



The Cowtown Humanist

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association & The Council For Secular Humanism

Volume Nine Number 5 - June 2007

OUR MEETINGS ARE HELD AT WESTSIDE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, 901 PAGE AVE, FT WORTH AT 7 PM ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH. JUNE'S GATHERING WILL BE HELD ON THE 13TH. JOIN US FOR DINNER AT 5:30 - LUBY'S CAFETERIA ON 8TH AVE (SOUTH OF ELIZABETH BLVD)

GUEST SPEAKER JACK Z. SMITH
June 13th 7:30 PM 901 Page Avenue

This month's program will deal with the **World's Population Explosion** and how it affects North Texas. Our chair, Dick Trice, was fortunate to get as a speaker, Jack Z. Smith, who last spoke to us about a year ago. Mr. Smith is a featured columnist and editorial writer with the Ft. Worth Star-Telegram.

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MINUTES MAY 9, 2007 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Dick Trice at Westside UU Church, 901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, Tx.

Dick welcomed our visitors.

He announced that a Humanist Officer, Ms. Marilyn Westfall, from Lubbock, Texas, will be visiting Ft. Worth May 13, 2007. The Board will be meeting with her and exploring ideas appropriate for the Chapter's growth.

Minutes were not available due to Secretary Reed Bilz's absence.

Treasurer's report was not given due to absence of the Treasurer, Delores Ruhs.

Ray Weil, Newsletter Editor, encouraged members to provide suggestions for content in the Newsletter.

Suggestions: a prominent placement for the date, time, subject of the next meeting and increased size of font, if appropriate.

Dick opened discussion for suggestions of subjects and/or speakers for the coming year. Ideas included and are not necessarily limited to: contact with Freedom Network in Austin, local issues, e.g. infant mortality rate, life quality of Muslim followers in this city, presentation by edito-

Suggestions for increasing the visibility of the Chapter in the community was suggested as a possible focus for planning by the Board.

Dick opened the meeting for nominations for officers for the coming year are as follows:

Dick Trice, Chair

Ray Weil, Vice Chair

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer

Reed Bilz, Secretary

Dick presented the program for the evening: Debate: "Globalization—Praise It or Damn It" between Jim Cheatham and Joel Bailey. It was a lively discussion extending beyond the meeting's adjournment.

Thanks to acting secretary Pennye Lewis for submitting the minutes.

MEGA EVENT

Humanists of Ft Worth Summer

Picnic at Trinity Park

Sunday June 10th - 12:30 PM

This year we are inviting all non-theists in the area to join us. We hope this gathering of free thinkers will be unlike any previously held in Ft Worth.

Bring your own chairs and sandwiches. The Humanists will furnish beer and soft drinks.

Atheism's Big Night In Little Rock

This article was published on Friday, April 27, 2007

[John Brummet](#)

The Morning News

Several members of the board met with Marilyn Westfall from the American Humanists on May 13th to discuss plans for increasing our presence in the North Texas region. We had dinner with Marilyn and gathered at Russell Elleven's home for further discussion.

It was suggested that the Humanist's headquarters submit a list of its Tarrant County members so that we could contact them and perhaps have them join our local group. If this isn't feasible we'd ask that the American Humanists contact its members with information about our chapter.

We further suggested that Marilyn be our liaison with the parent organization. If this proposal is adopted we'll have a voice at the national level.

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I'm Joe Holman, a former minister of the fundamentalist Christian sect known as the Church of Christ. I spent almost nine years of my life as a Christian and an evangelist preaching a message of guilt, human degradation, and pious ignorance. Now, I look back on my life then and wonder how I could ever have embraced such views. Those nine years of my life taught me much about life, religion, and human nature in general.

Now an avowed atheist, I live a much happier life, while holding onto something I could never have as a believer--self-honesty! I encourage you to search my website and get what you can out of it. I'll do my absolute best to respond to inquiries in a timely manner.

The basic goals of my website are...

1) to provide a basic introduction to atheism and why someone interested in truth would be led to that conviction.

2) to explain how and why a dedicated man of God could reject his faith and become an atheist.

3) to dispel myths regarding atheism and atheistic morality.

...and most of all...

4) to let other doubting and hurting religious people (like myself years ago) who are losing their faith know that there is life after religion

<http://www.ministerturnsatheist.org>

Dr. Richard Dawkins, an Oxford University biology professor, author and intellectual who probably is the world's most famous atheist and evolutionist, gave a lecture Thursday night in Little Rock.

Right there on the Bible Belt's buckle, they had to bring in extra chairs. Dawkins drew more than a thousand people to the Statehouse Convention Center, breaking Madeleine Albright's attendance record for lectures presented by the Clinton School of Public Service.

Everyone seemed friendly, ranging from those giving extended applause to those asking only the most polite of challenging questions.

I'd asked Skip Rutherford, dean of the Clinton School, if he expected trouble -- a shouting demonstration from zealous religious believers, perhaps.

"Could be," he said. Someone had called him to explain that the state Constitution prohibits atheists from holding office, which, while true, is long superseded by federal rights. But Dawkins was not seeking office, Rutherford replied. But you're advancing atheism, the caller countered. "No, I'm advancing ideas," Rutherford concluded.

Rutherford, a church-going Methodist, said the left got mad at him for bringing in Karl Rove, so it was fair for the right to get mad at him for bringing in Dawkins. Those probably are symmetrical devils.

During the Q-and-A, a young man told Dawkins he chose to believe in a religion-based afterlife so that his departed loved ones would have a place to go where he could hope to see them again. Dawkins was not impolite, but direct, when he explained that what the young man described wasn't belief, but hope.

Little Rock City Attorney Tom Carpenter asked Dawkins how we could be capable of love if we descended from the propagation of the "selfish gene," as Dawkins famously theorized in a best-selling book. Dawkins answered that the ability or even propensity to love could be as much a part of the natural selection process as physical characteristics.

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He also argued that nonbelievers' moral conduct comes from a healthy human choice rather than unhealthy fear of supernatural punishment.

In Britain, the state has an official religion, the Church of England, and children are required to be exposed to it. The result, Dawkins said, is that religion becomes "boring."

Look inside a church in England, he said, and you'll see four old ladies -- "cramming for finals," he joked, quoting an Australian friend.

To the contrary, he said that the United States, by separating religion from government, bestows the allure of freedom on religion and makes it a matter of "free enterprise, like selling soap flakes. And sell it they do."

Dawkins, who sometimes gets described as militant, opened with a series of broadsides on religion, some humorous. He managed to entertain in a mildly jarring way, since religion doesn't get talked about so disparagingly around here very often, much less before large, approving crowds. Then his remarks turned sufficiently esoteric on matters of biology and physics to make the audience a bit shifty, no doubt ready for the return to fun in the Q-and-A.

It's hard to imagine that he changed anyone's opinion.

"I'm not here to indoctrinate, but to raise consciousness," he said, shortly after saying how proud he was to be in the home state of the greatest president of his lifetime.

The audience seemed so friendly -- every nonreligious person in Arkansas must have been there -- that indoctrination would have been overkill. Surely there were resistant attendees, quietly taking offense on the basis of their religious faith.

Only they can say whether anything raised their consciousness.

Woman: "Look at all these people. It's a miracle."

Man: "Yeah, if you believe in that sort of thing."

Woman: "Which I don't."

And so my friends, black is now a color!

Rev. Bill McGinnis is an Internet Christian minister, writer and publisher. He is Director of LoveAllPeople.org, a small private think tank in Alexandria, Virginia, and all of its related websites, including InternetChurchOf-Christ.org, CommitteeForTheGoldenRule, CivicAmerican.com, and EssaysAndCommentaries.com. His agenda is to help maximize the happiness and well-being of all people.

Some religions are "polytheistic," with belief in many gods, each with different functions.

Atheism is the religion whose belief about God is that there is no God. Some Atheists, for their own political reasons, assert that Atheism is not a religion but instead is the total absence of religion. This allows them to spread their Atheistic beliefs freely in societies which insist on "separation of church and state."

But this is like saying that "black," (which physicists define as the total absence of color) is not a color. The car I drive is a big, old Chevrolet, whose color is black. In common practice throughout the world, "black" is understood to be a color, despite the technical definition of the physicists. Likewise, "Atheism" is a religion, despite any technical definitions to the contrary.

If black is a color, then Atheism is a religion.

If Atheism is a religion, then it must be subject to the same legal restrictions imposed by governments on all other religions. In particular, in the United States, the teaching of Atheism must be prohibited wherever the teaching of Christianity is prohibited. But where is Atheism being taught? Atheism is being taught, by default, in all places where other religions cannot be taught, particularly in the public schools.

When the State mandates that the Theory of Evolution be taught as fact, that is establishing the religion of Atheism, because the Theory of Evolution asserts that all life forms are created not by God, but by pre-existing natural processes. This is pure Atheism! If we are not created by God, then there might as well be no God, for all the difference He makes.

The mere fact that many scientists are Atheists does not entitle them to establish Atheism as our State Religion!

When the State prohibits free discussion of God in the classroom, that is establishing the religion of Atheism. Wherever the State permits Atheistic ideas to be spread but prohibits Theistic ideas, that is establishing the religion of Atheism.

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Jerry Falwell's Musings

Continued from the previous page

Therefore I urge you to understand clearly in your mind that Atheism is a religion, just as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are religions. And any restrictions placed on Christianity, Judaism, or Islam must also be placed on Atheism. Atheism must not be allowed to slip through its little loop-hole any longer, by pretending it is not a religion.

Blessings to you in the name of the One God, Creator of the universe.

Ohio Judge Frees Man After Bible Quiz

Quoting a Bible passage is apparently a "get out of jail free" card in some parts of Ohio. And this happened in a big city, not a small backwater town! This is blatant disregard for the laws which uphold the separation between church and state! And how the hell does quoting memorized Bible verses prove that someone is a good person? Would a person of another religion or would an atheist/agnostic/freethinker/humanist get off so easily? I think not.

CINCINNATI - A man arrested on Wednesday for allegedly trying to use a stolen credit card at a drugstore got a break from a judge after passing a sort of Bible quiz.

When Eric Hine appeared in court this morning, his attorney described him as a church-goer, hoping the judge would set a low bond.

Hamilton County Municipal Court Judge John Burlew was skeptical and asked Hine to recite the 23rd Psalm.

He did: all six verses. Some in the courtroom applauded.

Burlew was satisfied and released Hine on a \$10,000 appearance bond, meaning he'll have to pay that amount if he doesn't show up for his next court date.

Ed note: The Lord is indeed his shepherd .

"You'll be riding along in an automobile. You'll be the driver perhaps. You're a Christian. There'll be several people in the automobile with you, maybe someone who is not a Christian. When the trumpet sounds you and the other born-again believers in that automobile will be instantly caught away -- you will disappear, leaving behind only your clothes and physical things that cannot inherit eternal life. That unsaved person or persons in the automobile will suddenly be startled to find the car suddenly somewhere crashes.... Other cars on the highway driven by believers will suddenly be out of control and stark pandemonium will occur on ... every highway in the world where Christians are caught away from the drivers wheel."

Jerry Falwell, in his pamphlet, "Nuclear War and the Second Coming of Christ,"

We're fighting against humanism, we're fighting against liberalism ... we are fighting against all the systems of Satan that are destroying our nation today ... our battle is with Satan himself.

Jerry Falwell 1933-2007

Have you noticed how the Christian Fundamentalists claim Adolph Hitler was an atheist? Well, let them explain these quotes:

"The national government ... will maintain and defend the foundations on which the power of our nation rests. It will offer strong protection to Christianity as the very basis of our collective morality."

Adolf Hitler

God the Almighty has made our nation. By defending its existence we are defending His work....

Adolf Hitler . . . From a radio broadcast Jan 30, 1945

"Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.*"

From Mein Kampf

300million year old rock

By Lauren Becker

The summer before my senior year of college I worked as a park ranger guiding hikes in one of the most beautiful state parks in the country. Its central feature was a 256-foot waterfall that plunged down through a gorgeous natural amphitheater, cutting through bands of limestone and sandstone and collecting in a deep pool, the perfect hangout for summer swimming. My favorite program was the hike to the base of the falls. Layers of rock are like chapters in a history book and this canyon, carved so deeply, told an ancient story. Standing at the bottom, calling out over the roar of the falls, I got to teach the exciting conclusion, "The layers of slate and shale beneath our feet tell us that 300 million years ago, this deciduous forest was a tropical jungle."

"What book d'ya get that out of?" came the reply one day. And thus it began, for this waterfall was not only located in ancient rock, it was also in the heart of the Bible-belt. I had heard there were people who believed the Earth was only 6,000 years old, but I never thought I would actually meet any.

That summer, and every other summer I worked teaching science to the public, I met a lot of them. Though most objectors would just walk away from the program, some mothers would cover their children's ears to protect them from the "blasphemous park ranger." One man, after I patiently explained how we know the age of rocks, finally just threw up his hands, exclaimed, "The Devil made that rock look that old to turn you away from God," and He led his family back up the trail.

At the time, to a college kid with a summer job, these responses seemed bizarre but relatively harmless – they were local, "everyone's entitled to their own beliefs", "no skin off my back", "whatever"... But now, 15 years later, I understand these taunts to be the threat they truly are: dangerous beliefs made more dangerous because more and more people believe them.

How does believing a 300 million year-old rock is only 6,000 years old become dangerous? It is a reflection of where and how we find answers. A 300 million year-old rock is the answer resulting from decades of observation, research, field study, laboratory testing, comparative studies and critical thinking. A 6,000 year old rock is the answer because God said so.

Is the accurate age of a rock really important? Interesting, yes, but important? Maybe not. But what if the question is about Polio? Should we seek an answer from decades of observation, research and field study, discover a vaccine

and destroy a worldwide plague or does the answer lie in God's plan?

From: www.pointofinquiry.org

HumanistNetworkNews.org May 16, 2007

Atheists have not been timid in their responses to the death on Tuesday of Christian conservative televangelist The Rev. Jerry Falwell. "...it must be acknowledged in the wake of Rev. Falwell's death that he and the organizations he founded, especially the so-called Moral Majority, were serious threats to our Constitution and, specifically, the separation of church and state.... [he] was a dangerous man who opposed and worked against many of the key values underpinning our secular American democracy," stated Ellen Johnson, president of American Atheists, in a press release.

The Humanists of Fort Worth wish to express their condolences to Don and Dolores Ruhs upon the loss of their son, Brian Keith Ruhs

Your officers may be contacted as follows:

Chair: Dick Trice

7563 Casburn Ct Ft Worth, TX 76120 Phone 817-446-3840
email paandmatrice@sbcglobal.net

Vice Chair and Newsletter Editor: Ray Weil

2912 Woodlark Dr. Ft Worth, TX 76123 Phone: 817-346-2402
cell: 817-205-8603 email alphamail@myway.com

Secretary: Reed Bilz

6130 Haley Ln Ft Worth, TX 76132 Phone 817-292-7974 email
rbilz@charter.net

Treasurer: Dolores Ruhs

1036 Hill Top Pass Benbrook, TX 76126 Phone 817-249-1829
email rhsdol@sbcglobal.net

Recent Past Chair: Don Ruhs

1036 Hill Top Pass Benbrook TX 76126 Phone 817 249-1829
email: laidback935@sbcglobal.net

Past Chair: Mike Haney

924 Roaring Springs Rd Ft Worth, TX 76114 Phone 817-737-7047
email mhaneyinfw@charter.net

Past Chair and Webmaster: Russell Elleven

6120 Comfort Dr Ft Worth, TX 76132 Phone 817-370-2171
info@hofw.org

Humanists of Fort Worth

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Dick Trice at Spiral Diner Restaurant, Fort Worth, TX.

Ray Weil, Mike Little, John Huffman, Don Ruhs, Dolores Ruhs, Dick Trice and Reed Bilz were present.

We set the date for the Spring picnic in Trinity Park for Sunday, June 10th at 12:30. Dick will place a sign at University Drive to indicate the location that day. Ray has sent invitations to many free thinkers he has identified on the net. One has already responded.

The President of Westside UU has agreed to co-sponsor an educational video-social one Saturday evening each month at Westside. We would serve drinks and snacks, no charge, but provide a container for donations. There is audio-visual equipment at the church.

Dick has scheduled the July regular meeting to attract younger members and potential members. He has asked several young people to share their personal ideas related to Humanism or related subjects with us.

Jill Jung has volunteered to serve as publicist for the group.

Some suggestions for our newsletter include putting a membership application in every issue, and put news of our local chapter (upcoming and past meetings) on the first page. Ray has already increased the font size to 11 point.

We discussed the need to get out the message about Humanists in Fort worth. Dick has prepared a flyer for distribution and has written a letter which will be sent

to our 15 current members, former members, and prospective members by snail mail.

We concluded the meeting with some suggestions for videos to show at future meetings or the Saturday socials. Dick will check availability at Netflix.

Reed K. Bilz, Secretary

Does it make sense that the most powerful nation in the world clings to myth and superstition? Belief in supernatural beings is downright un-American! What happened to our unwavering sense of independence? Subjugating ourselves to an invisible god is just as bad as to a visible king! It is time for a revolution against god!! Join the fight for freedom from the tyranny of religion!

Beware of dogma.

God is just pretend.

Recovering catholic.

Nothing fails like prayer.

The Christian right is neither.

I believe in life before death.

Religion is myth-information.

Religion stops a thinking mind.

My karma ran over your dogma.

So many Christians, so few lions.

Blasphemy is a victimless crime.

One nation under god = theocracy.

God, protect us from your followers.

There is no sin greater than ignorance.

Come the rapture, can I have your car?

Fundamentalism stops a thinking mind.

Doing my part to piss off the religious right.

Religions are just cults with more members.

Your kids and my taxes go to St. Pedophiles.

He's your god. They're your rules. You burn in hell.

At first they burn books. Eventually they burn people.

I've got nothing against god. It's his fan club I can't stand.

Fundamentalism means never having to open your mind.

When religion ruled the world they called it the dark ages.

Believe those who seek the truth. Doubt those who find it.

Guilt, fear and mass insanity. Three cheers for Christianity.

You found god? If nobody claims him in 30 days, he's yours.

To err is human. To really screw things up you need religion.

The only problem with Baptists is they don't hold them under long enough.

godlessAmericans.org