

HUMANISTS OF FORT WORTH

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RUSSELL ELLEVEN PRESENTS SMART RECOVERY PROGRAM AT JUNE 15 MEETING

JULY 18 MEETING AT TRINITY PARK PAVILLION

MARK GREENE TO SPEAK AT AUGUST MEETING

HOFW MEETING VOTES FAVORABLY ON PARTICIPATION IN SMART PROGRAM

Our featured speaker at the HOFW June 15 meeting was our own Russell Elleven who explained the Self-Management and Recovery Training program (SMART) to an audience of 17 humanists. SMART is alternative way of treating addictions. There are the better known Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) as well as various privately run for profit organizations that offer treatment for various forms of addictive behavior. What distinguishes SMART is the absence of any religious content in the program and of any charge to participants. Persons participating in the program are encouraged to turn to their personal resources and to utilize family and friends in combating addiction rather than to look to divine or spiritual aid.

SMART strives to infuse a rational approach to dealing with addictive behavior. It stresses the

development of motivations for abstaining from addictions. Russell said that most people have misconceptions about urges: to wit, they are excruciating or unbearable, that they compel one to use an addictive substance or to engage in an addictive behavior, that they won't go away until satisfied, that they will drive one crazy otherwise. Coping with such urges becomes easier once the individual realizes that by exercising self-control in the short-term such urges tend to abate. They can be resisted and through resistance the individual develops a confidence that will enable him or her to overcome recurrent urges. Emphasis is on disciplining one's thoughts, feeling and behavior to serve one owns best interests rather than yielding to a temptation that will at best bring only temporary satisfaction.

Those suffering some form of addiction will almost invariably have experienced pleasant sensations from past substance abuse, hence, urges to return to that form of behavior are only normal and are not to be regarded as catastrophic relapses. The victim has to be encouraged not to dwell on the negative, not to talk oneself into a psychological state that weakens one's ability to resist, but to focus on positive goals. Inevitably some will occasionally stray from the straight and narrow, however, this does not imply a starting over. The SMART program is more like a wavy, gradually ascending line than a straight line; rough patches are to be expected. The individual builds on past accomplishments and continues toward the objective of a balanced life.

Russell sees in SMART an excellent opportunity for HOFW to

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Court Says No To Bush Detainee Doctrine

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expand its role of providing service to the community. He noted that as a seminarian at Vanderbilt's School of Theology, though his academic work was very edifying, he often yearned for a chance to actually do something. Similarly, he believes he has found in SMART the possibility for the kind of activist role he had envisioned for HOFW at its founding.

Members present at the meeting responded favorably to Russell's presentation by voting to recommend HOFW participation to the Board. If approved by the Board at its August meeting, the program will then be discussed with the Board of the West Side Church to see if HOFW and the Church can collaborate on a joint effort. Russell, who is both a Humanist Minister and a licensed counselor, would then train volunteers in counseling that would presumably be given on a weekly basis. We would attempt to make our program known to a larger public through the media and especially to Tarrant County judges who would then have the option of assigning to SMART addicted individuals under judicial custody not wanting to participate in an AA or faith based. Russell said that there is a \$10 a month administrative charge by SMART that perhaps could be shared between HOFW and West Side.

Mark Greene to Speak in August

Our August guest, Mark Greene, is a Texas native, born in Amarillo and raised in Fort Worth. After 10 years of parochial schooling he transferred to and graduated from public high school and college. A 1989 UTA graduate in journalism & public relations, he has served in the military and worked in public relations, political campaigns, marketing and financial services. He has spent the bulk of his working

career in construction, and is currently owner of a small construction firm specializing in elite residential remodeling and renovation services.

A 2000 democratic congressional nominee who lost a hard-fought race against Kay Granger, Mark later served one term on the Benbrook City Council before stepping down to free himself up for this year's public battle against George Bush and the Republicans. He is an ardent political activist, a philosopher sans portfolio, and is currently working on a collection of essays for publication. Mark lives in Benbrook with his wife Kelly and two very Democratic children.

MORE ON RELIGION

COMPILED BY JIM CHEATHAM

DETAINEE RULINGS STRIKE BLOW AT BUSH DOCTRINE

The Supreme Court repudiated a central legal doctrine of the Bush administration's war on terror on June 28, saying that U.S. citizens and foreigners being held as enemy combatants must be allowed to challenge their imprisonment in federal courts. In strong language warning of a "system of unchecked detention" that carries the potential to become a means for oppression," the justices said that Yaser Esam Hamdi, a binational U.S.-Saudi citizen captured in Afghanistan, must have a lawyer and chance to assert his innocence before a judge. So, too, must more than 500 foreigners being held at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, the court said. In a case involving another U.S. citizen being held as an enemy combatant, the court ruled that Jose Padilla had

filed his complaint in the wrong jurisdiction (New York rather than South Carolina where he is being held) and that he must refile in the proper court. Taken together, the rulings delivered a significant legal blow to the administration's assertions that in the war on terror, executive power is virtually unlimited, the role of courts is quite limited and detainees have virtually no rights. "We have long since made clear that a state of war is not a blank check for the president when it comes to the rights of the nation's citizens," Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote for the six-member majority. Justice Souter added: "It is instructive to recall Justice Jackson's observation that the president is not commander-in-chief of the country, only of the military."

The administration was dealt a "stinging and watershed defeat" in the rulings, said Steven Shapiro, legal director of the ACLU. Our judicial system does not place unreviewable powers in the hands of the executive. The ACLU filed briefs supported the detainees in all three cases. An attorney involved in the issue, Dr. Neal Katyal of Georgetown University Law School, surmised that the government might move quickly to release many of the detainees to reduce the pool of people who could file petitions in federal courts. He said that he expected the government would try to persuade federal courts not to entertain any habeas court petitions to review the detainees' status until they had gone through the military review process. (Knight Ridder, NYT)

HIGH COURT UPHOLDS MIRANDA RIGHTS

The Supreme Court on June 27 warned police away from using a strategy intended to extract confessions from criminal suspects

before telling them of their right to remain silent. The court, in a 5-4 vote, said that intentionally questioning a suspect twice—the first time without reading the Miranda warning—is usually improper. “The facts of the case by any objective measure reveal a police strategy adopted to undermine the Miranda warnings,” wrote Justice Souter. Criminal defense attorneys and civil libertarians had complained that police have used the strategy to get around the Supreme Court’s landmark 1966 *Miranda v. Arizona* ruling, which requires that suspects in custody be told that they have the right to remain silent. Such questioning can be successful because suspects may be more willing to talk before they’re told that they have a right to remain silent. And when told of their rights later, they may not realize that their first confession cannot be used against them. (AP)

JUSTICES REJECT INTERNET PORN LAW

The Supreme Court rejected a law on June 29 that would punish Internet porn peddlers who don’t shield their Web sites from children, but it gave the government a second chance to prove that the Child Online Protection Act (COPA) doesn’t violate the First Amendment’s guarantee of Free speech. In a 5-4 ruling, the justices said a lower court was right to block the 1998 law because it might prevent adults from accessing legal pornographic material. The law would jail and heavily fine online smut merchants who don’t require adult access codes, personal identification or credit card information from those who want to access the Web sites. During the arguments before the court, ACLU lawyer Ann Beeson told the justices that the law, as written, would threaten people who produce Web

sites about the television show *Sex and the City* or Bernardo Bertolucci films, such as *Last Tango in Paris*. Beeson said that the court’s ruling “demonstrates that there are many less-restrictive ways to protect children without sacrificing communication intended for adults about sexuality without risking jail time.” The opinion suggested that, when it comes to fixing the problems that technology brings, the justices will be more willing to put their trust in the authors of consumer software than in the authors of legislation; filtering software, unlike laws, can be updated weekly. (Knight Ridder, NYT)

NO RIGHT TO ANONYMITY WITH THE POLICE

The Supreme Court has ruled by a 5-4 vote that Nevada rancher Larry D. Hiibel could be required to identify himself to a law enforcement officer. The court held that the police are entitled to obtain the name of someone they suspect may be involved in a crime, even in the absence of the probable cause necessary to make an arrest. The administration had supported the State of Nevada against the rancher; civil rights groups favored the rancher. (NYT)

FOREIGNERS CAN BRING HUMAN RIGHTS SUITS IN U.S.

The Supreme Court ruled on June 29 that foreigners can sometimes use American courts to sue over alleged international human rights abuses, a decision that could allow courts to hear claims about things like inmate mistreatment in Iraq and forced slavery in impoverished countries. The decision was the Supreme Court’s first on the 1789 Alien Tort Claims Act, a law that has been used by Holocaust survivors

and relatives of people killed or tortured under despotic regimes from South America to the Philippines. The Bush administration and business groups had wanted the court to severely restrict the ability of U.S. courts to enforce international law. (AP)

TARRANT MAN GETS STAY OF EXECUTION

A Tarrant County man condemned for bludgeoning a Haltom City woman to death with a garden tool in 1989 won a stay of execution from the U.S. Supreme Court on June 29 four hours before he was to be strapped down for lethal injection. The lawyer for Mauro Barraza, who was 17 when he carried out the slaying during a drug-induced haze, persuaded the high court to halt execution while the justices continue their deliberations over whether youthful offenders should be subjected to the death penalty. (FWST)

THE RUSH TO WEDLOCK POLITICS

The Senate Republicans’ maneuver to stage a hurried, red-meat floor debate for President Bush’s proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, is nothing more than low-grade political mischief. The majority leader, Senator Bill Frist, has opted to trash Senate procedure and bypass proper consideration in the Judicial Committee to revive the Bush amendment, deservedly moribund for months. It is expected to come up a week before the Democratic presidential convention, perfect timing, as Bush partisans read their calendar, for pandering anew to their right-wing base. (NYT editorial)

GAY MARRIAGE CHALLENGE BLOCKED

A Boston federal appeals court on June 29 rejected any attempt by conservative groups and state lawmakers to stop gay marriage in Massachusetts. The Florida-based Liberty Counsel, which filed the lawsuit, said it would appeal to the Supreme Court. The appeals court said the appropriate way to contest the state court ruling that allows gay marriages is by amending the Massachusetts Constitution—a long process already underway. (AP)

CHURCH AND STATE

COMPILED BY JIM CHEATHAM

HIGH COURT SIDESTEPS “UNDER GOD” PLEDGE ISSUE

On June 14 the Supreme Court turned down Michael Newdow's challenge of the constitutionality of the “under God” portion of the pledge of allegiance. The Court ruled that Newdow lacked standing by virtue of the fact that his daughter, on whose behalf he was suing, was not in his custody but in her mother's. The mother had previously indicated that she had no objections to her daughter reciting the pledge as it is. Justice John Paul Stevens wrote that to allow consideration of Newdow's suit would threaten family law in California. Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Thomas and O'Connor wrote separate opinion addressing the merits of the suit and finding the pledge constitutional. In an op-ed piece in the NYT, Newdow rejected these arguments and complained that both state and federal authorities had neglected their obligations to uphold the rights of the citizenry: “In this case, Congress broke the rule that says

government may not take a position on religious belief. Then the state court system broke the rule that says that fit parents have a fixed constitutional right to love and protect their children (as might be appreciated by the fact that no reasonable justification for my loss of legal custody has ever been presented). And now—in the highest court of the land—the federal courts have broken the rule that says they will adjudicate any claim of injury that is properly brought before them.”

Challenges from atheist parents having custody of their children are expected to come forward but are unlikely to be considered by the high court before 2005. (var.)

BAPTISTS REJECT PUBLIC-SCHOOL PULLOUT

The Southern Baptist Convention rejected a proposal on June 23 that would have urged parents to pull their children out of public schools, while approving a call for a federal amendment to ban gay marriage. Retired Air Force Gen. T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria, VA, and Texas lawyer Bruce Shortt of Spring, had proposed a tough pullout statement that criticized the “officially godless” public schools. Instead, the resolutions committee wrote a blander, broader warning against America's drift toward secularism. Earlier, Southwest Seminary President Paige Patterson had told NPR that, while he lamented the absence of godly values in the public schools, most Baptist parents couldn't afford private schooling. (AP, NPR)

BUSH CAMPAIGN COURTS CONSERVATIVE CHURCHGOERS; BAPTISTS DEMUR

The Bush-Cheney re-election campaign has sent a detailed plan to religious volunteers nation-wide

asking them to give the campaign church directories, distribute issue guides in their churches and persuade their pastors to hold voter registrations drives. The instruction sheet circulated by the campaign to religious volunteers lists 22 “duties” to be performed by specific dates. By July 31, for example, volunteers should provide their church directories to the campaign and talk to their pastors about holding a voter registration drive. By August 15, they are to recruit at least five more volunteers in their church. The IRS sent a strongly worded letter June 10 to both parties' national committees, reminding them that tax-exempt charitable groups “are prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.” Meanwhile, the Southern Baptist Convention says it is offended by the Bush-Cheney campaign's effort to use church rosters for campaign purposes. “I'm appalled that the Bush-Cheney campaign would intrude on a local congregation in this way,” said Richard Land, president of the Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Land said this might “rub a lot of pastors' fur the wrong way.” Other religious organizations also criticized the document as inappropriate, suggesting that it could jeopardize churches' tax-exempt status. (WP, AP)

LAWSUIT AGAINST FW PASTOR ALLOWED

The 2nd Court of Appeals in Fort Worth has ruled that the pastor of the Crossland Community Bible Church of Fort Worth can be sued by a church member because he used private information he received from her in his capacity as a secular counselor. The woman in question, Peggy Penley, and her husband had received marriage counseling from her pastor, the

Rev. C.L Westbrook.

Subsequently, after counseling failed to bring about reconciliation, Westbrook distributed a letter to church members saying Penley had been involved with another man and had declined to “listen” in a way that would lead to “repentance.” The Court of Appeals ruled that Penley can sue Westbrook alleging negligence because of his actions. (FWST)

DUTY TRUMPS FAITH

New York police officer Eduardo Delacruz claims he obeyed a higher authority when he refused to arrest a homeless man in November 2002. Delacruz describes himself as a religious man with an unblemished record whose attempts to temper his job with compassion collided with the police department’s zero-tolerance policy on homeless people. To the police department, an order is an order, and officers are not given leeway to choose which ones they follow. Delacruz was suspended from the NYPD in 2002 and now faces trial. (NYT)

NEWS BRIEFS

TOP OF THE NEWS

COMPILED BY JIM CHEATHAM

[Rumsfeld] claimed that the Geneva Convention did not apply to the prison at Guantanamo. We began writing our own rules for the treatment of terrorist suspects and prisoners of war—rules that included the now-infamous elements of ‘stress and duress.’ ...[I]n the appalling abuses at Abu Ghraib prison and the international outrage it has caused, we are reaping what we have so carelessly sown. In this and so many other ways, our unilateralism and the arrogance that accompanies it have cost us dearly.

--Walter Cronkite, *Seattle Post-Intelligence*

WHAT ON EARTH WERE THEY THINKING?

[The infamous Department of Justice memo dated August 2002 argued that the UN Convention against Torture gave wide latitude to the administration to use force on enemy combatants.] ...the memo goes further than most ordinary opinion would in defining torture as “equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function or even death.” On the face of it, that means sliding needles under fingernails or holding someone’s head under water to the point of drowning would not count as torture under the law. Constitutionally, its second argument is no less striking. This is that the president can do whatever he wants in war, or, as the memo puts it, “enjoys complete discretion in the exercise of his commander-in-chief authority.” Interrogations, the memo says, are a “core function of the commander-in-chief.” ...This comes near saying that the president is above the law when acting as commander-in-chief in wartime. No other president has made such a claim. ...In addition, the memo claims the particular law in question [implementing the Convention] cannot apply because it offends against presidential power. This law governs activities of Americans abroad, so it applies almost entirely to soldiers and spies—people under the president’s command. In other words, the memo argues that the law cannot really apply at all. Yet there is a long tradition in the United States against interpreting laws in such a way as to render them meaningless. The memo’s third argument is that in rare cases when acts are so egregious that they amount to torture, and do not challenge presidential power, torturers are still

able to claim immunity. They could only be prosecuted if it were shown their main intent was to inflict pain. If they intended to extract information (presumably the point for all but sadists), that would be a defence under American law according to the memo. ...it even ignores the president’s own statement of June 2003: “the United States is committed to the worldwide elimination of torture and we are leading this fight by example.” ...Even if policy did not change [so as to implement the views offered in this memo], the memo undermines the administration’s “rotten apples” defence in Abu Ghraib. Lastly, Mr Bush’s reaction was not reassuring. Asked about the memo, he said, “the instructions went out to our people to adhere to law. That ought to comfort you.” Now the instructions can be read, it is hard to be comforted. The unease they cause is likely to dog Mr Bush for some time. (The Economist)

IMPERIAL AMERICA

An American president invades a distant land to share the blessings of democracy. Instead, U.S. troops encounter a bloody insurrection. Sound familiar? Don’t think Iraq today—think the Philippines a century ago. It took 14 years, 4000 American casualties and 200,000 Philippine dead to subdue the rebellion and almost a half century to proffer self-rule, or rather rule by a rich elite. And still the Philippines is arguably the politically least stable country in southeast Asia today. Yet, George W. Bush had the chutzpah to tell the Philippine congress in October 2003 that the U.S. will succeed in bringing democracy to Iraq as it did to the Philippines. Read more at www.foreignpolicy.com.

U.S. DROPS PLAN TO EXEMPT TROOPS FROM ICC

The U.S. bowed to broad opposition in the Security Council on June 23 and announced it was dropping its efforts to gain immunity for its troops from prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Resolutions granting a year's exemption had passed the Council in each of the past two years, but this year the renewal ran into difficulties because of the prison scandal in Iraq and strong opposition from Secretary General Kofi Annan. The outcome, while a political defeat for Washington, will have no effect on the vulnerability to prosecutions of American soldiers in Iraq. Neither the U.S. nor Iraq is a member of the tribunal, and its jurisdiction is limited to countries that do not themselves prosecute crimes by their military. (NYT)

DEVELOPING WORLD'S AIDS VICTIMS GETTING LITTLE HELP

Despite much-hyped initiatives to expand AIDS treatment—announced by the U.S., Europe, and the United Nations—just seven percent of AIDS patients in the developing world are getting the drugs they need. (WSJ)

TEXAS DEMOCRATS ENDORSE DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM

The Texas Democratic Party on June 19 adopted a platform that calls for a moratorium on executions and a ban on executions of juvenile offenders, among other death penalty reforms. (Texas Moratorium Network)

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BALKS ON RELEASING DATA

The Bush administration is offering a novel reason for denying a request for the Justice Department's (DOJ) database on foreign lobbyists: Copying the information would bring down the computer system. "This was new one on us. We weren't aware there were databases that could be destroyed just by copying them," Bob Williams of the Center for Public Integrity said June 29. The watchdog group in Washington made the request in January. He said the group expects to appeal the Justice Department's decision. The government said that an overhaul of the system should be finished by (nota bene) December and that copies should be available then. (AP)

REAGANS AND KERRY BACK STEM CELL RESEARCH

Friends and associates of Nancy Reagan say they expect her to return to her role of promoting a cure for Alzheimer's disease. That includes pushing the issue of using embryos for stem cell research, which scientists believe could lead to cures for such illnesses as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes. She wrote to Bush in April 2001 with an emotional plea for his help "in supporting what appears to be the most promising path to a cure." Months later, Bush committed some federal money toward the research but limited it to stem cell lines created before August 2001 (about 10 viable ones, not the 60 he claimed at the time.). Her son, Ron Reagan, you may have noticed, has of late been very critical of administration foot-dragging in approving more federal support for this type of research.

On June 12, John Kerry endorsed Nancy Reagan's efforts to help find

a cure for Alzheimer's disease and challenged the Bush administration to relax restrictions on stem cell research to pursue cures for that and other illnesses. Ethical questions raised by the use of human embryos can be resolved through "good will and good sense," Kerry said in the Democrats' weekly radio address. Researchers can find the cures that are there, "if only they are allowed to look." (AP)

HoFW NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

July Meeting

We will meet at the Pavilion in Trinity Park on July 18 at 1:00 p.m. for our annual summer solstice (a bit delayed, you may have noticed) picnic. Bring you own plus a dessert to be shared with all alike. You don't have to be a member to participate in fun and lively conversation.

August Meeting

Mark Greene, former Democratic nominee for Congress from Tarrant County, will be our speaker at the August 17 meeting. Read more about him and his subject in the August Newsletter.

Membership Dues

A reminder that membership dues were to be paid in March. If you are still delinquent and wish to retain your membership, please see Dolores at the picnic

BOOK CORNER

BY DON RUHS



The Trouble With Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith

by Irshad Manji
(2003), St. Martin's Press,

229 pgs.

I have to be honest with you. Islam is on very thin ice with me.... Through our screaming self-pity and our conspicuous silences, we Muslims are conspiring against ourselves. We're in crisis and we're dragging the rest of the world with us. If ever there was a moral moment for an Islamic reformation, it's now. For the love of God, what are we doing about it?

Irshad Manji (From the book cover)

This small book is a scathing indictment of Islam of today. The blatant mistreatment of women is one thing to consider but the extreme prejudice against those in Islam who are not 'Arabic Muslims' is something else again. We only thought Christian fundamentalism was intolerant; Manji shows us that Islam is much worse by what she calls "fundamentalism," a term she relates to an attempt by the most ardent of believers to return the faith to the days of its founders.

When she was four years old her family immigrated to the West when her parents fled to Richmond, a middle-class suburb of Vancouver, British Columbia in 1972. Between 1971 and 1973, thousands of South Asian Muslims fled Uganda after the military dictator, General Idi Amin Dada had proclaimed Africa to be for the blacks. "He gave those of us with brown skins mere weeks to leave or we would die," she writes in her first chapter. "My father and his brother ran a Mercedes-Benz dealership near Kampala, benefiting

from the class mobility that the British bequeathed to us but that we, in turn, never granted to the native blacks whom we employed."

She witnessed her family treating the blacks as slaves, her father beating them when he felt they were out of line. If she, her mother, or her two sisters aided the servants, they too would be beaten. It was, apparently, common practice in many more Muslim households than hers.

As a student at J.N. Burnett Junior High School in Richmond,

Vancouver, she ran for, and was elected, student body president, something that never would have happened in an ultra-Islamic community. She studied at the University of British Columbia and became the first humanities student to win the Governor General's Gold Medal for top graduate. She now promotes innovative thinking from Toronto, where she leads gay and lesbian parades, Islamic reform initiatives, Jewish discussions and character education for young people.

Irshad is a journalist, TV personality, and writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto. She is an "outed" lesbian, which, along with her vocalized disenchantment with Islam, has caused quite a bit of hatred towards her within the Muslim community. She has appeared on "NOW with Bill Moyers" and on C-Span's book review.

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Call to Humanists

Is there something we forgot to mention in the newsletter? Do you have a comment or suggestion? E-mail [Michael Rivera](mailto:Michael.Rivera) with:

- Newsletter story ideas.
- Photos for the newsletter.
- Events to include on the newsletter or Internet Group.
- Subscribe/Unsubscribe requests.