

Our Ancestors were Brothers

There were two brothers. One preferred to fish, the other wanted to continue planting. They did not agree, they sharpened the points of their digging rods before they met. The brothers separated, one went to Ji-Minareyag and had children. Later the families came back together.

Sun and Sky were the first gods. Their daughter was Aino, or Soul. She did not intend to leave her home in the heavens but the sky became very low. She slipped down. Birds flew up to ask the Old God to help; Raven, who lived in the sun, tried but failed to raise the sky; the tiny Woo bird then sang so sweetly that the sky rose from pure joy and the sun went up to where it is now.

The Old Gods decided it was time to change the world and sent a brother and sister in a grain mortar with seeds. They were sent out in a great cleansing flood to plant a new world.

After the great flood, when earth became green, the elder gods were ready to repopulate the land. They talk to their grandchildren, who were being sent to earth to be reborn. Aka! the children protest. Down there are no people, no food-- how do we get there? You will be born in a flower, they tell the girl; you will be put in bamboo, they tell the boy. Be fruitful. Be wise. Help each other. The girl does a cartwheel, and she is on earth. The boy addresses her-- "I was born of bamboo. I saw some trees over here."

They live separately. He has sons born out of his legs-- all his progeny are boys, lacking eyes. Her children are all female, with no arms or feet. Suppose they exchange qualities by living together? They do, and after this, all children are normal. *There's a wonderful song of reunion of elders and children of the earth, with singers entering from all around us to the stage.*

The Goddess From Ta-Wu Mountain *I also saw this as a dance. It is one of the most performed and retold stories in all Asia.*

We see the goddess as a girl swinging on a vine on her mountain top heaven. She swings so hard that she lands on the ground near a young hunter.

Enchanted, he gives her a flower. They walk together, swinging from hilltop to hilltop by her powers. Their dance -- big, slow turns describe their happy time together. But finally she must return to the heavens.

They part tenderly, after agreeing that every 5 years he will burn millet as a signal that she should return for a visit.

We hear a distant song, unison with brief harmonies.

Sages, Ya Got Trouble

Friends, right here in River City, we've got trouble, with a capital "T" and that rhymes with "P" and that stands for pool! At the next meeting of the BUUF Sages, come find out just how much trouble we've got, with the help of Chuck Tate, and his instructor, CarlaJean Beers. Newcomers are welcome to join us for the fun, and a no-host breakfast at the Kopper Kitchen, 2661 Airport Way, 9:30 am, Thursday, June 8. No reservation needed. Contact Tom von Alten at 208 378-1217 or tva@fortboise.org for more information.

BUUF Humanists next meet informally for conversation, a 3rd Sundays, next on June 18, 11:15:am, in the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library. Sages meet 2nd and 4th Thursdays 9:30am, June 8 and 22 at the Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport..

May 21 2017 among buuf humanists it was that mid-spring time when so many of us are traveling to weddings, graduations. *Since we hadn't picked our next topic at the last meeting (we were a small group and informal, on Easter Sunday.) I suggested that we select a favorite passage from a text held as sacred; my next concern, after watching the film Lincoln based upon Tony Kushner's screenplay, was to have us consider in what way we are a Christian nation—and if not, what would it look like if we were?*

Rick began, saying that the fundamentalism of his parents was not what we associate with it today. While they still lived in Fairfield, a small community near Boise, his parents befriended a couple who were isolated because the wife was Korean. And his father had several black friends at the mill. He brought the Bible (Revised Standard Version) given to him by his parents and turned to the version of the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 31. After he read this aloud I read an interpretation provided by my copy of The Five Gospels.

Rick was also returning a copy of Woody Weyerman's little booklet, Rajneesh Neo-Tarot, and at Woody's request I read aloud the parable on prayer, card #23, wherein Moses chastises a humble believer for his naïve prayer—which Moses corrects by teaching the man a 'proper' prayer, and brings down God's reproach to Moses—"this 'right' prayer to me won't be a prayer at all, because prayer has nothing to do with law. It is love. And with love, grace happens. And with love, truth. . If you can understand truth, truth liberates. And there is no other liberation."

Woody spoke of how the humanistic messages of the Rajneesh have affected him. When the Mormons came to visit his mother-in-law a Mormon visitor asked Woody to join them in prayer. Woody said no, he has no need for this because God speaks to him directly. Woody's example was a recent one.

Woody's son was driving a school bus that became mired in mud; his son, like many others in their community, called Woody for help. Woody at first wondered how his pickup could assist—it doesn't have the power to pull a school bus out of mud—and then recalled that at least he had a heavy chain, and so he drove to the site to find that a nearby farmer had driven up in his tractor, needing only a sturdy chain to extract the school bus.

Thus, says Woody, his conclusion that his prayer (actually, his meditation on the situation) provided just the answer needed. Woody told the Mormons, in their terms, that God speaks to him directly, essentially answering a prayer even before he formulates the request as such. The advice of Rajneesh has been perfect for him, allowing him to do God's work, making things happen.

Becky remembered that as a Catholic she was expected to memorize and use only approved prayers. She doesn't recall being taught from or knowing of any other lay persons reading the Bible. Woody shared his preparation for his mission, which included intensive study of the Bible as a way to demonstrate what good Christians the Mormons are, how they 'live by the scripture.' His mission to British Columbia, particularly on Vancouver Island, confused and disabused him of one teaching given to him, a list of thirteen things that Joseph Smith accomplished, while inspired by God—proof that the only way to achieve large goals (organize thousands of people, write scripture..) was to be a believing Mormon. He ran into Sikhs, Buddhists, a north Vancouver film maker, as well as a Hudson Bay Company executive married to swimmer/actress Rose Marie Reed (this man also LDS). These people, many of them Chinese, had significant accomplishments without benefit of Woody/Joseph Smith's god. One man borrowed Woody's list of 13 unique achievements and then returned it with contradicting information—and only then was Woody enlightened, that the man borrowing his list was a professor of history at a British Columbia university. Listening to others, Woody realized that much of what he was told to be unique to Mormons was part of the faith in other traditions. He met Bahai's 'who believed all I believed and more—they even included Joseph Smith as a prophet.' *Continued on page 8*

A Culture of Witch Hunts J Ross

Frank Rich in the New York Times, February 2002, applied the mean girl syndrome to Republican party leadership when he reviewed David Brock's memoir, Confessions of a Right Wing Hit Man. Rich called out the hypocrisy inherent in right wing attacks on liberals by specifying the highly personal attacks on Anita Hill, which were based, as Brock's book reveals, on cocked-up evidence of legitimacy for the dominant party's Supreme Court candidate and 'spittle-spewing blind rage' against evidence presented by one of the judge's former assistants.

That shared fit of rage in front of cameras may have been deliberate theatrics. In terms of the research on bullying, particularly that on what was labeled 'mean girls,' the disregard for Hill's testimony seems as likely to have been a jolly team bullying action. Her self-effacing personality matches the description of targets of bully attacks, and her career since that time demonstrates her abilities and integrity.

Rich, the former theater critic, mocks Brock's confession of dressing to please bosses and heroes in a costume of suits, bow ties and glasses, which seems especially appropriate fifteen years earlier, as we consider the costuming of today's leaders and followers, with female employees ordered to wear sheer stockings and heels, in contrast to the rumpled look of the self-appointed revolutionaries in the White House. Add to that the sneering slogans worn as clothing, at campaign rallies past and ongoing toward 2020 presidential elections.

Rich described right wing behavior back then as "post-ideological drift and spitball politics," "take-no-prisoners mud-slinging," a disingenuously holier-than-thou moral crusade fueled by a gossip machine," "a kind of cultural profiling" taken from men like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell.

Rich does not challenge Brock's explanation of right wing dirt as an effort to be loved, but today we have vivid evidence of an obsession with admiration and attention when our leader of the free world pushes aside lesser leaders to shoot his lapels and beam, ready for a photo shoot from the front row of a gathering of Western World leaders.

This reminded me of the cliques I observed in the year that I was a counselor for Idaho Youth Ranch's Emancipation Home. Those boys could dish. And I could see the sheer pleasure of being mean in each other's company, whereas in private, as their counselor, I knew

that they were subject to obsessions, anxiety, and ever-more apocalyptic visions. They explained their behavior as response to grievances— as aggrieved disenfranchised individuals, as outlaw outsiders.

Today's situation is more dangerous, a pose perpetrated by Fox News pundits and their followers who describe Anglo-Saxon Christians as an aggrieved minority insulted by Christmas hating liberals.

What the political mean machine has in common with out-group bullying: a sense of powerlessness combined with self-righteousness and lack of empathy, leading to hysterical overreactions, attacks, and the building of a club, barricades built of bodies of those damaged by denunciation and denigration.

How much better if today's victims are the identified decision-makers and rule-makers, now demonized as the cause of all that is wrong. How satisfying for such 'elites' to be mocked and brought low! And how do conservative elites, the corporate leaders and their lobbyists, avoid the smear? By emphasizing party loyalty. One party represents itself as winners who have rightfully defeated the unworthy losers.

Because these labeled elites have a big foot on their backs, their words and their concerns can be disregarded. Public schools, with their free lunch programs, are defunded. Our environmental protection boards of scientists, who oversee research and applications of research to public policy, have been silenced, even as ice melts and storms intensify.

Public dialogue remains locked into the equivalent of bully versus victim, and our fourth estate, the free press, is one of the discredited elites from the perspective of the nation's leader and his devoted followers. Reporting is a hapless record of pronouncements still at the level of a four year old who says to a classmate, "That's an ugly dress." Tweets and rallies demonstrate the sheer pleasure of pleasing a crowd incapable of self-examination, which leaves a cavity in which one may stumble at any time.

Professor Jay Rosen, of New York University, has spoken of what present day challenges of the task for today's journalists. And historian Ruth Ben-Ghiat speaks of the qualities that Donald Trump shares with other national figures like Erdogan of Turkey, Berlusconi and Mussolini in Italy. All are or were impulsive, charismatic men who attracted intensely devoted followers who forgave all sins, including bullying and much worse.

What Pattern Are We Seeing? JR I begin with the Goldwater rule, when psychologists and psychiatrists agreed not to diagnose a public figure without a professional, personal examination. But it's possible to look at behavior that fits a particular diagnosis, and let readers make their own conclusion. A personality disorder describes those who show erratic behavior, who have poor impulse control. They are self-involved, yet not self-correcting, uninterested in the needs or preferences of others and avoid criticism. If these persons have some attractive qualities— if they are charming and persuasive, in a privileged position, they can gather admirers who reinforce immature, self-centered behavior and share their resentment of existing authority figures. Lacking conscience, they can deceive without regret. This and unpredictable recklessness can be defined as positive qualities— as rough honesty, justified anger. Their lack of remorse and shamelessness will be encouraged, then rationalizes their anger and mistreatment of identified victim classes. When confronted with lies or misstatements, such individuals will simply repeat them with greater emphasis, aware that each repetition reinforces a lie in the mind of those who already accept it.

Despite their façade of absolute certainty, sufferers of this disorder are subject to paranoia and fear of enemies. Those in positions of power or influence is capable of encouraging or even leading vindictive, opportunistic treatment of identified enemies. Those with a narcissistic personality disorder have, in addition, an extreme sense of their own importance along with an unquenchable need for admiration. The danger: they lack a capacity to consider the effect of their actions on others. They are obsessed with gaining wealth and power, and demand constant, unrelenting recognition. They can justify any tactics needed to achieve their ends. Their need for approval makes criticism unbearable and prevents any improvement in their behavior.

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Humanist with own Puzzle *continued from page 6*

On his mission in the city of Vancouver BC Woody came to know a Presbyterian minister who had been cast out of the pulpit for writing a book, [A Reason for Living](#), essentially from a humanist perspective. He gave a copy of the book to Woody, who found it reasonable and thoughtful. Woody had always been interested in the Shoshone and Bannock people around Rupert; now he made friends with them, and while still under the influence of his Mormon upbringing was disappointed to see that they had no memory of being a remnant of the lost tribe of Israel who reached our continent by submarine, according to Joseph Smith. Only later did Woody read about a man named Spaulding who was the source for Joseph Smith's insistence that America's native people were Israelites. Woody came to see that Smith repeated what he heard at Revival meetings that were part of a major revival movement and wove them into battle fantasies. Woody compares Smith to Trump, who also has gathered believers. Many of Smith's revelations in the [Pearl of Great Price](#) were responses to what peeved him at meetings of the elders. This led us to a conversation about Fawn Brodie's book, [No Man Knows My History](#) and reasons for the author's access to information in the church vaults. She was the niece of David O. McKay, perhaps the most famous and influential leader of the church Council of Twelve. Brodie was a young, gifted historian given access to the vault, where material "true or not," according to Woody and Ben, were essentially unread— damaging journals and other records purchased and then locked away, to be puzzled out much later.