

## President's Message

I would like to remind everyone that the HOI general election is in May. Nominations will be closed, and ballots sent out, in the third week of April. Anyone interested in running for one of the board positions, should contact our VP, Pat Acks, at [pat@acksnet.com](mailto:pat@acksnet.com). The board is comprised of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Charitable Coordinator, and Newsletter Editor (or other more expanded position), the latter being still pending a vote by membership.

Also as part of this election, we will consider the fate of the monthly newsletter, and the consideration of whether the temporary board position of Newsletter editor should be made permanent, as well as expanding that position to a more comprehensive title, like Media Director. For those of you who follow our events on Meetup, there is a poll regarding the newsletter at <https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Idaho/polls/1260831/>. Please take a few seconds to answer the poll question. It will help us decide what direction to take, with regard to how our followers want to receive news and updates.

In response to the Parkland mass shooting, a group called "March for our Lives Boise" has formed. If you are interested in finding solutions for the escalating gun violence in America and/or attending related events, check them out on Facebook. They are in the process of organizing and scheduling events, and are looking for volunteers to help bring a large rally to Boise, possibly in March.

Our next board meeting is March 19<sup>th</sup>. We will be discussing outreach and events for 2018, formally opening nominations for elections, and continuing the discussion regarding our media presence, especially social networking platforms. Anyone who has an issue that they would like the board to consider, can send their suggestions to me via e-mail at [CelebrantVan@gmail.com](mailto:CelebrantVan@gmail.com), and I will add it to the agenda.

D G Van Curen  
President, Humanists of Idaho

## HOI History starting June 2005

The Strubles moved to Seattle after providing energy and direction to HOI for several years. Chris' involvement in the community remained as a model not easy to replicate. Positions and the new officers:

**Paul Rolig: President** Spokesperson and contact

**Permanent Building Fund Treasurer:** Collects and deposits checks into our Permanent Building Fund. This fund is a separate account from our operating account.

**D. G "Van" Van Curen: Vice-President:** Assists the president and conducts elections

**Publicity Chair:** Make sure meetings and other events are publicized and get listed in community calendars

**Webmaster.** Maintains and updates the web site and email account for the organization.

**Yahoo Group Administrator.** Approves users who request to join the Idaho Humanists Yahoo group, and sends email communications to the Yahoo group

**Laurie Rollins: -Treasurer:** Writes and deposits checks, and gives financial reports for our operating funds account.

**Nancy Rolig: Secretary:** Keeps the minutes of business meetings.

**Newsletter Editor.** Publishes and prints the newsletter

**Database Administrator:** Maintains and updates the database of members and prospects used to generate mailing lists. Prints mailing labels for newsletter.

**Jan Van Bibber: Charitable Giving Chair:** Organizing participation in charitable activities such as answering phones for IPTV, sponsoring families for WCA, book drives for the local libraries, etc.

## Speech at Idaho Day of Equality

Given by Paul Rolig May 5, 2005 on the Capitol Building Steps for an event sponsored by the Idaho Atheists, Inc.

Ms. Susan Harrington and fellow citizens: Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity to address you.

My name is Paul Rolig, and I represent the Humanists of Idaho. Our organization promotes the application of reason and science, not supernaturalism, to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems. We advocate in favor of common moral decencies including honesty, integrity, self-responsibility, and benevolence toward all people. We thank our friends in Idaho Atheists for sponsoring this Idaho Day of Equality.

We have seen some indications recently in our local, state, and national politics that not everyone agrees that all people are equal when it comes to beliefs on the subject of religion. We hear advocates of specific religions claim that only their particular group has moral standards. We hear some people claim that our country's founders always intended our United States of America to have a government based on their religion.

We do not dispute that most Idaho citizens are religious. However, we do dispute that religion is to be established by the government by majority vote. Yes, our democratic system is based on majority vote for many things: who gets elected to office, whether to approve taxes, and other general policy issues. But our country's founders also feared the "Tyranny of the Majority" and recognized some absolute, inalienable rights of individuals. One of these is freedom of religion, or in our case, freedom from religion. One may even wonder just how big this majority is. According to the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, 14% of Americans, and 19% of Idahoans, identified themselves as non-religious.

One recent letter to the editor of a local newspaper went so far as to call Idaho Atheists an "un-American organization". I've heard other people question the patriotism of those of us who resist the establishment of official government religion.

I am an atheist, and I consider myself a patriot. I love this country and this state for the freedoms they are established to protect. It pains me greatly to be called unpatriotic just because I do not agree with the majority religion.

In fact, I am so patriotic, I actually dusted off my copy of the US Constitution, and I also looked up a few things in the Idaho Constitution. Here are some interesting things I read comparing the US and Idaho State constitutions.

## Idaho Society of Reason has joined Humanists of Idaho.

Meetings are held 2nd Sundays in Boise, 4th Sundays Nampa, starting with a noon potluck. Watch for details, changes at <https://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Idaho/>

...No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." These are the closing words of Article 6 of the US Constitution. They make me think that atheists, agnostics, Buddhists, Christians, Deists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and others are all supposed to be allowed to hold public office. But how many religious minorities do we find in our state government? Not many!

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ...". That's from Article 1 of the Bill of Rights. That sounds to me as though the government should not be in the business of building religious monuments. We're still working on that one!

"No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State ... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." That's from the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. That makes me think that governments should not treat people differently just because they don't happen to believe this way or that way on the subject of religion.

Now, here's a pretty radical sounding statement in Article 9, section 6:

**RELIGIOUS TEST AND TEACHING IN SCHOOL PROHIBITED.**

**No religious test or qualification shall ever be required of any person as a condition of admission into any public educational institution of the state, either as teacher or student; and no teacher or student of any such institution shall ever be required to attend or participate in any religious service whatever.**

**No sectarian or religious tenets or doctrines shall ever be taught in the public schools,** nor shall any distinction or classification of pupils be made on account of race or color.

**No books, papers, tracts or documents of a political, sectarian or denominational character shall be used or introduced in any schools established under the provisions of this article..."**

I have concluded that they are on the side of equality for all, no matter what we believe on the subject of religion.



**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. See the meetup page or Facebook for calendar of events.

## Atheists Win Big In Idaho

### State cannot discriminate in favor of Christian groups, day of prayer permit

By CONRAD GOERINGER *From [AANews](#) published May 4, 2005*

A U.S. District Court Judge ruled (on May 4) that the State of Idaho could not deny a permit to Atheists wishing to hold a "Day of Equality" rally on the steps of the state capitol building, and instead allow a National Day of Prayer event to take place even though the Atheists reserved the space first.

Supported by American Atheists, the Idaho Atheists and AA State Director Susan Harrington sued Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and state facilities manager Tom Mason arguing that the state had violated the constitution when it cancelled the IA reservation for tomorrow's event.

It all started when Harrington noticed that the scheduling calendar for May 5 -- the National Day of Prayer, which has included a religious rally on the capitol steps -- was blank. She promptly scheduled the Idaho Day of Equality for the venue. Mr. Mason, however, later realized that while his office "routinely" scheduled the NDOP for that time, the Atheists were there first. He then cancelled the Idaho Atheists reservation.

Backed by American Atheists, Harrington and the Idaho Atheists went into federal court, arguing that they were victims of state-sponsored religious discrimination.

"Government state facilities officials have intervened and stated that it was their mistake and that our Atheist group must give up our spot we legally obtained in order to give preference to a religious group,"

Harrington said in a statement to reporters. "Even though the National Day of Prayer event wasn't scheduled when we made our reservations, even though we had been assured that we were following the guidelines, and even though the National Day of Prayer people were going to move their event inside, the state is saying that we Atheists cannot hold our event on the front steps and that we have to move to the side steps."

### Officers for Humanists of Idaho

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**Secular Idaho News** is published by HOI. Yearly membership (\$25), family memberships (\$45) include SI News, paper or electronic copies. Distribution by Paul Rolig at roligpd@gmail.com. Mailed news subscription is \$15/year; electronic copies gratis. PO Box 44913 Boise ID 83711-0913. **Editor** Jeanette Ross jross@fortboise.org 208 870-6487 Event calendar at [www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Idaho](http://www.meetup.com/Humanists-of-Idaho); web <http://humanistsofidoaho.angelfire.com/>

Harrington added that Gov. Kempthorne "must set a standard of inclusiveness and neutrality with respect to religious opinion or practice. Religious opinion is a personal matter, and the government has no business implying that Atheists are second-class citizens because they don't believe in gods."

According to news reports, though, Kempthorne -- who issued an official proclamation in support of the National Day of Prayer event -- is "disappointed" in the judge's decision which upheld fairness and the separation of church and state. He grumbled to reporters, "I will take part in the National Day of Prayer event, no matter where it is held, because of my own belief in the importance of prayer -- not to make a political statement."

He also said that "attempts to accommodate the Idaho Atheists, by offering them a very similar venue on the same day and at the same time, were rejected."

For information, visit: [www.atheists.org/ID](http://www.atheists.org/ID) (Office of the Idaho State Director, American Atheists)

*Conrad F. Goeringer is the editor of AANEWS, a free newsletter of American Atheists, a nationwide movement founded by Madalyn Murray O'Hair that defends the civil rights of nonbelievers; works for the total separation of church and state; and addresses vital issues of First Amendment public policy.*

## Report on Sex Ed in Schools

By D. G. Van Curen June 2005

The Wednesday meeting for Sex Ed in Schools by Planned Parenthood was quite informative. In the years since Bush was first elected, the federal funding for abstinence only curricula has increased from \$50 million per year to \$170 million per year (upcoming fiscal funding). This despite a recent study by Yale and Columbia University that teenagers who took Virginity/Abstinence Pledges were just as likely to get STDs and should be a part of teen pregnancy programs receiving condoms. They tended to not seek treatment immediately for STDs, and carried the diseases longer because of the stigma of having to admit they broke the pledge. This makes the diseases harder to treat and easier to spread.

ALTERNATIVE SEX: One thing that surprised even me was that abstinence pledgers, in protecting their "virginity" (defined as vaginal intercourse), were SIX times more likely to engage in oral sex than were non-pledgers and FOUR times more likely to engage in anal sex. While either may avoid pregnancy (and preserve Vaginal Virginity), neither will prevent STDs, and both are generally engaged in without protection in teens.

Dr Fred Mondin, Professor of Human Sexuality at BSU for more than 20 years, related the European approach to the problem. Sweden and Holland, for example, begin teaching sex education in grade school (Sweden at age 6). Information, contraception, and "protection" are readily available for all ages. The rates for STDs and teen pregnancies in those countries are among the lowest in the world.

STDs and teen pregnancies are a serious problem in this country, and education is the route to the cure. Teachers present at the meeting noted that they were prohibited from answering specific questions regarding conception, contraception, STDs, and homosexuality. Instead, they are required to refer students back to their parents for answers to those questions, recognizing that oftentimes parents WON'T answer the questions, and/or students are afraid to ask parents those questions.

While students can get medically correct information from Planned Parenthood, too often the parental consent issue prevents even that. A Booth Memorial representative noted that they teach medically correct sex education. Unfortunately, the teens they teach are already pregnant.

## Official Government MISINFORMATION

Below are some items of misinformation presented in G.W.Bush administration approved teaching curricula, compared to CDC factual reports.

Science has proven that condoms can't protect us from STDs (Me, My World, My Future, page 142) (note: CDC reports condoms 98% effective)

Jealousy, embarrassment, depression and disappointment can be eliminated by abstaining from sex until marriage. (Choosing the Best Path, page 19)

50% of gay teens are HIV positive (Middle Schools Facts, page 112-113) (note: I would like to know how they came up with this number)

One of the best ways to avoid AIDS is to avoid Homosexual behavior (student workbook, p 25)

Because they generally become aroused less easily, females are in a good position to help young men learn balance in relationships by keeping intimacy in perspective (student workbook, p 6)

Syphilis rates have more than doubled since 1980 (student workbook, page 36) (note: CDC report of 1999 states syphilis rate to be the lowest since 1957, with only insignificant increases in recent years)

Condoms have a 14% fail rate for pregnancy (Choosing the Best Path, page 39) and a 31% fail rate for HIV (Choosing the Best Path, page 18) (Note: CDC reports condoms have a 2% fail rate, and much of that is attributed to human error, not condom failure)

Women who want to keep a partner should never ever act too smart (Choosing the Best, p 51)

Sweat and tears contain the HIV virus (WAIT, page 219) (CDC reports HIV cannot be transmitted through sweat or tears)

Items 1 and 7 are key. The Yale and Columbia study noted that many teens didn't use condoms, because school teaches them that condoms don't work.

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## Advancing Humanism: Building Bridges and Allies

President Paul Rolig, August 2005

The new officers of HOI have been discussing what we want the group to do. There are many activities that serve to advance humanist ideals, and our different members can pick and choose to undertake those they find most rewarding.

For the group, one important purpose is to put a face on humanism, to establish a public identity, to stand up and say, "We are humanists, and here is what we are about!" Probably the largest percentage of the public has no clue what humanism is. We can be living examples that humanism is, simply, a philosophy for living life together on earth, valuing human life and achievement, using reason, not supernaturalism, to decide what is right and what is wrong, and what should be valued, and what should not be valued.

No doubt there are many folks out there who are humanists without knowing it yet. We will do all concerned a lot of good by making contact with them, finding new friends, and letting them know they are not alone in their search for an alternative to religious faith.

For the people of faith who simply do not know what humanism is, we can show them that we are decent people who are very much like themselves in very many ways. We can work with them on many productive causes that serve humanist values and faith-based values alike.

There is also a segment of the public, small I think, but real, who hear the alarmist religionist message that secular humanism is the work of the devil – a dark, shadowy movement out to lure their children away from Jesus and into temptation and sin, etc. We will likely not turn them around overnight. However, we can make some of the more thoughtful of them think twice before repeating such nonsense in public.

Perhaps as deeply religious people find out that their perfectly nice, decent friends, neighbors, and coworkers are humanists, they may even begin to question whether they should believe everything their religious leaders are telling them – and what could be a better humanist accomplishment than getting people to think for themselves?

One specific activity we have decided to do is to participate in CROP WALK, a project to raise awareness and funds for fighting hunger. Participants raise money that can be directed to the anti-hunger program of their choice.

A Humanist interest group from the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (BUUF) is spearheading this as a social action project for the BUUF congregation.

CROP WALK is organized internationally by a group known as Church World Service, "a cooperative humanitarian ministry of 36 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations, providing sustainable self-help and development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance in more than 80 countries" (from their website at [churchworldservice.org](http://churchworldservice.org)).

Locally, I have also contacted The Interfaith Alliance, in order to be in a position to get humanists involved in specific activities. No, humanism is not a faith, but this group truly seeks to unite, not divide, and has sponsored a couple extremely worthy events in Boise in the last couple years. One was a "Rally for Human Dignity" at the Idaho Human Rights Memorial as an answer to Kansas preacher Fred Phelps' venomous anti-gay demonstration.

Another was a solidarity vigil at the local Muslim mosque after it was vandalized. While humanism has basically the same disagreements with Islam that it has with Christianity or any other religion, it is certainly part of humanism to speak out against (anti-) religious-based vandalism or violence.

I believe that by building these bridges and alliances with others when they are in agreement with specific humanist values, we will build a better world for ourselves.

### Sages Replay

We had a bit of a “snow day” on Feb. 22, probably a good idea most of us stayed off the road. Our presenter was kind enough to offer to give his talk on The Federal Theater Project when more people could attend. The New Deal program to fund live artistic performances brought some light and a “Living Newspaper” to the Great Depression. The Sages will meet 9:30 am, Thursday, March 8, for a no-host breakfast and a little time travel, with Dr. Charles Lauterbach, BSU theater professor emeritus. For questions or more information, contact Tom von Alten, at [tva@fortboise.org](mailto:tva@fortboise.org) or 208 378-1217. Newcomers are always welcome!

### Join Center for Humanist Activism

Mel Lipman, President, AHA *reprinted from HOI 2005*

Do you think Humanists deserve a representative voice in the halls of Congress? At the American Humanist Association we're continuing to do more to face the escalating challenges posed by an increasingly entrenched Religious Right.

Since we moved AHA headquarters from Amherst, NY, to Washington, DC, we've joined several political coalitions and became actively involved in lobby efforts where we've positively affected votes on the Federal Marriage Amendment and many faith-based initiatives.

Our members asked for more involvement, so we've become active in the media, increasing our appearances in major newspapers and securing interviews on national radio and television. Since AHA members wanted still more involvement, we launched a national advertising campaign to raise the profile of Humanism.

And now, in order to realize Humanism's potential to make a difference in public life, we're preparing to formally launch the Center for Humanist Activism of the American Humanist Association. <http://www.humanistactivism.org>

A sister organization of the AHA, the Center for Humanist Activism will lead work on political issues of importance to Humanists. Capitalizing on our location in Washington, DC, this effort will advocate for Humanist concerns in the halls of Congress by working with the Secular Coalition for America to establish a permanent secular lobbyist on the Hill and organizing nationwide grassroots Humanist efforts.

**BUUF Humanists meet for conversation 3rd Sundays, 11:15 am, in the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library. March 15 we continue plans for a Humanist summer service..**

**BUUF Sages meet 9:30am, 2nd Thursdays, March 8 and 22, 9:30am, at the Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport.**

BUUF Humanists are embarking on the development of a summer service at BUUF. Part of each regular meetings will be dedicated to this. The other half of each meet will be given to a presentation by one of our regular attendees.

A complete schedule will be posted on BUUF sites, including the weekly email news. Check [BoiseUU.org](http://BoiseUU.org) for more information.

The Center for Humanist Activism will build upon developed AHA connections in well-established Washington coalitions—thereby influencing the influencers.

The Center will bring Humanist concerns to a whole new level of political influence and will lobby for issues Humanists care about. Separation of church and state will be a top priority. But the full spectrum of Humanist issues will be addressed, and will include defending human and civil rights as well as specific issues like end-of-life-choices and stem-cell research.

We wanted you to be the first to know. In the coming weeks we'll be publicly announcing the new organization and preparing to challenge newly introduced legislation that would encourage religious displays on government property. See the beginnings of a hub for Humanist e-activism at <http://www.humanistactivism.org>

While many members like you give over donation limits or simply don't itemize, donations to the Center for Humanist Activism won't be tax deductible, since the funds are used to influence politics.

If you want to enter the political fray as a Humanist, and become a founder of the Center for Humanist Activism, please go now to <http://www.humanistactivism.org> and support this exciting new effort today!

## HOI President's message December 2007

On October 21, Jan Rowe, Doug Van Curen, several other members of their family, and Paul Rolig walked in the Ada County **CROP WALK**. This was the third year in a row for members of Humanists of Idaho to participate in this event. HOI raised in excess of \$500 for anti-hunger programs locally and around the world.

Elsewhere in this newsletter are details of our holiday project this year. Donations of various goods for Boise's newly opened **Interfaith Sanctuary Homeless Shelter** will be collected at our Solstice Party.

Why should humanists support Interfaith Sanctuary? Because it is the only homeless shelter around that is secular in nature.

Other shelters make demands that clients worship with them and be subject to proselytizing. Interfaith Sanctuary makes no demands that clients believe this way or that way on the subject of religion. Its driving founders happen to be leaders in various faith groups who are more interested in the humanistic value of caring for the poor than they are in "spreading the word."

On the national and international fronts, both of HOI's national affiliates have charitable arms that distribute aid for disaster relief. Donations can be made for Southern California wild fire relief, South Asia monsoon relief, or other projects.

**American Humanist Association** operates **Humanist Charities** at 1777 T St NW, Washington, DC 20009. Make credit card donations by phone at 800-837-3792 or on the web at [www.humanistcharities.org](http://www.humanistcharities.org)

**Council for Secular Humanism** operates **Secular Humanist Aid and Relief Efforts**.

Donate to "S.H.A.R.E." c/o Council for Secular Humanism, PO Box 664, Amherst, NY 14226-0664.

Please help make our world a better place, and donate to your choice of worthwhile causes.

Then come celebrate the Winter Solstice, Human-Light ([www.humanlight.org](http://www.humanlight.org)), and Newton Day on Friday, Dec. 21!

## UN Report Highlights Rights of Atheists and the Non-religious

By MATT CHERRY [HumanistNetworkNews.org](http://HumanistNetworkNews.org) Nov. 7, 2007

The 2007 annual report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief highlights the rights and concerns of humanists and other nonreligious groups. The report includes a section devoted to the situation of atheists and other non-theists. The report is written by Asma Jahangir.

I believe that the five page "Situation of persons with atheistic or non-theistic beliefs" will be valuable for campaigners for the rights of the nonreligious. It provides an excellent summary of the relevant international laws and agreements that reference non-theists and the non-religious. It explicitly demonstrates that the guarantee to freedom of "religion or belief" includes "non-theistic and atheistic beliefs" equally with theistic beliefs. It also raises problems and concerns that I and other humanist representatives and freethought groups have raised at the UN and elsewhere in recent years. Humanist concerns addressed in the Special Rapporteur's report to the UN include:

- Atheists' taxes being used to finance religious organizations
- Blasphemy laws
- Obligations to participate in religious worship in schools
- Discriminatory employment practices by faith groups
- Religious exemptions in equality legislation
- Discrimination in faith-based services

Jahangir reiterates the view of humanists and many human rights groups that "criminalizing 'defamation of religions' can be counterproductive, since it may create an atmosphere of intolerance and fear and may even increase the chances of a backlash."

She notes that, "Accusations of 'defamation of religions' might stifle legitimate criticism or even research on practices and laws appearing to be in violation of human rights but that are, or are at least perceived to be, sanctioned by religion."

All inquiry, philosophical and scientific, suffers under laws criminalizing defamation or any other perceived lack of respect for the sanctioned faith.

Two classes remain for “**The Roots of Humanism,**” meeting Tuesday evenings March 6 and 13 from 7 to 8:30pm in the Channing room of Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. March 6 will look at the contributions of Transcendentalists and Robert Ingersoll, “The Great Agnostic.” On March 13 we begin with the Humanist Manifestos and then consider the contributions of cognitive research on our understandings of ourselves.

Drop in for one or both. No book purchase needed; materials will be provided. There is no charge for classes

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### ***Idaho Science Standards Now Include Climate Change***

The Idaho House Education Committee voted to remove climate change from the state science standards, but the Senate Education Committee overruled the House committee and put it back in. Whew!

See the Idaho Statesman "[HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE AGAIN REMOVES REFERENCES TO CLIMATE CHANGE](#)" from Feb. 7, and "[Senate panel's vote gives Idaho schools new science standards, climate change and all](#)" from Feb. 22.