

HUMANISTS

Volume 14, Number 7

Happy



Humanist

of FORT WORTH

July, 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).

IN THIS ISSUE

Page:

1. July meeting notice; HoFW meeting schedule and location; !Thanks!; Quotes;
2. **The Meaning of Humanism;**
3. Officers, Board Members, Membership Categories;
4. Presentation for July & August meetings;
- 5., 6. From the Chair;
- 7.,8., 9. School Prayer Fifty Years Later
10. Editorial - **Know Your Bible? 11;**
11. Minutes of June meeting;
12. Treasurer's Report;
13. **Church & STATE;** Book Nook;

There *never* was a time when there was nothing; If that were so, there would be *nothing* now.

Anon

Meeting

July 10, 2013 7:00 PM

SPEAKER: Dick Trice

TOPIC: Open discussion

More on page 4.

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.

! 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 Meaning of Humanism

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

Humanism as a philosophy has ever competed with other philosophic viewpoints for the allegiance of men. But however far-reaching its disagreements with rival philosophies of the past and present, Humanism at least agrees with them on the importance of philosophy as such. That importance stems from the perennial need of human beings to find significance in their lives, to integrate their personalities around some clear, consistent and compelling view of existence, and to seek definite and reliable methods in the solution of their problems. Philosophy brings clarity and meaning into the careers of individuals, nations, and civilizations.

2. HUMANISM DEFINED

First: Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics or attitude toward the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth; and that regards Nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of matter and energy which exists independently of any mind or consciousness.

Second: Humanism, drawing especially upon the laws and facts of science, believes that we human beings are an evolutionary product of the Nature of which we are a part; that the mind is indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of the brain; and that as an inseparable unity of body and personality we can have no conscious survival after death.

Third: Humanism, having its ultimate faith in humankind, believes that human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision.

Fourth: Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the shapers of their own destiny.

Fifth: Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress— economic, cultural, and ethical— of all mankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion.

Sixth: Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community.

Seventh: Humanism believes in the widest possible development of art and the awareness of beauty, including the appreciation of Nature's loveliness and splendor, so that the aesthetic experience may become a pervasive reality in the life of all people.

Eighth: Humanism believes in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment throughout the world of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living on the foundations of a flourishing economic order, both national and international.

Ninth: Humanism believes in the complete social implementation of reason and scientific method; and thereby in democratic procedures and parliamentary government, with full freedom of expression and civil liberties, throughout all areas of economic, political and cultural life.

Tenth: Humanism, in accordance with scientific method, believes in the unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions including its own. Humanism is not a new dogma, but is a developing philosophy ever open to experimental testing, newly discovered facts, and more rigorous reasoning.

The preceding was taken from *The Philosophy of Humanism*, by Corliss Lamont, Eighth Edition, Revised.

July 2013

Officers and Board Members

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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

NOTE:

If you do not have access to the internet, the Newsletter may be mailed to you for an additional annual fee of \$12.00.

PRESENTATION FOR JULY MEETING

Our program for this evening will include introductory statements for three separate open discussions on these topics:

- (1) MORALITY and WHISTLE BLOWING
(Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden);
- (2) CORPORATOCRACY--the New Capitalism;
- (3) THE FUTURE OF HUMANISM.

We promise not to run out of coffee and cookies and all Free Thinkers, doubters, and enthusiasts of good arguments are more than welcome.

Presented By:

Dick Trice

Board Member

Past Chair of HoFW

PRESENTATION FOR AUGUST MEETING

At our August Meeting, our speaker will discuss the religion of Islam.

From the . . .



. . . Sam Baker

Next Time You Have a Life Threatening Injury, Make Sure You Have It Close to a Hospital Covered by Your Insurance

Suzanne Haley was gravely injured in the Moore, Oklahoma tornado. She was trying to protect the children, who took cover under their desks when the tornado demolished their school. At first, Haley, a Special Education aide at Briarwood Elementary School and a 35-year-old single mother of two, thought her leg was simply stuck under something heavy until her daughter, who attends Briarwood and was in her classroom, let out a loud scream. The metal leg of a desk impaled her right calf. She managed to unscrew the desk leg from the desktop, all while calming her students and daughter.

A handful of first responders came to the rescue, freeing her and her students from the rubble and administering an IV to her. She was going into shock, she recalled. She was put in the bed of a truck with her leg stabilized by cinder blocks. Her rescuers initially took her to Moore Medical Center, only to find it leveled. They then drove five miles south to Norman Regional HealthPlex.

Once at the hospital, the teacher's aide underwent anesthesia before a surgeon used a saw to cut through the desk leg. Recovery should take about three months according to the surgeon.

Haley was worried that her insurance wouldn't cover her medical bills because she was taken to a hospital not on her plan. The closest "covered" hospital would have been at least 20 plus miles away. However, after sharing her story live with Piers Morgan on CNN, Haley was contacted by her insurance company and was told the company would cover her bills at this "not covered" hospital.

In other words, after Piers Morgan put her on TV, the insurance company is now too embarrassed to deny coverage for her health care expenses.

What happens to people in the same situation who don't get on TV? The insurance companies deny coverage, that's what. A woman in the Fort Worth area, who along with her husband owns a small window tinting business, told me her husband had a massive heart attack and was rushed to the nearest hospital. When she found out that this hospital was not covered by her insurance, she asked the doctors if he could be transferred to a covered hospital miles away. They told her he couldn't be moved.

Her insurance company refused to cover the costs at the hospital, and the

<<< Continued from page 5

couple is now saddled with trying to pay \$50,000 of bills they wouldn't have had to pay in an "in network" hospital. She pays them what she can afford to pay, \$50 a month, and she lives in fear that the hospital will sue them and force them into bankruptcy and take away their small business.

Nothing I have heard indicates that any of this will change under Obamacare. The insurance companies will still have lists of hospitals and doctors they cover and those they don't. Even if you can get to a covered hospital, you may learn after you regain consciousness that the doctors who treated you weren't covered by your policy.

Insurance companies pocket twenty cents of every dollar Americans pay for health insurance. Why do we continue to put up with all these coverage exclusions and the other tricks, traps, and gotchas they bury in the fine print? No one in the rest of the industrialized world does.

Sam

And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise.

As said by Jesus.

Luke 6:15 (KJV)

The following is a 'Letter to the Editor' of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as published in January.

I asked a friend, who is against Obamacare, "What happens to the man or woman who loses his or her job and health insurance, has a previous medical condition and can't find or buy a health insurance policy?"

Her answer was, "I don't care."

I think this says it all.

Herman I. Morris
Fort Worth

Submitted by Sam

All natural institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

His work, "Common Sense" inspired the American Revolution.

SCHOOL PRAYER 50 YEARS LATER: WHAT DO AMERICANS BELIEVE?

Huffpost Religion June 19, 2013

Though school-sponsored prayer in public schools was ruled unconstitutional more than 50 years ago and the Supreme Court decided more than 20 years ago that public schools cannot sponsor prayer at graduation ceremonies, the topic continues to be one of the country's most controversial.

The prayer debate echoed again across TV screens and newspaper headlines this month when Roy Costner IV, a valedictorian at Liberty High School in Liberty, S.C., surprised his graduation audience when he ripped apart his pre-approved speech on stage and instead said the Lord's Prayer. Costner IV later told reporters he was making a statement about how "taking prayer out of schools is the worst thing we could do."

Turns out that many Americans may agree with him. According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted last year, 65 percent of Americans said "liberals have gone too far" in attempting to keep religion out of schools and government. A smaller number of Americans, around 48 percent of those surveyed, told Pew that conservative Christians have gone too far in trying to "impose religious values on the country."

According to data Pew plucked from last year's General Social Survey, a majority of Americans disagree with highest court's position on prayer in public schools. On the court's ruling that the government can't require the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses to be read in public schools, 57 percent said they disapproved of the decision, compared to 39 percent who approved. More than seven-in-ten Southerners, such as those in Costner's state, said they that they disapprove of the court rulings.

At the same time, people ages 18 to 29 are more likely than any other age group to say they approve

of the ban on prayer in public schools. More than 56 percent agree with the court's rulings.

Pew also reports that Americans are well-versed in court decisions on school prayer. In its 2010 Religious Knowledge Survey, which famously found atheists and agnostics to be the most religiously knowledgeable of all religious groups, the question people were most likely to answer correctly was about whether the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of prayer in public schools. Nearly nine-in-ten people said that prayer was not allowed by the court's ruling. **Note: See [Pew Report page 8](#)**

That survey also showed that people think restrictions on religion in public schools are tighter than they really are. For example, teachers are allowed to lead classes on comparative religion, but only 36 percent of people knew that. Teachers are also allowed to read from the Bible -- as a literary text -- but only 23 percent of respondents said that was allowed.

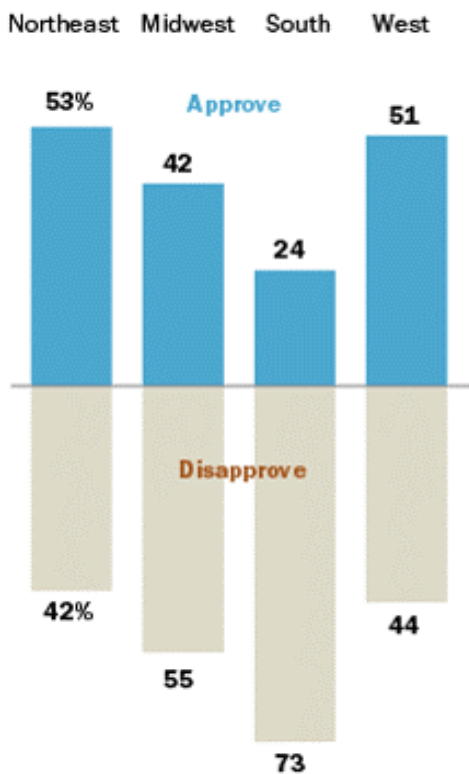
In an in-depth article this week, the Christian Science Monitor argued that despite official bans on school-sponsored prayer and perceptions of laws against prayer, "God and faith are probably present in more ways now than ever in public schools." The immense growth since the mid-1960s of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, for example, which has "established itself on more than 8,000 junior and high school campuses, many of them public." It also pointed to the growth of Campus Crusade for Christ, which started as a college organization but now has more than 200 high school clubs, most of which are at public schools. The paper added that Good News Clubs' "Sunday school-like" classes are in about 3,200 public elementary schools.

Continued on page 9 >>>

Pew Report
2012

Views of Supreme Court's School Prayer Ban, by U.S. Region

Percent who approve/disapprove among those living in the ...

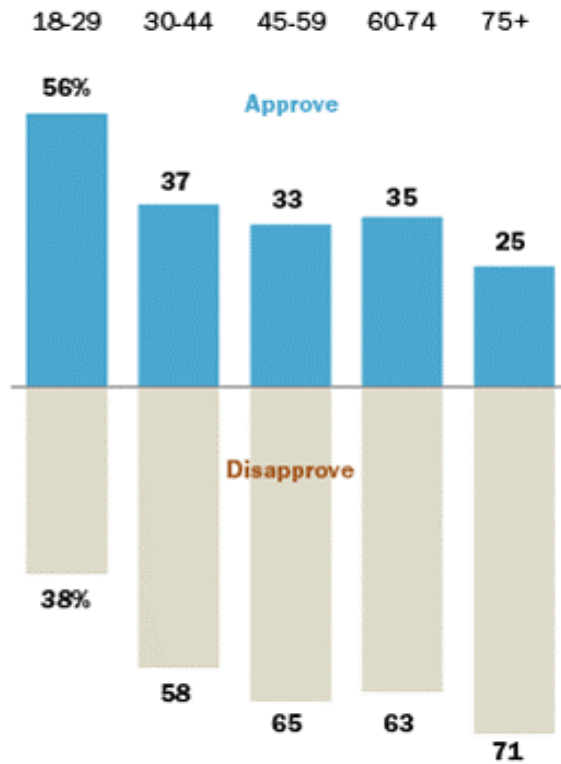


Source: General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, 2012. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Views of Supreme Court's School Prayer Ban, by Age Group

Percent who approve/disapprove among ages ...



Source: General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, 2012. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

>>> Continued from page 7

The Atlantic came to a similar conclusion in its recent report:

It took a while, but by the late 1980s, educators started to reach consensus about how to teach religion. Guides were published about how to treat religious holidays in the schools, how to teach students about religious traditions, and how to create equal access for organizations, including religious clubs on campus. In 1995, roughly three dozen groups representing numerous faiths as well as a secular humanist organization designed a joint statement on religious liberties, showing support for what could be done legally in the schools, and disputing the claim that schools were "religion-free zones."

"As the nation awaits landmark decisions on voting rights, affirmative action, and marriage equality cases, it's important to remember that sometimes the high court's ruling doesn't close the book on an issue," MSNBC noted in its own piece on religion in schools. "It's only another chapter."

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962)

In an opinion delivered by Justice Hugo Black, the Court ruled that government-written prayers were not to be recited in public schools and were an unconstitutional violation of the Establishment Clause. This was decided in a vote of 6-1, because before the decision could be announced, Justice Felix Frankfurter suffered a cerebral stroke that forced him to retire, and Justice Byron White took no part in the case.

The Court explained the importance of separation between church and state by giving a lengthy history of the issue, beginning with the 16th century in England. It then stated that school's prayer is a religious activity by the very nature of it being a prayer, and that prescribing such a religious activity for school children violates the Establishment Clause. The program, created by government officials to promote a religious belief, was therefore constitutionally impermissible.

The Court rejected the defendant's arguments that people are not asked to respect any specific established religion; and that the prayer is voluntary. The Court held that the mere promotion of a religion is sufficient to establish a violation, even if that promotion is not coercive. The Court further held that the fact that the prayer is vaguely worded enough not to promote any particular religion is not a sufficient defense, as it still promotes a family of religions (those that recognize "Almighty God"), which still violates the Establishment Clause.

"There's never been anything, however absurd, that myriads of people weren't prepared to believe, often so passionately that they'd fight to the death rather than abandon their illusions. To me, that's a good operational definition of insanity." Arthur C. Clarke

(Quoted from THE ATHEIST'S BIBLE edited by Joan Konner © May 2007).

Editorial . . . Know Your Bible? 11

Don Ruhs

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

From: Various sources, including the Holy Bible.

IS THAT IN THE BIBLE?

Just a few quotes concerning animals that may come up in conversation with a Bible thumper.

- 1. Where in the Bible does it mention the taming of a Unicorn?
Ans. Job 39:9-12.
- 2. What sound was made by the turtle’s voice?
Ans. Solomon’s Song 2:12.
- 3. Where are unicorns mentioned?
Ans. Num. 23:22; 24:8; Job 39::9; Deut. 33:17; Ps. 22:21; Isaiah 34:7.
- 4. What is a cockatrice?
Ans. Isaiah 11: 8; 14:20; 59:5, Jeremiah 8:17.
- 5. Are there such animals as dragons?
Ans. Deut. 32:33; Job 30:29; Ps. 44:19; Ps. 74:13; and several other places.
- 6. What happened to children who made fun of a bald man?
Ans. II Kings 2: 23-24.
- 7. What was the size of Noah’s ark to be able to accommodate the various species of animals (approx. 1.4 million) on Earth?
Ans. Gen. 6:15. (A cubit is 18-22 in.)
- 8. Can snakes talk, or hear?
Ans. Gen. 3:1-5, 13-14.

9. Which was created first man or the animals?
Ans. Gen 1: 25-27; Gen 2:18,19

10. After David smote Hadadezer, how many chariots, horsemen, and footmen did he take from him?
Ans. 2 Samuel 8:4; 1 Chron. 18:4.

NOTE: If one will take a little time to browse through these few passages, one would soon learn of the *many fallacies* to be found in the Holy(?) Bible. Plus, they become useful when discussing the holy(?) book with “fundies.”

Don

“If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet, and so forth, I need not trouble myself. I need not think, if I can only pay—others will easily undertake the irksome work for me.”

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The poets were not alone in sanctioning myths, for long before the poets the states and the lawmakers had sanctioned them as a useful expedient. They needed to control the people by superstitious fears, and these cannot be aroused without myths and marvels.

Strabo, *Geographia*, I.2.8, c. 20 BC-AD 23

July 2013

HUMANISTS OF FORT WORTH

Minutes

June 12, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Sam Baker.

This evening Past Chair Dick Trice spoke on the *Philosophy of Humanism*.

Following the presentation we enjoyed time for refreshments and conversation.

The meeting resumed with an open discussion of the evening's topic.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:30 PM.

There were 43 attendees, including five visitors. We gained three new members.

Respectfully submitted,

John Fisher

John Fisher, Secretary

Humanists of Fort Worth

July 2013

Humanists of Ft. Worth (HoFW)

Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 12-June-2013

Beginning Balance 8-May-2013 **\$1,014.55**

CREDITS	Date	Amount
DUES	6/12/2013	\$200.00
Snack Donations	6/12/2013	5.00

TOTAL CREDITS \$205.00

DEBITS	Activity	Ck. #	Date	Amount
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TOTAL DEBITS

TOTAL CREDITS LESS DEBITS

Ending Balance 12-June-2013 **\$1,219.55**

Attest:

Signature: *Dolores M. Ruhs* Date: 13-June-2013

Dolores M. Ruhs Treasurer

Don Ruhs Clerk

Copies:

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

c:\My Documents\HoFW Treasurer's Reports MSXL 13-June-2913



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* June 2013, page 22

AROUND THE WORLD

Turks Worry About Pianist's Blasphemy Conviction!

The Recent conviction of a prominent Turkish pianist on blasphemy charges has secular Turks worried that their government may seek to punish religious dissent.

Fazil Say, 42, has been critical of Turkey's Islam-influenced government, and on April 11 he was convicted of insulting Islamic values for tweeting ironic comments on religion.

Say needled imams and noted the words of 11th-century Persian poet Omar Khayyam, who joked about the afterlife. The poet's writings are widely available in Turkey, but a court decided Say had incited "religious hatred" and gave him a suspended 10-month sentence.

This development has some Turks nervous about the extent to which speech may be limited in their country.

"We feel totally vulnerable in front of the government," noted painter and government critic Bedri Baykam told Eurasianet.org. "The way the laws are being used, you don't have the right to think or you don't have the right to be [an] atheist or you don't have the right to criticize religion."

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 GOD Argument

The Case Against Religion and for Humanism.

by

A.C. Grayling

Published 2013 by Bloomsbury USA.

214 pgs. in eBook form

From: *The GOD Argument*, pg. 16

In the Introduction it was acknowledged that religious belief can serve as a comfort, guide and inspiration when benign, while stating the less comfortable and larger truth that religion is far too often a form of enslavement, mental and even literal, and a source of harm from which the world needs liberation. Whereas there are other sources of individual comfort and inspiration that are far better than religion—they include love and friendship, family life, art, the pursuit of knowledge and, as noted, the outlook and principles of humanism—there are very few sources of conflict and mental enslavement as bad as an ideology which demands self-abnegation by submission to its dogmas and to the self-appointed interpreters of its dogma. Religion is the paradigm of this.

.....
This is undoubtedly one of the better books I've read recently dealing with the *fallacies of religious beliefs* and promises of a humane/humanistic outlook toward realism.
Don