

HUMANISTS

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Happy



Humanist

of FORT WORTH

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This newsletter is presented by the Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW), Texas for its members.

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HUMANISM

Humanism is a progressive lifestance that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

NOTICE

Membership dues are scheduled to be collected in March.

See page nine for explanation of membership categories.

Dues will be gratefully received by the Treasurer.

NOTICE

WISDOM

**LEARN FROM THE PAST;
LIVE IN THE PRESENT;
LISTEN TO THE FUTURE.**

Don Ruhs, Editor



THE AFFIRMATIONS OF HUMANISM: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES *



WE ARE COMMITTED to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems.

WE DEPLORE efforts to denigrate human intelligence, to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms, and to look outside nature for salvation.

WE BELIEVE that scientific discovery and technology can contribute to the betterment of life.

WE BELIEVE in an open and pluralistic society and that democracy is the best guarantee of protecting human rights from authoritarian elites and repressive majorities.

WE ARE COMMITTED to the principle of separation of church and state.

WE CULTIVATE the arts of negotiation and compromise as a means of resolving differences and achieving mutual understanding.

WE ARE CONCERNED with securing justice and fairness in society and with eliminating discrimination and intolerance.

WE BELIEVE in supporting the disadvantaged and the handicapped so that they will be able to help themselves.

WE ATTEMPT to transcend divisive parochial loyalties based on race, religion, gender, nationality, creed, class, sexual orientation, or ethnicity and strive to work together for the common good of humanity.

WE WANT TO PROTECT and enhance the earth, to preserve it for future generations, and to avoid inflicting needless suffering on other species.

WE BELIEVE in enjoying life here and now and in developing our creative talents to their fullest.

WE BELIEVE in the cultivation of moral excellence.

WE RESPECT the right to privacy. Mature adults should be allowed to fulfill their aspirations, to express their sexual preferences, to exercise reproductive freedom, to have access to comprehensive and informed health-care, and to die with dignity.

WE BELIEVE in the common moral decencies: altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, responsibility. Humanist ethics is amenable to critical, rational guidance. There are normative standards that we discover together. Moral principles are tested by their consequences.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED with the moral education of our children. We want to nourish reason and compassion.

WE ARE ENGAGED by the arts no less than by the sciences.

WE ARE CITIZENS of the universe and are excited by the discoveries still to be made in the cosmos.

WE ARE SKEPTICAL of untested claims to knowledge, and we are open to novel ideas and seek new departures in our thinking.

WE AFFIRM HUMANISM as a realistic alternative to theologies of despair and ideologies of violence and as a source of rich personal significance and genuine satisfaction in the service to others.

WE BELIEVE in optimism rather than pessimism, hope rather than despair, learning in the place of dogma, truth instead of ignorance, joy rather than guilt or sin, tolerance in the place of fear, love instead of hatred, compassion over selfishness, beauty instead of ugliness, and reason rather than blind faith or irrationality.

WE BELIEVE in the fullest realization of the best and noblest that we are capable of as human beings.

* by PAUL KURTZ

by Christopher Hitchens:

Gullibility and credulity are considered undesirable in every department of human life except religion.

Submitted by **Marj Bixler**

LOVE

Love is the only bow on Life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the babe, and sheds its radiance on the quiet tomb. It is the mother of art, inspirer of poet, patriot and philosopher. It is the air and light of every heart—builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody—for music is the voice of love. Love is the magician, the enchanter that changes worthless things to joy and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower, the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts; but with it, earth is heaven, and we are gods.

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899)

“HUMANISM” ON MILITARY DOG TAGS?

From the Associated Press: RALEIGH, N.C.

Maj. Ray Bradley is applying to be the first humanist recognized as a "distinctive faith group leader" by the Army. In the meantime, he can't be designated a humanist on his official records or dog tags, although he can be classified as an atheist.

Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/02/10/3726400/army-officer-wants-humanism-officially.html>

Submitted by Jay and Suzie Lotven

DADT

"Don't ask, don't tell" (DADT) was the official United States policy on homosexuals serving in the military from December 21, 1993 to September 20, 2011. The policy prohibited military personnel from discriminating against or harassing closeted homosexual or bisexual service members or applicants, while barring openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons from military service. The restrictions were mandated by United States federal law Pub.L. 103-160 (10 U.S.C. § 654). The policy prohibited people who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" from serving in the armed forces of the United States, because their presence "would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability." The act prohibited any homosexual or bisexual person from disclosing his or her sexual orientation or from speaking about any homosexual relationships, including marriages or other familial attributes, while serving in the United States armed forces. The act specified that service members who disclose that they are homosexual or engage in homosexual conduct should be separated (discharged) except when a service member's conduct was "for the purpose of avoiding or terminating military service" or when it "would not be in the best interest of the armed forces".

The "don't ask" part of the DADT policy specified that superiors should not initiate investigation of a service member's orientation without witnessing disallowed behaviors, though credible evidence of homosexual behavior could be used to initiate an investigation. Unauthorized investigations and harassment of suspected servicemen and women led to an expansion of the policy to "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue, don't harass."

A congressional bill to repeal DADT was enacted in December 2010, specifying that the policy would remain in place until the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certified that repeal would not harm military readiness, followed by a 60-day waiting period. A July 6, 2011 ruling from a federal appeals court barred further enforcement of the U.S. military's ban on openly gay service members. President Barack Obama, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, sent that certification to Congress on July 22, 2011, which set the end of DADT for September 20, 2011.

DOMA

The **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)** (Pub.L. 104-199, 110 Stat. 2419, enacted September 21, 1996, 1 U.S.C. § 7 and 28 U.S.C. § 1738C) is a United States federal law whereby the federal government defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman. Under the law, no U.S. state (or other political subdivision) may be required to recognize as a marriage a same-sex relationship considered a marriage in another state. The law passed both houses of Congress by large majorities and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on September 21, 1996.

The law, specifically Section 3, codifies an irrecognition of same-sex marriage for all federal purposes, which include family insurance benefits for employees of the government, survivors' benefits from Social Security, and joint tax filings. This section has been found unconstitutional in two Massachusetts court cases and a California bankruptcy court case; however, the court rulings are under appeal. The Barack Obama administration has called parts of the law unconstitutional, and announced in 2011 that while they will enforce DOMA, they will not defend it in court. Shortly thereafter, House of Representatives announced it would defend the law on behalf of the federal government in place of Obama's Department of Justice.



Church & STATE



the BOOK NOOK

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The 1st Amendment to the Constitution of the United States—"The Establishment Clause."

From Americans United for the Separation of Church & State

OUTRAGEOUS RELIGIOUS RIGHT MYTHS:

#1: Pulpit politicking is legal. Under federal law, tax-exempt, non-profit groups are barred from intervening in elections by endorsing or opposing candidates. This includes houses of worship. This law's application to churches has been upheld by a federal appeals court.

#2: The American people support church electioneering. Poll after poll has shown strong opposition to pulpit politicking. Opposition sometimes reaches 80%. Even polls sponsored by conservative religious groups have found solid opposition to pulpit politicking among church-goers as well as clergy.

#3: Americans are accustomed to hearing partisan sermons in churches. Increasingly, Americans are telling pollsters that they don't view houses of worship as centers of partisan politics, and most clergy say the same thing. People are part of religious communities for spiritual reasons, not to get orders on how to vote.

#4: Houses of worship are being muzzled and sermons are being censored. Religious leaders and organizations can—and many do—speak out a wide range of spiritual, moral and political issues. But if houses of worship want to keep their tax exemption, they cannot endorse candidates or use congregational resources to intervene in partisan campaigns.

(cont'd. >>>>)

This space is intended to focus attention on books, authors, subjects and articles that may be of interest to humanists, agnostics, atheists, and freethinkers.

Some personalities and authors whose writings are known to favor, or influence the humanist philosophy:

Thomas Paine (1737-1809): "The Rights of Man"; "Common Sense";

Charles Darwin (1809-1882): "On The Origin of Species"; "The Descent of Man";

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899): "Some Mistakes of Moses"; "The Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child"; "The Creed of Science"; "Why I am an Agnostic";

Isaac Asimov (1920-1992); "Asimov's Guide to the Bible OT & NT"; "The Genetic Code"; "The Foundation Trilogy";

Richard Dawkins (1941-): "The Selfish Gene"; "The God Delusion"; "The Greatest Show on Earth";

Susan Jacoby (1946 -): "Freethinkers"; "The Age of American Unreason; "Never Say Die";

Of course there are many others, these are some of my favorites. Who are your favorites?

Editor

#5: The Internal Revenue Service never enforces the no-politicking law against religious groups.

In 1995, the IRS revoked the tax exempt status of a New York congregation that took out newspaper ads opposing a presidential candidate. TV preacher Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network lost its exemption for two years and paid a monetary penalty for partisan politics, and the late Jerry Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour suffered the same fate.

March 14th Meeting (Second Wednesday of the month)

Topic: RAPE CRISIS AND VICTIM'S SERVICES

Speaker: MS Mary Jane Themudo, BSW

Ms Themudo is Manager of the “**Play It Safe!**” program of *The Women's Center* in Ft. Worth.

Services offered to assist their clients include:

- ◆ Helping child and adult victims to recover from the trauma of rape, sexual abuse, battering and other violent crime;
- ◆ Teaching children how to reduce the risk of sexual and physical abuse.
- ◆ Support victims as they work through police and court proceedings.
- ◆ Helping unemployed women and men find jobs and how to advance in the labor market.

Election of Officers

The annual election of officers is scheduled to take place during a special meeting in May. Members are encouraged to present themselves as candidates for the various positions. Positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer will be up for election.

We should prepare the slate of candidates for discussion by April. We ask for the cooperation of every member to make this election, and our organization, a success.

*** Your Input Is Encouraged ***

All *members of HoFW* are encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in this newsletter. The deadline for your input is the fifteenth of the month prior to the next scheduled monthly meeting.

Before publication, all articles will be reviewed for size, content, and appropriateness to the philosophy of Humanism (See page 2 of this issue for guidance).

Don Ruhs, Editor

SUSAN G. KOMEN FOR A CURE V. PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Submitted by John Fisher, Recording Secretary, HoFW

When the nation's largest advocacy group for the cure and prevention of breast cancer, Susan G. Komen Race For a Cure, announced a decision January 31 to discontinue grants to Planned Parenthood for breast cancer screenings, foes of reproductive choice stood and cheered. Katie Pavlich, News Editor at Townhall.com, joyously blogged: "I may be doing my first Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure this summer; they've cut ties with Planned Parenthood." She proceeded to re-hash the allegations of Planned Parenthood aiding and abetting the child sex trade and the accusation that Planned Parenthood doesn't actually provide breast screenings, complete with yet another showing of the well-worn (and some have charged, doctored) videos purporting to prove those points.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America did not take the blow sitting down, and neither have allies of reproductive choice. In three days' time following Komen's announcement that they would pull funding, which amounted to \$680,000 last year and \$580,000 the year before, over \$3 million dollars poured in to Planned Parenthood from private donors all over the country.

Komen Vice President for Public Policy Karen Handel, who in an earlier gubernatorial campaign had made her anti-choice views clear (including advocating the de-funding of Planned Parenthood), resigned February 7 in the wake of the controversy. A source familiar with decision-making at Komen indicated that the decision, ostensibly to deny funding to any entity which is currently under Federal investigation, was made with the de-funding of Planned Parenthood specifically in mind. Komen's decision to pull funding came at least partially in response to the Congressional investigation launched by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., into whether Planned Parenthood uses federal monies to pay for abortions. That investigation came at the urging of anti-choice groups including Americans United For Life.

Komen has since amended its policy to specify that such investigations must be "conclusive and criminal in nature".

The controversy has expanded to merge with the fight over the Affordable Healthcare For Americans Act, the Obama Administration's healthcare reform, which originally would have required religious institutions to provide insurance coverage for birth control free of charge to all of their employees. In response to the outcry from anti-abortion religious forces, the President announced a compromise whereby religious institutions will not be required to pay for birth control, but their insurers must offer such coverage to any employee who desires it. The Catholic Church first indicated that this was "a step in the right direction", but later changed its tone and said that even the newest compromise violates religious freedom of conscience.

continued on page 8 >>>>>>>

>>>>>> continued from page 7: Susan G. Komen . . .

The controversy continues in the context of the political debate over health reform. There will be future articles in the HoFW newsletter exploring these issues further.

The Angry Humanist Vice Chair-Sam Baker

Catholics complain about contraception coverage

The Catholic leadership objects on moral grounds to being forced to provide employee health insurance coverage for contraceptives in Catholic supported institutions like universities and hospitals even though many employees at these institutions are not Catholic.

If the Catholic Church is so concerned about the taking of innocent life, when has it ever objected to its members being forced to pay income taxes part of which are used to wage unprovoked wars which have resulted in the deaths of millions of innocent people around the world? Never.

Are Catholics being forced to take contraceptives? No. But individual Catholics would have a choice as long as contraceptives are covered. And choice is something the Catholic Church has never been able to tolerate. For hundreds of years, the Church was able to compel compliance to its dictates by everything from torture to burning people alive. Why did it employ torture and murder against people who merely entertained thoughts contrary to Church doctrine? Because the Church has never been able to win adherence to its beliefs by the force of its arguments alone. A prime example: 98% of Catholic women admit to having used artificial birth control at some time in their lives.

Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in blood transfusions.

If we want universal health coverage, everyone can't decide what is to be covered and what is not to be covered.

Why should Catholics have to pay for coverage for contraceptives which, theoretically, they won't use? Because Jehovah's Witnesses are helping to pay for their blood transfusions.

February Meeting

Minutes: February 8, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. By Chair Gene Gwin. There were twenty-four members and four visitors present.

This month's speaker was Zachary Moore, Ph. D., professor of molecular biology at the University of North Texas.

After a break for refreshments there was further discussion and Q. and A.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Fisher, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Report Date: Feb. 8, 2012

Beginning Balance:	\$989.98
Credits:	14.00
Debits:	00.00
Ending Balance	\$1,003.98

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer

Note:

Credits were for donations to our snack fund.

The Humanists of Fort Worth (HoFW) meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Westside Unitarian Universalist Building, 901 Page Ave.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Single Member	\$25.00/yr.
Couple	\$40.00/yr
Patron	\$50.00/yr.
Student	\$10.00/yr.

Choose the category that best fits your needs. See the Treasurer or member of the Board for an application.

Pay in cash or mail the application, with your check, to the Treasurer.

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