

HUMANISTS

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Happy



Humanist

of FORT WORTH

February, 2013

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

The "Happy Humanist" symbol is presented by IHEU (International Humanist and Ethical Union).

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

Meeting

February 13, 2013 7:00 PM

SPEAKER: Dave Aftandilian

TOPIC: The role of animals in religion.

See page 6 for more info.

! Thanks !

Many 'thank-yous' to the members and friends who are assisting with the cleanup and rearrangement duties after our meetings. It is much appreciated.

If you are interested in lending a hand please see one of the Board Members.

! Thanks !

The most formidable weapon against errors of any kind is reason..

Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

The presentation below, to honor the birth date of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin, was originally page 5 of the newsletter of February, 2012.

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LINCOLN AND DARWIN

Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin, were born in the same year, and on the same day, February 12, 1809.



Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky (now La Rue County). For the most part he was a self-made man, never having a formal education. He was, however, an avid reader. He mastered

trigonometry (for work as a surveyor), he read Blackstone on his own to become a lawyer. He memorized swaths of the Bible and Shakespeare. At the age of 40, he undertook the study of Euclidian geometry as a mental exercise.

At the age of 22 young Lincoln eventually migrated to the small community of New Salem, Illinois where over a period of years he worked as a shopkeeper, postmaster, and eventually general store owner. It was here that **Lincoln**, working with the public, acquired social skills and honed story-telling talent that made him popular with the locals.

In 1846, **Lincoln** was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Illinois. He served a single term in the House. In 1860 he was elected as the 16th president of the United States and inaugurated in May of 1861.

Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, by well-known actor and Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.



Darwin was in born in Shrewsbury, England into a moderately wealthy family.

He started out as an amateur naturalist, a beetle collector, a rock-bound, a 22 year-old rich-kid dilettante who,

after flirting with the idea of being first a physician and then a preacher, was allowed to ship out with the *HMS Beagle* as someone who might supply good conversation at the captain's table. His father all but ordered him not to go to sea, worrying that it was nothing more than one of Charles's lengthening list of aimless exploits. But, as history now knows, **Darwin** made some of the most Earth-shaking discoveries in the world in the fields of biology and evolution.

He became the very model of a modern major scientist without benefit of graduate school. And because of his findings, and in spite of those initial discoveries, today's scientists in every field have benefited.

Darwin put off publishing his findings for decades for fear of harassment and repercussions from the fundamentalist religionists of his day. He finally did publish his "The Origin of Species" in 1859.

He died in 1882 and was buried a few feet from the grave of another immortal among British scientists, Sir Isaac Newton.

From the . . .



. . . Sam Baker

America's Continually Eroding Democracy (Yes, it's intentional)

Americans love their myths. One of them is that there is an all-knowing, supernatural daddy in the sky who watches over us and who will grant us our wishes if we beg him long enough. Another is that we live in a representative democracy which is the envy of the world. We may be the envy of the world for other reasons, but not because we have the most democratic political process.

We were all taught in school that the impetus behind our revolution was the fact that Colonial Americans were incensed about being taxed by a legislative body in England in which they were denied representation. Kay Granger doesn't represent any of my views on any subject that I know of. Neither do Texas's two senators. If you are reading this newsletter, it's a good bet your views aren't held by your representatives either. Rep. Granger doesn't even bother to reply to my emails any more, but getting the stock replies I used to get really wasn't much better.

The sad fact is that our system of government guarantees that up to 49.9 percent of the voters end up just like me. How? First of all, by the gerrymandering of congressional districts by the dominant party in the state which guarantees that, once elected, a congress person has a very small chance of ever losing his or her seat. Oftentimes, these people don't even have an opponent in re-election campaigns because the other party knows it's a waste of money to run an opposing candidate. Secondly, due to often unreasonable and unfair state regulations designed to keep third parties off the ballot, most of us usually are limited to two candidates, a Democrat and a Republican, but, even worse, our system is winner-take-all so if your candidate loses, even if he or she loses by only one tenth of one percent, your views won't be represented at all in the Congress unless it is by someone in a race somewhere else.

Is there an alternative? Yes. Is it practiced in other countries? Yes. It's called proportional representation which, as the name implies, guarantees that minority views are represented in a legislature. There are several ways to achieve proportional representation, but perhaps the best is called Choice Voting. You can study how it works here:

<http://www.fairvote.org/what-is-choice-voting?>

It is simple, but it requires multi-member districts. In other words, the voters vote for more than one candidate and more than one candidate is elected. Under Choice Voting, the voter rank orders his choice of candidates so that he can actually vote for the person he most wants and that vote will count. One isn't forced to vote for the lesser of two evils, which is what many of us are forced to do in almost every election. The voting procedure is simple, but the counting is more complicated because there are multiple rounds of vote counting as candidates who receive the least votes are dropped from the counting, and each voter's preferred candidates are re-ordered. A sample election where there are six candidates for three seats is explained here:

<http://www.fairvote.org/sample-election>

This process insures that minority views win seats in the legislature in proportion to their share of the voters, in contrast to our system where all power goes to a 50.1% majority in a winner-take-all election.

As each day passes in our "envy of the world" democracy, the less democratic our system becomes. When the country started out, each congressman represented at most 30,000 people, and as the population increased, the number of congressmen increased to keep pace. If your congress person represented only 30,000 people, you might have a chance of actually knowing him or her. At the very least, he or she would probably have the time to give you a sincere response to your letters or emails.

>>> Continued from page 3

Presently the average congress person represents about 710,000 people instead of the 30,000 his forefathers represented. In 1929 Congress passed the Reapportionment Act of 1929 which capped the size of the House at 435 (you guessed it--Republican control of both houses of Congress and the presidency) so now, as the population continues to grow, each congress person represents an ever growing number of people, and the voice of the individual voter in America becomes ever more muted.

So how does our democracy compare to other countries? Not very well, according to a letter Congressman Alcee Hastings wrote to his colleagues in 2001:

British House of Commons	659 Members	1 Member per 90,288 people
Canadian House of Commons	301 Members	1 Member per 103,924 people
South Africa National Assembly	400 Members	1 Member per 108,553 people
German Bundestag	669 Members	1 Member per 123,752 people
Australian House	148 Members	1 Member per 129,521 people
Japan Shugi-in	500 Members	1 Member per 253,100 people
Russia State Duma	450 Members	1 Member per 324,447 people
Nigerian House	360 Members	1 Member per 342,605 people
Brazil Camara dos Deputados	513 Members	1 Member per 467,190 people
U.S. House of Representatives	435 Members	1 Member per 645,632 people
Indian Lok Sabha	552 Members	1 Member per 1,836,963 people

Congressman Hastings further stated:

In the past 90 years, the U.S. has become the second most underrepresented democracy in the entire world, but the size of the House of Representatives has remained the same. In the past 90 years, U.S. population has more than tripled, but the size of the House of Representatives has remained the same. In the past 90 years, four states have joined the Union, but the size of the House of Representatives has remained the same. In fact, in the past 90 years, Congress has addressed permanently increasing the size of the House of Representatives only once.

While the U.S. claims the title "Leader of the Free World," after India, it is the least representative democracy in the world!

Our "envy-of-the-world" democracy is anti-democratic in a number of ways. A University of Texas law professor, Sanford Levinson, has written a book on the subject entitled, "Our Undemocratic Constitution: Where the Constitution Goes Wrong (And How We the People Can Correct It)."

Let's face the sad reality. We don't really have a representative democracy. We have the illusion of representative democracy. As someone else noted about our televised political debates, if we still had slavery, the Democrats would argue for regulation of the industry, the Republicans would argue in favor of the free market, and the abolitionists wouldn't be allowed on the stage.

Sam Baker

More from the Chair:

Hot Off the Presses: The Republican Plan to Steal the Next Presidential Election

The media are buzzing about a newly announced plan by Republicans in several states to change the rules for choosing electors to the Electoral College which, if they had been in effect in the last presidential election, would have resulted in a win for Mitt Romney regardless of the fact that President Obama won the national popular vote. According to the Richmond Times-Dispatch:

Legislation that would apportion Virginia's electoral votes by the winner of each congressional district, instead of the current winner-take-all system, emerged from a Senate subcommittee today. The legislation now heads to the full committee, where a 10-5 GOP majority is likely to send it to the floor of the full Senate for a vote.

Republicans and uninformed reporters are referring to this new plan as "proportional representation" which it most certainly is not. As should be obvious from the term, if the plan was truly proportional, the slate of electors would reflect the proportion of the state-wide popular vote. For example, if the proportion of the state's vote was 60% Democrat and 40% Republican, then the proportion of electors would be the same, 60% Democrat, 40% Republican. True proportional representation won't turn a blue state red.

What the Republicans want to do is to change the rules so that a majority Democratic state yields the Republicans more electors than Democratic electors. You might ask how this would be possible. Presently, all but two states have a state-wide winner-take-all election for electors: all electors are awarded to the party which wins the popular state vote. In lieu of a state-wide vote, Republicans want to hold a winner-take-all election in each gerrymandered congressional district and award electors on a district basis. In states dominated by Republican legislatures and governors, districts may already be gerrymandered. All that would be left is to change the way electors are elected.

How would it work? Let's say for purposes of simplicity that there are 300 people in the state and 3 congressional districts. Furthermore, let's say 180 of the people are Democrats and 120 are Republicans, giving the Democrats a statewide 60% majority.

The Republican plan is simple: re-draw the congressional districts (if not already gerrymandered) so that most Democrats are crammed into almost all Democratic districts and then require that electors be chosen in a winner-take-all election in each district. In our example, here's how the gerrymandered districts might be composed:

District 1: 90 Democrats + 10 Republicans
 District 2: 55 Republicans + 45 Democrats
 District 3: 55 Republicans + 45 Democrats

Thus, Republicans would be awarded two electors and the Democrats one elector in a state composed of 60% Democrats. This is a true example of American Exceptionalism. No other modern industrial democracy would tolerate this level of trickery.

Can they get away with it? Probably, unless these plans can be found to be violative of the Voting Rights Act. The states have the exclusive power to allocate their electoral votes and may change their state laws concerning the awarding of their electoral votes at any time.

The majority of Americans want to abolish the anachronism known as the Electoral College and have direct election of the president, but the difficulty in amending the Constitution prevents it. In other words, the will of the people is already thwarted by gerrymandering and our dated constitution.

Fortunately, in this instance, there is a way around the Constitution. Under the National Popular Vote bill, all of a state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes (at least 270). The bill has already been enacted by 9 jurisdictions possessing 132 electoral votes — 49% of the 270 necessary to activate it (VT, MD, WA, IL, NJ, DC, MA, CA, HI), and it has passed 31 legislative chambers in another 21 jurisdictions (AR, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OR, RI, VT, WA), according to the National Popular Vote website. Google the "National Popular Vote" and check it out. The bill has been introduced in Texas and needs your support.

Sam Baker

February 13

Anthropology Professor Dave Aftandilian of TCU will speak to us on the topic of the role of animals in religion. One of Dave's areas of study is Native American Religions.

If you have some specific questions you would like him to address, please send them to me.

For example, here are some great questions another member has:

1. Is there a consistent pattern in history of animism/animal worship to god/animal characters in mythology to a totally anthropomorphized god?
2. What pressures seemed to have moved humans from worship of animals/animal spirits to using the animals as a means to appease a non-animal god? And then, what forces seemed to have moved humanity away from the use of animals altogether? Of course, I realize that there are mixtures of all kinds of practices around today. It just seems that is the general direction.
3. Is there a growing pressure to see animals a equal to humans in worth and dignity? If so, how might that shape culture and society in the future.

Regards,

Sam

THE BLESSINGS OF ATHEISM by Susan Jacoby (From the NY Times)

In a recent conversation with a fellow journalist, I voiced my exasperation at the endless talk about faith in God as the only consolation for those devastated by the unfathomable murders in Newton, Conn. Some of those grieving parents surely believe, as I do, that this is our one and only life. Atheists cannot find solace in the idea that dead children are now angels in heaven. “That only shows the limits of atheism,” my colleague replied. “It’s all about nonbelief and has nothing to offer when people are suffering.”

This widespread misapprehension that atheists believe in nothing positive is one of the main reasons secularly inclined Americans—roughly 20 percent of the population—do not wield public influence commensurate with their numbers. One major problem is the dearth of secular community institutions. But the most powerful force holding us back is our own reluctance to speak, particularly at moments of high national drama and emotion, with the combination of reason and passion needed to erase the image of the atheist as a bloodless intellectual robot.

The secular community is fearful of seeming to proselytize. When giving talks on college campuses, I used to avoid personal discussions of my atheism. But over the years, I have changed my mind because such diffidence contributes to the false image of the atheist as someone whose convictions are removed from ordinary experience. It is vital to show that there are indeed atheists in foxholes, and wherever else human beings suffer and die.

Now when students ask how I come to believe what I believe, I tell them that I trace my atheism to my first encounter, at age 7, with the scourge of polio. In 1952, a 9-year-old friend was stricken by the disease and clinging to life in an iron lung. After visiting him in the hospital, I asked my mother, “Why would God do that to a little boy?” She sighed in a way that telegraphed her lack of conviction and said: “I don’t know. The

priest would say god must have his reasons, but I don’t know what they could be.”

Just two years later, in 1954, Jonas Salk’s vaccine began the process of eradicating polio, and my mother took the opportunity to suggest that God may have guided his research. I remember replying, “Well, God should have guided the doctors a long time ago so that Al wouldn’t be in an iron lung.” (He was to die only eight years later, by which time I was a committed atheist.)

The first time I told this story to a class, I was deeply gratified when one student confided that his religious doubts arose from the struggles of a severely disabled sibling, and that he had never been able to discuss the subject candidly with his fundamentalist parents. One of the most positive things any atheist can do is provide a willing ear for a doubter—even if the doubter remains a religious believer.

It is primarily in the face of suffering, whether the tragedy is individual or collective, that I am forcefully reminded of what atheism has to offer. When I try to help a loved one losing his mind to Alzheimer’s, when I see homeless people shivering in the wake of a deadly storm, when the news media bring me almost obscenely close to the grief of bereft parents, I do not have to ask, as all people of faith must, why an all-powerful, all-good God allows such things to happen.

It is a positive blessing, not a negation of belief, to be free of what is known as the theodicy problem. Human “free will” is a Western monotheism’s answer to the question of why God does not use his power to prevent the slaughter of innocents, and many people throughout history (some murdered as heretics) have not been able to let God off the hook in that fashion.

The atheist is free to concentrate on the fate of this world—whether that means visiting a friend in a

Continued on page 8 >>>>

>>>> Continued from page 7

hospital or advocating for tougher gun control laws—without trying to square things with an unseen overlord in the next. Atheists do not want to deny religious believers the comfort of their faith. We do want our fellow citizens to respect our deeply held conviction that the absence of an afterlife lends a greater, not a lesser, moral importance to our actions on earth.

Today's atheists would do well to emulate some of the great 19th-century American freethinkers, who insisted that reason and emotion were not opposed but complementary.

Robert Green Ingersoll, who died in 1899 and was one of the most famous orators of his generation, personified the combination of passion and rationality. Called "The Great Agnostic," Ingersoll insisted that there was no difference between atheism and agnosticism because it was impossible for anyone to "know" whether God existed or not. He used his secular pulpit to advocate for social causes like justice for African-Americans, women's rights, prison reform and the elimination of cruelty to animals.

He also frequently delivered secular eulogies at funerals and offered consolation that he clearly considered an important part of his mission. In 1882, at the graveside of a friend's child, he declared: "They who stand with breaking hearts around this little grave, need have no fear. The larger and the nobler faith in all that is, and is to be, tells us that death, even at its worst, is only perfect rest ... The dead do not suffer."

Today's secularists must do more than mount defensive campaigns proclaiming that we can be "good without God." Atheists must stand up instead of calling themselves freethinkers, agnostics, secular humanists or "spiritual, but not religious." The last phrase, translated from the psychobabble, can mean just about anything—that the speaker is an atheist who fears social disapproval or a fence-sitter who wants the theoretical benefits of faith, including hope of eternal life, without the obligations of actually practicing a religion. Atheists

may also be secular humanists and freethinkers—I answer to all three—but avoidance of identification with atheism confines us to a closet that encourages us to fade or be pushed into the background when tragedy strikes.

We must speak up as atheists in order to take responsibility for whatever it is humans are responsible for—including violence in our streets and schools. We need to demonstrate that atheism is rooted in empathy as well as intellect.

Finally, we need to show up at gravesides, as Ingersoll did, to offer whatever consolation we can.

In his speech at an interfaith prayer vigil in Newtown on Dec. 16, President Obama observed that "the world's religions—so many of them represented here today—start with a simple question: Why are we here? What gives our life meaning?" He could easily have amended that to "the world's religions and secular philosophies." He could have said something like, "Whether you are religious or nonreligious, may you find solace in the knowledge that the suffering is ours, but that those we love suffer no more."

Somewhere in that audience, and in the larger national audience, there were mourners who would have been comforted by the acknowledgement that their lives have meaning even if they do not regard death as the door to another life, but "only perfect rest."

Susan Jacoby is the author of the (recently released) book "The Great Agnostic: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought."

COMMENTARY:

Along with Thomas Paine, Ingersoll was one of the "patron saints" of freedom of, and freedom from, religion in America.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in knowing more about the Freethought movement in America and the life of this great champion.

I recently downloaded Jacoby's book (192 pgs.) on to my NOOK Tablet.

Don Ruhs

! PREVIEW OF COMING EVENTS !

March 13

Professor William Roche of the Philosophy Department
of TCU will speak to us on the topic of

“Evidentialism”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/evidentialism>

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/evidenti/>

Support the philosophies of Humanism, Freethought, and Atheism:

Become a member of HoFW.

See page 13 for membership categories and dues.

Editorial . . . **Know Your Bible? 6***Don Ruhs*

All Bible quotes are taken from the King James Version (KJV).

From: Various sources, including the Holy Bible.

From Jared Diamond:

“The World Until Yesterday-What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies?”

Published by Viking, 2012.

The Bible’s Old Testament is full of exhortations to be cruel to heathens. *Deuteronomy 20:10-18*, for example, explains the obligation of the Israelites to practice genocide: when your army approaches a distant city, you should enslave all its inhabitants if it surrenders, and kill all its men and enslave its women and children and steal their cattle and everything else if it doesn’t surrender. But if it’s a city of the Canaanites or Hittites or any of those other abominable believers in false gods, then the true God commands you to kill everything that breathes in the city. The book of Joshua describes approvingly how Joshua became a hero by carrying out those instructions, slaughtering all the inhabitants of over 400 cities. The book of rabbinical commentaries known as the Talmud analyzes the potential ambiguities arising from conflicts between those two principles of “Thou shalt not kill [believers in thine own God]” and “Thou must kill [believers in another god].” For instance, according to some Talmudic commentators, an Israelite is guilty of murder if he intentionally kills a fellow Israelite; is innocent if he intentionally kills a non-Israelite; and is also innocent if he intentionally kills an Israelite while throwing a stone into a group consisting of nine Israelites plus one heathen (because he might have been aiming at the one heathen).

Commentary:

What a wonderful guide for living and for teaching our young people: Besiege the city, kill the men, make servants/slaves of the women and children, and gather the spoils unto yourselves!!

But let’s move on to another example of the wonderful(?) guidance from the “loving God” of the O.T.

After the death of Moses, God transfers the leadership of the Israelite tribes over to Moses’ Minister Joshua, the son of Nun.

It’s hard to imagine the magnitude of the atrocities carried out by the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua.

“Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived.”

ISAAC ASIMOV (1920-1992),
Scientist and writer

“The Good Book—one of the most remarkable euphemisms ever coined.”

— ASHLEY MONTAGU
(1905-1999), British
anthropologist, Harvard and
Princeton science professor

Humanists of Fort Worth

Minutes

January 9, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by the Chair, Sam Baker.

The speaker for the evening was Zachary Moore, Coordinator of the Dallas/Fort Worth Coalition of Reason (DFW-COR). His topic: “The Rise of the Texas Atheist” received great attention by all present.

After a break for refreshments and snacks, Dr. Moore continued his presentation which included a session of questions and comments from the audience.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

There were seventeen members present plus visitors.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fisher

John Fisher, Secretary

Humanists of Ft. Worth (HoFW)

Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 9-Jan-2013

Beginning Balance 12-Dec-2012 **\$1,164.06**

CREDITS		Date	Amount
Holiday Party Fees		12/12/2012	125.00
Donation	For Snacks		3.00

TOTAL CREDITS \$128.00

DEBITS	Activity	Ck. #	Date	Amount
Sam Baker	Party Wine	493	12/13/2012	45.39
Dolores Ruhs	Party Supplies	494	12/13/2012	137.21
Dolores Ruhs	Coffee & Cups	OOP	12/13/2012	35.92
Sam Baker	Discretionary Fund		12/13/2012	25.00

TOTAL DEBITS \$243.52

-\$115.52

Ending Balance 9-Jan-13 **\$1,048.54**

Attest:

Signature *Dolores M. Ruhs* Date: 9-Jan-2013
 Dolores M. Ruhs Treasurer
 Don Ruhs Clerk

Copies:

Sam Baker Chair
 Gene Gwin Co-Chair
 John Fisher Rec. Secy.
 Dolores Ruhs Treasurer
 Don Ruhs Board Member
 Dick Trice Board Member

c:\My Documents\HoFW Treasurer's Reports 9-Jan-13
 MSXL



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* January 2013, page 22

School Voucher Scheme Struck Down in Louisiana!

A Louisiana court has struck down Gov. Bobby Jindal's school voucher plan, saying it violates a provision of the state constitution governing education funding.

A state teacher's group asserted that the voucher scheme, which allows religious and other private schools to receive taxpayer dollars, violates a portion of the state constitution that says tax monies drawn from the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) must be used for "all public elementary and secondary schools, as well as to equitably allocate the funds to parish and city school systems." The court agreed.

"The MFP was set up for students attending public elementary and secondary schools and was never meant to be diverted to private educational providers," wrote 19th Judicial District Judge Tim Kelley in a Nov. 30 decision.

Kelley's ruling in the *Louisiana Federation of Teachers v. State of Louisiana* case was the second blow to Jindal's ploy in a short period of time. Earlier that same week, a federal court in New Orleans said the voucher program could conflict with court-ordered efforts to desegregate some public schools.

While U.S. District Judge Ivan Lemelle's ruling applied to one parish (as counties are called in Louisiana), at least 30 other school districts are also under orders to desegregate. Reuters reported that voucher opponents are likely to file similar cases in those communities.

Americans United Senior Policy Analyst Rob Boston called Jindal's program a disgrace.

"[Religious schools] are getting checks from the government with very little oversight for what is being taught," he told *The Guardian*. "It is an embarrassment."

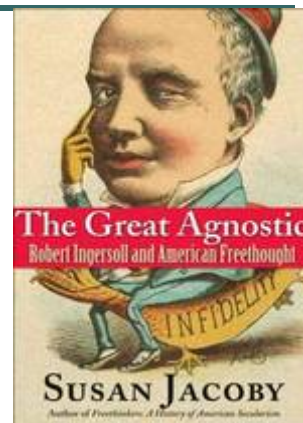
Jindal has vowed to appeal the court decisions.

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

THE GREAT AGNOSTIC: Robert Ingersoll and American Freethought

By Susan Jacoby, Pub. 2013
Yale University Press.

Many of you (including those, like Richard Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens, born and educated in England) have devoted a good deal of your



proselytizing energy to the United States because this is the only developed country whose inhabitants still cling, in significant numbers, to the idea that their nation and their way of life was ordained by God. What these particular Americans mean by God is not some vague, over-arching providence but a particular god who shed his divinity to walk the earth some two thousand years ago and died on a cross to redeem us (including you heretics) from the original sin committed in the Garden of Eden. And so, you rightly emphasize one of the paradoxes of American history—the founding of the world's first secular government at a time when the American people were even more overwhelmingly Christian, specifically Protestant, that they are today. In the pantheon of American freethinkers, you rarely fail to mention, at some point, the role played in the establishment of our secular government by the many Enlightenment rationalists among the founders. You always single out Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison not only as the founders of the new nation but also as the progenitors of an American tradition that enshrines no religion—unless intellectual liberty is considered religion. Again I ask: Where is Ingersoll in your accounts of subsequent chapters in the story of American secularism?

The preceding comment was excerpted from an NPR interview with Susan Jacoby on Jan. 4, 2013

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, Dolores Ruhs, or a member of the Board for an application.

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

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer-HoFW
1036 Hill Top Pass
Benbrook, TX 76126-3848

Reminder

**HoFW Membership Renewal
For fiscal year 2013-2014
Is due the first of March**

Dolores Ruhs, Treasurer

See membership categories listed above

Reminder

In Memoriam

We are sad to report that Jim Fogleman, a longtime UU member of First Jefferson UU Church, and member of HoFW, passed away in January after a long illness.

A *Celebration of Life* service will be held Saturday, February 23 at 2:00 pm at the First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, Arlington, Texas. Jim was a caring and gracious friend who will be missed by all who knew him.

Cards of condolence can be sent to his wife:

Beverly Fogleman
4411 Rising Sun Court
Arlington, TX 76017

Officers and Board Members:

Chair: Sam Baker

Phone: 817-994-8868

Email: sambaker@hotmail.com

Vice-Chair/Past Chair: Gene Gwin

Phone: 817-723-3444

Email: tgwin@att.net

Secretary: John Fisher

Phone: 682-556-9894

Email: jmfthird@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Dolores Ruhs

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