

# HUMANISTS

# of FORT WORTH

Volume 13, Number 9 Happy

Humanist

October, 2012

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. September meeting notice; HoFW meeting schedule and location; Meeting topic; Thanks!; Quotes;
2. **AFFIRMATIONS OF HUMANISM.**
3. Message from the Chair-Sam Baker;
4. Presentation for Oct. meeting– Sam;
5. **Editorial - Know Your Bible? 2-** Don Ruhs;
6. Invitation to visit HoFW Meetup site;
7. Minutes of Sept. meeting-John Fisher;
8. Treasurer's Report-Dolores Ruhs;
9. **Church & STATE** ; Book Nook
10. Membership categories; Officers.

**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

**October 10, 2012 7:00 PM**

**Speaker: John Harvey,  
TCU Economics Professor**

**Topic: The Debt and the Deficit**

**See page four for more.**

## **! Thanks !**

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

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

## **! Thanks !**

War does not determine who is right; war determines who is left!

Anon



## THE AFFIRMATIONS OF HUMANISM: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES \*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**WE BELIEVE** in the cultivation of moral excellence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* by PAUL KURTZ

From the . . .



Sam Baker

## Thoughts about Commonly Held Opinions

"The Bible is man's creation inspired by God"

There are so many things in the Bible that are not god-like (like contradictions, flat out untruths, odd commandments, etc.), one wonders where the inspiration came from.

If the creator of the universe really wanted to communicate with us, it is odd that his book doesn't contain one mathematical equation or any discussion of geologic time, the true age of the earth and the universe, evolution, or DNA. If only there were a few things, or one thing, in the Bible that human beings wouldn't figure out scientifically or mathematically until thousands of years later, the idea that it was inspired by an omniscient being would be vastly more credible.

"Atheism is a belief system"

No, but empiricism tempered by reason is a belief system: the belief that we can only distinguish what is true from what is false by the use of our five senses and logic. People choose to believe what their senses and logic tell them, or what dogma and superstition tell them. Most people unfortunately choose the latter.

"Only [about] half of the population is paying income tax."

True, but what did the Congress originally intend when it passed the income tax law? When the modern income tax was enacted in 1913, it applied to fewer than four percent of the population.

## PRESENTATION FOR OCTOBER MEETING

**Speaker: John Harvey, Professor of Economics, TCU**

**Topic: The Debt and the Deficit**

Did you ever have a teacher whose classroom lectures were so captivating that you couldn't wait to get to class, a teacher so good that you were sad to see the course end?

For those of you who don't know, our former Chair and speaker extraordinaire himself, Dick Trice, leads the Westside Forum every Sunday. At Forum I had the privilege of hearing two lectures by John Harvey, Professor of Economics at TCU, and I believe Professor Harvey is one of those rare teachers who can make complicated subjects not only accessible but enthralling.

Professor Harvey has graciously agreed to speak to us at our October meeting on the much discussed subject of the debt and the deficit. Professor Harvey's passion for economics is truly infectious, and if you miss this meeting, you will miss a really great talk.

Professor Harvey has a blog on the Forbes website, and his posts collectively comprise a good short course in macroeconomics. Read them in advance of the meeting and come with a good list of questions and comments for him. His blog is here:

<http://blogs.forbes.com/johntharvey/>

Sam

## Editorial . . . Know Your Bible? 2

*Don Ruhs*

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

24 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

25 *And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.* Gen. 1:24-25

Commentary:

The estimated number of animals on our planet falls somewhere in the vast range of 3-30 million species (Erwin 1983, Wolosz 1988).

26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Gen. 1:26

Commentary:

So, there you have it: This Judeo-Christian-Islamic God created everything, including the animal kingdom of from 3-30 million species!!

31 *And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.* Gen. 1:31

*And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.* Gen. 2:2

Commentary:

And everything was good, very good in fact. Hallelujah! And then, on the seventh day, God rested? Why was it necessary for God to rest??.

5 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

6 *And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

7 *And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

8 *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*

Gen. 6:5-8

Commentary:

Why must God repent? Are we to believe that this almighty God has committed a sin? And, everything was going so good!?

So now he's going to destroy everything he has created? Including babies? And, animals? What an evil, vindictive character this god is turning out to be! But let's not forget, man is not supposed to be able to understand the mind of god.

But, then, maybe, by sparing the lives of Noah and his family of eight (Noah, his wife, along with their sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives) God is showing a little compassion?

Stay tuned, there's more . . .

*You never think yourself into  
a new way of  
Living;*

*You invariably live yourself  
into a new way of  
Thinking.*

Richard Rohr.

## THE INERRANT BIBLE

A long time back in 1968 three American men in a spacecraft called Apollo 8 ventured into the first orbit of the moon. That evening television viewers were treated to incredible views of the moon and space while the three astronauts pulled a Bible from somewhere in the capsule and what did they choose to read? Why the first chapter of Genesis, what else?

Now, how many of you have ever read those chapters? Those of you who have, of course, know that Verses 6, 7 and 8 of the first chapter read:

*6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. (KJV)*

Think about it. Instead of cracking through a sky of water and causing a flood of water bursting out, these two soared peacefully on in their orbit while piously reading God's words that they had just totally disproved, seemingly unembarrassed by the fact that the first extraterrestrial message in the 20th century A. D. reflected the state of "science" in the 20<sup>th</sup> century B.C.!

Dick Trice

"I almost shudder at the thought of alluding to the most fatal example of the abuses of grief which the history of mankind has preserved -- the Cross. Consider what calamities that engine of grief has produced!" – John Adams

"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution." – James Madison

Sam Baker

## **Humanists of Fort Worth**

### **Minutes**

**September 12, 2012**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. By Chair Sam Baker. There were twenty-five present, of whom three were visitors; visitors were recognized and welcomed.

The Chair announced the decision of the board to dispense with the reading of the Treasurer's Report and the minutes of the previous meeting as part of the meeting format. These reports will continue to be available to members in the monthly e-newsletter.

This month's speakers were Zachary Moore, PhD., Coordinator of Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition of Reason, and Alix Jules, founder of Free-thought of Fort Worth and Chair of DFWCoR's Diversity Council.

Zachary Moore gave a brief history of the DFW Coalition of Reason, and then explained the demographics shown by the 2011 DFW Religious Profile Survey, which included members of all groups under the DFWCoR umbrella, and First United Methodist Church of Fort Worth.

After a break for refreshments, Alix Jules spoke on racial and cultural diversity in the Dallas-Fort Worth free-thought community, with emphasis on issues faced by nonbelievers of color.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
John Fisher, Secretary

# Humanists of Ft. Worth (HoFW)

## Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 12-Sep-2012

Beginning Balance 12-Aug-2012 **\$1,276.75**

CREDITS	Date	Amount
Dues collected		50.00
Donation		14.75
Snacks		
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>		<b>\$64.75</b>

DEBITS	Activity	Ck. #	Date	Amount
Suzie Loften	Snacks	485	8/8/2012	10.47

TOTAL DEBITS \$10.47

**\$54.28**

Ending Balance 12-Sep-12 **\$1,331.03**

Attest:

Signature:		Date:	12-Sep-2012
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





Church

&amp;

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* September 2012, page 3

### Supreme Court Skips San Diego Cross Case

The U.S. Supreme Court has decided not to hear a long-running controversy over a 43-foot-tall cross displayed on government property in San Diego.

Americans United welcomed the court's June 25 refusal of the case because the Christian cross is not an appropriate symbol to memorialize deceased veterans of many different faith perspectives.

"Crosses belong in sacred spaces, not on public property," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United, in a press statement. "It's time to move on and create a memorial that honors all the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country."

Litigation over the Mt. Soledad cross has been under way for nearly 20 years. Several federal courts have ruled against its display on public property. In an effort to keep the cross where it is, the federal government acquired the land underneath the structure in 2006.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year in *Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America v. City of San Diego* that the religious display violates separation of Church and State.

Americans United and other groups filed a friend-of-the-court brief urging the judges to reach that conclusion.

### AU Opposes Prayer Add-On At WWII Memorial

The memorial honoring veterans of World War II does not need to be altered to add religious material, Americans United told a U.S. Senate committee recently.

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 latest issue of *Free Mind* (Fall 2012), a publication of The American Humanist Association touts a new book: ***Damned Good Company*** by Luis Granados. It relates "tales of conflicts between God experts and humanist rebels, from earliest times through today."

I recently downloaded this one to my NOOK Tablet and though I've not yet finished it, I believe it's a "Damned Good Read" for Humanists, Atheists, and Freethinkers.

It's available as an e-book from Humanist Press or Barnes & Noble for \$9.99 plus tax.

In a June 26 letter to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, AU Legislative Director Maggie Garrett expressed opposition to S.3078, which would add a prayer given by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 6, 1944, to the World War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"The current memorial represents all 16 million men and women who served in our armed forces during WWII, Garrett wrote, "There is no need to alter it so that it only represents one particular point of view of God, causing some veterans to feel excluded."

Garrett noted that the design of the memorial, which has stood for more than 10 years, was selected as part of an open, national competition and was approved by the Department of the Interior and other agencies.

Changing the design of the memorial now, Garrett now, Garrett concluded, would disrespect the entire approval process and would do so for political gain.

At press time, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee had yet to take action on the bill beyond holding a hearing. The measure passed the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year and was introduced in the upper house by U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio).

## 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

---

### 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**

Phone: 817-249-1829

Email: ruhsdol@sbcglobal.net

**Past Chair: Dick Trice**

Phone: 817-446-4696

Email: trice933@att.net

**Past Chair / Newsletter Editor : Don Ruhs**

Phone: 817-343-3650

Email: laidback935@sbcglobal.net