

COWTOWN

Volume 10 Number 1



HUMANIST

February 2008

The chairperson, Dick Trice, noted that March 1 begins the 2008 fiscal year, the time for dues, and suggested that members might come prepared to pay at next meeting.

Dick announced that the American Humanist Association will be displaying a billboard message February 3 on the New Jersey Turnpike that reads, "Don't Believe in God? You are not alone." Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association said, "The point of the billboard is to let non-theistic people, such as atheists and agnostics, know they're not alone...This billboard demonstrates our will to push back and refuse to be passive in the culture wars. And after so many religious billboards, it's only fair that we should have one that gives voice to non-theists. It is only the first of a series that will appear around the country, raising the public profile of humanists and freethinkers. Nationally and locally there is a beginning effort to expand the visibility of the varieties of religious thinking and expressions in the country."

Dr. Russell K. Elleven, minister of the Westside UU Church, is initiating a support program, SMART (Self Management and Recovery Training), on January 19 at the church. Our Humanists of Fort Worth chapter is sponsoring this offering. The intent is to provide a choice of treatment in addition to AA and other religion-based therapies for persons suffering from different kinds of addiction.

For a change-of-pace moment of entertainment to begin the meeting, Dick introduced Alan Wilhelm, Westside UU member, who provided a medley of western songs, accompanied with his guitar. He included the traditional "twang" frequently used in some Western music, providing levity for the audience.

The Chair opened the program for a free expression of interests and opinions.

The ideas were multiple and included, but not limited to, the following:

What kind of programs are most interesting to members?

How can we increase interest and new members in the chapter?

What is the best way to explain our free-thinking views to shocked relatives and friends?

What is the future of non-theism in our country?

How much hope do we have?

After much discussion Dick announced that our February meeting will have Ms.

Mary Beth Garcia (more about her later) to speak on the disturbing subject of illegal immigration. Members have asked for programs offering greater information about the many outstanding free-thinkers of our past and it was decided to have two of our own members present 15-minute biographies at our March meeting of two of the greatest, one of whom would have to be Robert Ingersoll, the Great Agnostic.

From The Timberjay of Tower, Minnesota.

Saturday, February 09, 2008 Volume 19, Issue 6

Creationists resort to deception in attacking evolution
By Marshall Helmberger

As editor of the Timberjay's editorial pages, there are few things that have been more frustrating over the years than determining how to handle this perennial debate over evolution, prompted for the most part by a single, local proponent of creationism.

(Continued on page 2)

While I inherently believe in the free exchange of ideas, the purpose of the editorial pages is to discuss ideas and viewpoints that can affect the world in which we live. To a large degree, the debate over evolution doesn't meet that criteria— because what we all choose to believe on the subject has no bearing whatsoever on what is real.

It's like arguing about the color of the sky. In the end, there's nothing that can be done about it anyway.

Personally I don't care if someone wants to believe that the world is 6,000 years old and that humans walked with dinosaurs.

Where I draw the line is when such individuals try to force their unscientific and insupportable beliefs into the science curriculum of our public schools. While many of us followed the recent ruling in the Dover, Pennsylvania, case, where the school board was successfully sued for forcing science teachers to teach creationism's newest incarnation, dubbed "intelligent design," we should take little solace from the fact that sound science prevailed.

While the courts have correctly ruled that the teaching of religion as science is unconstitutional in this country, the fact is that advocates of creationism have significantly undermined the teaching of evolution in American classrooms nonetheless. Few American young people graduate from high school or university with anything more than a rudimentary understanding of the basics of evolution and the literally mountainous and ever-growing base of scientific evidence to support it.

School boards across this country, fearful of backlash from creationists, have largely kept evolution out of science courses. Evolution is the basis of modern biology, ecology, genetics, paleontology, and many other areas of study, but it is almost completely avoided in many science classrooms to this day. Even the writers of science textbooks in the U.S. frequently give it a pass, for fear their books won't be purchased by nervous school officials.

What's most sad, is that this campaign against evolution has been waged largely through deception and distortion. Indeed, the purveyors of creationism were criticized for their "disingenuous" tactics by Judge John Jones III, who ruled in the Dover, Pennsylvania, case. Jones, by the way, was a religious conservative, appointed by President Bush on the recommendation of fundamentalist former Senator Rick Santorum.

Creationist advocates clearly had a sympathetic judge in the Dover case. They had their day in court, but their arguments were so patently flawed that the judge's 139-page finding of fact was ultimately scathing. He even recommended some of the pro-creationism school board members be investigated for perjury.

I've seen plenty of this kind of truth-twisting closer to home. Just as they advocate in other parts of the country, local creationists routinely attempt to falsely equate evolution with atheism, in hopes that the devout will choose religion over science. It's a false choice, of course, since there is absolutely no contradiction between religious beliefs and an acceptance of evolution.

In addition, creationists falsely claim that Darwin's theory suggests life began on Earth on its own. Darwin, in fact, suggested that life was created in simpler form by a Creator, but that evolution has led to the remarkable diversity we see today. That's a view that's held today by many scientists, and many non-scientists, who are also individuals of faith.

I could go on and on. The list of false arguments, missed points, and outright frauds perpetrated by creationists to attack evolution is long.

And while I am usually more than happy to facilitate free debate, I'm not interested in false debate, either on these pages or online.

*“So where did you get your degree”
“At a small university. You probably haven’t heard of it”
“Oh really? Well, how small is it?”
“Um. About 50 feet wide by 75 feet long”*

You may have heard of the “scientist” who has



been pushing Intelligent Design “theory” for a while, [Kent Hovind](#). Hovind has been one of the biggest supporters of the idea of Intelligent Design as a “science” and is known for operating Christian theme parks, television donation beg-a-thons and for promoting his claims that he has proven evolution wrong with his scientific research. Kent isn’t doing that at the moment however. He’s taking a break at the [Edgefield US Federal Correction](#) Institution until 2015, assuming he behaves himself, for tax evasion.

One thing worth noting: It’s actually somewhat rare in the United States to go to prison for simply not paying taxes. What the government really wants is you to pay up, so in most cases, the penalty leveled is restitution and possibly interest on unpaid taxes and fines. Generally, putting someone in prison isn’t really helpful to the tax man because it doesn’t allow the person to work and therefore pay their back taxes. Kent went to prison because he’s been pulling this crap since at least the early 1990’s and has also done some things to hide his assets. So, the whole “I’m sorry I don’t keep good records and my account didn’t tell me so please just let me pay the back taxes and this won’t happen again.” line has pretty much worn out it’s effectiveness on sympathetic judges.

But getting back to the topic I started out with...

Kent Hovind, or as he prefers to call himself “[Doctor Kent Hovind Ph.D.](#)” got his education at [Patriot Bible University](#). Patriot claims to be a Christian university which specializes in Bible study courses and theology and also various science courses. The science courses, of course, are not religious but actual fact-based scientific pursuits.. It just so happens to be at a Christian school, but that’s no big deal because after all, Notra Dame is a Catholic university and nobody seems to claim their physics or chemistry department isn’t legit, right? sure.....

Well, as it turns out Patriot Bible University is primary an independent study and distance learning institution. There’s not really anything wrong with



that, considering that such programs have proven their worth in providing a solid education to working adults or those who can’t travel through a combination of online courses, video lectures and supervised exams at local institutions. But, Patriot University is not actually accredited as a degree-granting university. Actually, it’s not even recognized as a valid institution by any major educational body. It can’t even grant any kind of industry-recognized certification. That would tend to put it on the bottom of the heap in terms of “[diploma mills](#),” most of them at least do a better job at pretending to be real.

They do however claim to be “[Christian Accredited](#)” which I guess means that Christ gave them the thumbs up. So if you call them into question, you’re actually assaulting the word of the risen lord and you’ll be turned into stone or get cudies and smell bad or something bad like that.
(Continued on page 4)

The “university” claims to have an annual graduating “class” of between 50 and 100, but of course, it is a small establishment which is committed to specialized areas of education and research. How small? Well, it can’t be that small, because the university president apparently lives on campus, as her private residence is actually the same address as the school. The photo to the right however proves that it was big enough for them to have the funds and space to erect a church-looking kinda thing on the side of it. It’s only two-dimensional, but who’s counting, right?

They do however have something of a parking lot (complete with trap rock grit to keep the dust from kicking up too much) and a concrete wheelchair ramp and stairs and such. They even have a commercial-grade streetlamp. So, that’s got to count for something. Oh and there’s a dumpster too, which coincidentally is a good place to put one of their degrees.

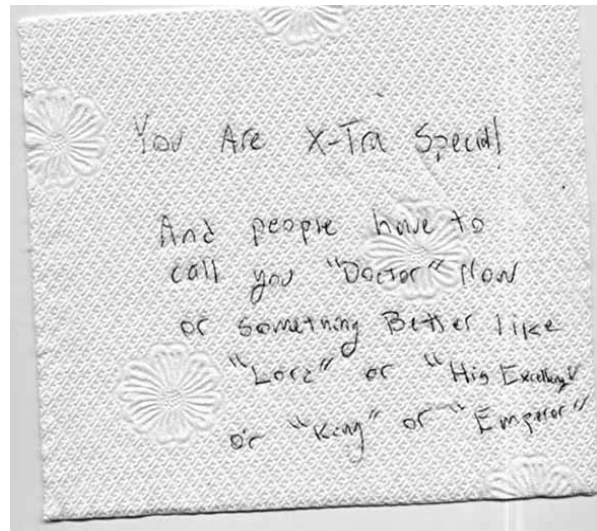
If you’d care to check it out you can always hit up [Google Earth](#) or [Google Maps](#). The measurement tool puts the place at about 75 feet wide by about 50 feet deep, but that tool’s not always accurate so it might be as wide as 80 feet in reality.

It’s on a lovely secluded road not far from a couple of trailer parks and a small housing development. There’s also a gas station just a little ways up the street! Apparently campus life and the university community are really hopping! The only problem is that [apparently the University is under attack](#) by the same forces that defamed poor Kent and oppose teaching of “the truth.” But they school assures us that they will prevail!



So there you go. If you want a degree and don’t want to actually learn anything this place might be the place to go. I remember being told a while ago that “too many students are just concerned with the reputation of a school and not with whether or not it’s the proper fit for them.” That might be a good statement in this case. Because if reputation means nothing to you and you’re an outright liar and federal convict, this school is a perfect match!

HOWEVER: I should also mention that Depleted Cranium also offers educational services and distance learning. (Starting at) Just \$49.99 (Plus shipping) you can get a degree sent to you of equal value to that from Patriot Bible University. You can even have it personalized with your own name or framed for a very reasonable fee. Please contact us for more information on how you can receive your degree! Sample shown:



From: <http://depletedcranium.com/?p=372>

Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by rulers as useful.

Seneca

From www.ingodwetrustusa.com

The nation's largest atheist group wants you to imagine a world without the Pledge of Allegiance, without faith, without patriotism, and without America as we know it. However, In God We Trust is standing up to them with a new advertising campaign that exposes how much the radical Atheist movement hates America and everything our nation stands for.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation has begun posting their "Imagine No Religion" billboards all across the country. So, In God We Trust has created our own billboard campaign asking "Why Do Atheists Hate America?"

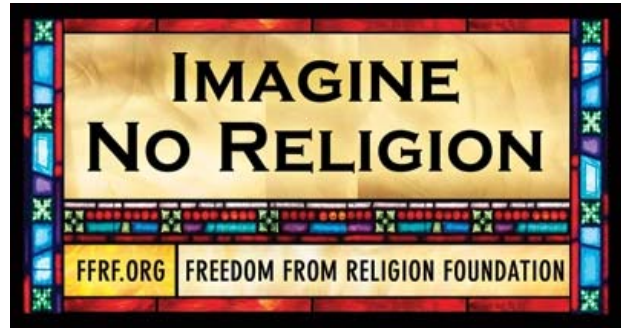
Why does this particular atheist group seem to want to banish people of faith? Our sign doesn't say, 'Imagine No Atheists.' All we want is a public debate. We want the atheists to defend some of the Anti-American statements they've made. Not only that, but we would like to know how 'Imagine No Religion' is different than 'Imagine No Christians' or 'Imagine No Jews'? Think about what these atheists are really saying. 'Imagine No Mother Theresa?' 'Imagine No Martin Luther King, Jr.?' I guess that's the kind of world in which these atheists think we would all be better off living. We disagree, and we think most Americans feel the same way.

To learn more about the Freedom From Religion Foundation's views on patriotism, America, and religious freedom in its leaders' own words, click

<http://ingodwetrustusa.org/atheists.html>

Ed note: Don't you just love how this site explains what WE think?

This is the billboard that causes angst for these People!



Freedom From Religion website:

<http://www.ffrf.org/news/2008/hatebillboard.php>

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 ruhdsol@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

doctorelleven@gmail.com