

Free Mind

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The Expansion of AHA's Grassroots Network

By Eric Nguyen

More and more people are seeing that atheism is not enough. Indeed, to be atheist is to say nothing of how we live and how we approach life. Where humanism succeeds is that it offers a view of the world and the philosophy necessary for action, and more people are finding this appealing. This can be seen in the recent growth of AHA's Grassroots Network, a program of various local groups across the country. Since June, the Grassroots Network has passed the 140 mark with 141 chapters and affiliates.



Part of the growth is due to people's overall wariness of using the term atheism. "We think 'atheist' is too controversial and confrontational," says Margaret Nydell of the Fredericksburg Secular Humanists, an affiliate of the AHA as well as a chapter of the Washington Area Secular Humanists (WASH). This has been part of the dialogue within our movement—identity politics and the strategy of naming. Yet these aren't simply atheist groups disguising as humanists. Rather these groups point to the growing number of humanists—those who seek to live an ethical, socially responsible life without belief in the supernatural—and humanist groups who gather to change their local communities.

Continued on page 2

An Open Letter to Humanists

The Red Cross. Doctors Without Borders, CARE, UNICEF, OXFAM.

These and many other charitable organizations are undoubtedly familiar to Humanists. We donate to them in times of trouble, because we might not be able to physically get to a place that could use our help. Regardless, we can still help others do what we can't do directly. So we give.

But the question arises—are we giving to organizations that promote and express our values as humanists?

The AHA sponsors **Humanist Charities**, an adjunct which "specializes in benevolent aid and action to further the health and welfare of humankind. Its purpose includes applying uniquely humanist approaches to those in need and directing the generosity of American humanists to worthy disaster relief and development projects around the world."



The Board of the Charities evaluates organizations whose purposes align with those found in the Humanist Manifesto III, especially those that "affirms our ability and responsibility

Continued on page 4

- 1 The Expansion of AHA's Grassroots Network
- 2 An Open Letter to Humanists
- 3 Humanists Entering Election Year
- 4 Call for Papers for 2012 *Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism* Symposium
- 5 Do you vote in a church? Tell us about it.
- 6 AHA Funds Haitian Free Thought Group
- 7 AHA On the Hill
- 8 Save the Date
- 9 NPR's Ira Flatow to Receive 2012 Isaac Asimov Science Award
- 10 Call for Conference Presentations
- 11 Taking Action
- 12 Helping Others: Establishing a Caring Committee for Your Local Group
- 13 Meet the New AHA Staff
- 14 AHA in the News
- 15 In Memoriam
- 16 AHA Contributors

The Northwest Arkansas Humanist Association, the first AHA chapter in Arkansas, started with this goal in mind. "I started the humanist group with three main goals...political and general equality, community support and involvement, and social interaction with like minded people," says Jason Bathon, founder of the group. He started the group because freethought groups focused more on the "god argument" rather than asking the question of what can be done without barriers created by religious dogma.

"Since my transformation from religious indoctrination to an explicit atheist I had visited several freethinker/freethought groups and they seemed to have one continuous theme, atheism vs. religion," says Bathon. Such discussion can easily lead to stigmatization for those who have yet to reject their religious beliefs and those who would rather not talk about religion. "In fact, when a member would bring a religious person who were perhaps on the fence about their faith, most of the time the freethought groups were so caustic that they would turn away these new people and place a stigma in their head that the atheists were just as opinionated, elitist, and judgmental as what they were trying to move away from. My main goal was trying to rise above this stigma and just move away from the topic of religion all together."

Many other groups, while holding various discussions on religion and philosophy, have also included service projects into their programming and in their overall mission.

In Colorado, a new group states this explicitly in their name "Humanists Doing Good." Founded to foster a sense of "community, fellowship, and support for people who were often yearning for such things" the group already has many successes.

"We printed a series of bright volunteer shirts with our logo that we started wearing to our volunteer events," says founder Jesse Bond. "Our first good deed event was collecting coats and blankets for people in need in our community. We were able to donate about one hundred coats and blankets to a project started by a local high school student who tragically passed away. Our second event was carrying out a random act of kindness for several people."

Bond says that such acts can help change perception of humanists: "The leaves were falling in our area so our group decided to rake leaves for people for free and with no strings attached...We were able to help one lady who had a medical condition which made it difficult for her to breathe. It was clear that she had meticulously cared for her yard prior to becoming ill, and she had been worrying about how she would handle the leaves, when our group suddenly knocked on her door. She was amazed that people had showed up to help her with no other intentions than to do good. Helping people like this appears to be a far more powerful 'argument' for humanism than any words we could have spoken to her."

Alan Cluverius of the United Assembly of Humanism in Richmond, VA agrees, "Being located in the Bible belt means that most people probably don't agree with what we're doing, but we've found a surprising number who are willing to at least question their faith."

These groups show that humanism is truly about changing the world around you and making it a better place for everyone.

As Steve Ahlquist of the Humanists of Rhode Island says, "Our group formed because a few like minded individuals realized that we would have more of a positive effect working as a group than as individuals. Since forming our group has mushroomed in size, revealing a deep need for this kind of thinking. We are Humanists because it is a term that describes what we believe in, whereas Atheist describes what we don't believe in."

This is why many humanist groups form. Thankfully, as more and more people want to change the world and see religion as not necessary to effort, the humanist movement will continue to grow.

Eric Nguyen is the Grassroots Coordinator and the Humanist Society Coordinator for the American Humanist Association.

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A Message from the Executive Director



BY ROY SPECKHARDT

Humanists Entering Election Year

There's now less than a year to go before the next U.S. presidential election, and there is a lot on the line which humanists should give serious consideration to. The media is already dominated by the aggressive campaigns we've become accustomed to, where each of them attempts to outshine the others as the most Godly. As of today, at least four presidential candidates (Michelle Bachmann, Herman Cain, Rick Perry, and Rick Santorum) claim that they are running at the behest of the man upstairs. But that only displays how ridiculous it is to claim God's endorsement, since presumably God is aware that only one can win.

In addition to the office of the president and the many congressional and local elections, there are several possible appointments to the federal bench and Supreme Court that are yet to be determined. These judicial positions have an impact on a whole host of real life issues, one of which is abortion. Hopefully, the "personhood" initiative in Mississippi is a wake-up call to just how far the right intends to go to outlaw abortion in any and all cases. The "Occupy" movement will also likely come to a head as the issues around corporate personhood, endless war funding, and worker empowerment are sorted out. Additionally, Jefferson's Wall of

Church-State Separation is under such constant attack that doubts about its long term applicability are consistently raised. This election cycle very well may be the critical factor in determining its future strength and stability as more and more cases that attempt to defend the rights of secular Americans are defeated in the federal courts.

As Humanists, we've got to elect people to office who will make the first amendment a priority. We need to support people who will protect humanist values of individual liberty and compassion for others, and who will make policy decision based on reason and the best of modern knowledge, not ancient myth. Once we find such enlightened individuals and give them the opportunity to make a difference by helping them into public office, they must have the backbone to stand up to those who'd see politicians continue to sling mud, praise the lord, and waste their chance to make positive change. But how can we turn this ship around?

In looking at what Humanists have before us have done, I've seen an increasing need for an organization capable of working directly in the electoral process. Should we work with humanist leaders to establish the first Humanist Atheist Political Action Committee? What do you think? A couple times I've used this column to ask your input on important decisions and you've been extraordinarily helpful with your thoughtful letters. Please take a moment to let me know if we should jump into the political fray and build a secular humanist campaign fund and action group.

Matthew Bulger, **editor**
Lisa Zangerl, **graphic designer**
Roy Speckhardt, **AHA executive director**

AHA Staff: Maggie Ardiente, Jennifer Bardi, Bob Bhaerman, Bill Burgess, Joaquin Cabrejas, Patrick Connors, Jes Constantine, Luis Granados, Ron Holley, Brian Magee, Eric Nguyen, Kayley Whalen, Hannah Woerner

Free Mind

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View our website at www.americanhumanist.org

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An Open Letter to Humanists - Continued from page 1

to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.”

After the 2010 Haitian earthquake, while people were texting donations to the Red Cross and pleas for funds were coming from organizations both religious and secular, Humanist Charities contacted a group located on the island and arranged for direct funding of food and supplies to be delivered to an area hard-hit by the quake. We Humanists made a difference to large groups of people.

And in 2011 we put out a call to Humanists to help with the aid to the earthquake victims in Japan. We rose over \$5000 that went to support disaster relief efforts.

The greater good of humanity is promoted when we help others to the best of our abilities. Not everyone can donate every time, nor can everyone give the large amounts all charities look for—we all know that the economic realities of these times make that difficult. But as humanists we do care for others in circumstances detached from our locale and immediate family.

The Clear Fund (<http://www.givewell.org/>) notes that less than half of all the monies donated to the various national charities for the Haitian relief effort actually got used “on the ground.” Most were eaten up in administrative costs. While there always will be overhead in charitable operations - even for the Humanist Charities - we strive to minimize what it costs to process a donation.

I’m asking that as humanists and as members of the American Humanist Association we look first to Humanist Charities as a place to give—in times of disaster or in good times when a charitable donation is the right thing to do. Chapters and affiliates of the AHA could start a donation pool; individuals who want to celebrate a milestone in someone’s life, be it a birth, death, or any event in-between should look first to Humanist Charities; celebrants who know of couples who are asking guests to donate to a charity in lieu of wedding gifts should suggest Humanist Charities as a way to better reflect the tone of the wedding.

We all try and promote humanism in our daily activities, and when extra-ordinary events happen, we should strive to leave a Humanist imprint. Humanist Charities should be the

first stop for us to donate—it’s one way to put forward our ideals in to a world that needs our help.

Humanist Charities can be found at <http://www.humanistcharities.org> or donations can be sent via the American Humanist Association offices addressed to: Humanist Charities, 1777 T Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009-7125. We’re always looking for help and suggestions of possible donation events, so please let us know.

You’re a Humanist. Donate!

Howard Katz

Howard Katz is president of the Humanist Society, an adjunct of the American Humanist Association which certifies Humanist Celebrants. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the American Humanist Association.

Call for Papers for 2012 Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism Symposium

The American Humanist Association will host the Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism Symposium as part of its 71st Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Symposium will be focused around the AHA academic journal, *Essays on the Philosophy of Humanism*, in collaboration with The Humanist Institute, the Institute for Humanist Studies, and the Kochhar Humanist Education Center.

The Symposium will take place on Thursday, June 7, 2012 at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. It will be organized in two morning sessions and three afternoon sessions. The Organizing Committee invites authors who have been published in the Journal as well as interested persons from the humanist community to submit an abstract for a proposed 20-minute presentation. The abstract should be no longer than 200 words and should contain: the title of the presentation, name of the author, and affiliation of the author. We seek academic level papers on a broad range of themes including, but not limited to: history of philosophy, philosophy of humanism, history of humanism, comparative religion, humanist lifescence, humanist ethics, humanism and law, politics, economics, science, art, humanist institutions and organizations.

Abstracts should be submitted by e-mail to the EPH editor at eph@essaysinhumanism.org no later than February 29, 2012. Information about acceptance of abstracts will be sent before April 30, 2012. The final acceptance will depend on the registration to the AHA Annual Conference and Symposium.

Marian Hillar, Editor-in-Chief
Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism

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Do you vote in a church? Tell us about it.

By Bill Burgess



The AHA's Appignani Humanist Legal Center is investigating the use of churches and other houses of worship as polling places.

Americans vote in a wide variety of buildings in their local neighborhoods. Schools, libraries, fire stations and other municipal buildings are spread throughout communities, allowing us to vote near where we live. Sometimes, churches are designated as polling places as well. When this is the case, it raises significant concerns about the venue for the exercise of one of our most important democratic rights and the effect it has on those who are not religious. Recent studies have shown that the nature of the polling place affects the psychology of voters, influencing the way the vote on relevant issues.

If your local polling place is a church, the legal center would like to hear from you. In particular, we'd like to know the following about your polling place:

1. Is there an available secular alternative location in your neighborhood that could serve as a polling place?
2. Is there any evidence of politicking by the church directed at voters at the polling place, such as signs expressing opinions on social issues? Are church members on premises on Election Day speaking to voters or handing out literature?
3. Is the part of the church which voters access neutral in appearance or does it contain significant religious elements which have not been covered up? Are there any pictures of how the church looks on Election Day?
4. Have you registered a complaint with the local government about their choice of the church as a polling place? If so, what was their response?
5. How widespread is the use of churches as polling places in your community? Are they overrepresented, given the availability of secular alternatives? Do they represent the religious diversity of your community, or is any one religion or denomination overrepresented?
6. Have local politicians or government workers made any comments on the choice of churches as polling places? If not, has anyone asked them about their motives?
7. If a voter objects to voting in church, is he or she permitted to vote at an alternate secular location?
8. Is the church complying with your state's election laws?

In exercising our fundamental right to vote, we deserve the chance to vote in a neutral setting that is welcoming to the entire community, not just those who follow the religion of the majority. If you feel that your polling place does not meet this standard, we would like to hear from you.

To contact the legal center about this (or any other matter), please send me an email at legal@americanhumanist.org. To keep up with the legal center's ongoing activities, please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/humanist.legal.

Bill Burgess is the Legal Coordinator of the American Humanist Association's Appignani Humanist Legal Center

AHA Funds Haitian Free Thought Group



The Free Thinkers of Haiti, a secular group that promotes scientific thinking and actively combats superstition in the Caribbean nation, recently ran in to financing trouble and petitioned AHA for assistance. The Ministry of Social Affairs in Haiti requires 13,400 gourdes (\$335) each year so that the organization can maintain a legal status of operation. Unfortunately, the Free Thinkers of Haiti frequently experience great difficulty in paying that amount, and often must sacrifice future programming just to pay the registration fee. The President of the organization, Billy Almoza, approached AHA through an affiliate to ask for our assistance. Because of support from AHA members we were able to support Mr. Almoza in his efforts to spread humanism and rational thinking in Haiti. We received this photograph from the organization thanking us for our support, and will continue to receive periodic updates about the efforts of the group in spreading scientific and humanistic thought.

AHA On the Hill

Eager to increase its visibility on Capitol Hill and further its legislative influence, the American Humanist Association has recommitted to direct lobbying of members of Congress. Maggie Ardiente, AHA's Director of Development and Communications, met with Senators Nelson (D-NE) and Casey (D-PA) in October to communicate AHA's stance on church-state separation and to encourage the Senators to support a legislative agenda that honored the secular tradition upon which this nation was founded.

AHA continued its lobbying efforts in November when Matthew Bulger, AHA's Program Assistant, met with Senators Leahy (D-VT) and Tester (D-MT) to discuss their stances on the Protect Life Act and the "In God We Trust" resolution. Matthew was able to have a productive discussion with the Senators on the current state of secular governance in America, and left the meeting feeling optimistic regarding the Senate's attitude towards humanism and secularism in general.

The American Humanist Association will continue to make the voice of secular Americans heard in our government, and actively works to block legislation that weakens the wall of separation between church and state.

CALLING ALL BOOK HOUNDS

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Do you like to read **FREE BOOKS?**

.....

The *Humanist* magazine invites interested AHA members to join its new **READERS BUREAU!**



Sign up to peruse our list of review copies and become eligible to request titles. Readers will be asked to provide short write-ups on books we send, with the possibility for development into longer reviews for the *Humanist*.

contact: editor@thehumanist.org
subject line: Readers Bureau

SAVE THE DATE



HONORING HUMANIST AWARDEES



Gloria Steinem George Takei Debra Sweet
and more to come!

71st Annual Conference
American Humanist Association
June 7-10, 2012
New Orleans, Louisiana



The AHA is proud to hold its 71st Annual Conference in the great city of New Orleans, hosted by the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association (NOSHA). The Sheraton New Orleans is located on historic Canal Street adjacent to the French Quarter, and just a short walk to Bourbon Street, Jazz Fest activities, Riverwalk Marketplace, and numerous renowned restaurants and legendary nightlife.

Book your room early by calling the Sheraton New Orleans at 888-627-7033 and mention the American Humanist Association to get the special conference rate of \$129 a night! Online booking will be available soon.

Online registration will be available in December. For more information, visit www.americanhumanist.org/conference.

NPR's Ira Flatow to Receive 2012 Isaac Asimov Science Award

The American Humanist Association is pleased to announce that Ira Flatow, award-winning journalist and host of NPR's Science Friday, will be awarded the 2012 Isaac Asimov Science Award at the AHA's 71st Annual Conference in New Orleans.

Ira Flatow is best known as the host of National Public Radio's popular *Science Friday* and past host of *Newton's Apple*, a television science program for kids. *Science Friday* hosts a lively, informative discussion on science, technology, health, space, and the environment. Flatow is also founder and president of The Science Friday Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating radio, TV, and Internet projects that make science "user friendly." He's appeared on the Today Show, Oprah, and Charlie Rose, and he's received numerous awards including the National Science Teachers Association Science Faraday Communicator Award. In 2009 he made a cameo appearance on the popular television show, *The Big Bang Theory*.

Call for Conference Presentations

The 71st Annual Conference of the American Humanist Association will be held June 7-10, 2012 at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

If you are interested in leading a breakout session, speaking on a panel, or if you are an entertainer, send a proposal, outline, complete text, audio, video or web link to Maggie Ardiente at maggie@americanhumanist.org. Please include your name and complete contact information with your material. Also indicate your audio visual needs, if any.

We are particularly interested in sessions on nontheism, church-state separation, LGBT rights, women's rights, minority outreach, political issues, human rights, the right-to-die movement, the environment, global issues, science and critical thinking. We are also looking for sessions on "applied humanism," which may include local activism, chapter growth, charitable work, education programs, and the like.

All program suggestions must be received by January 27, 2012, to provide the planning committee adequate time to review submissions, allot space, and prepare a final agenda. Conference speakers are volunteers who will receive complimentary conference registration (banquet meals not included). If, however, there are special financial requirements that come with your proposal, such as travel or lodging expenses, please indicate.

For more updates, visit www.americanhumanist.org/conference.

Taking Action

Oppose the Reaffirmation of "In God We Trust" As Our National Motto

President Obama was recently criticized by House Republicans for statements he made regarding the national motto of the United States while travelling abroad. The President repeatedly suggested that the phrase "E Pluribus Unum" (Out of one, many) was the national motto, evoking the ire of Republicans at home. A resolution was subsequently introduced to "remind the President" of the actual national motto of the United States, "In God We Trust".

House Continuing Resolution 13 (H. Con. Res. 13) was introduced in the House by Representative Randy Forbes (R-VA) on January 26th, and passed the House in early November. This resolution reaffirms "In God We Trust" as the official motto of the United States and would support and encourage the public display of the national motto in all public buildings, public schools, and other government institutions.

This religious motto weakens the wall of separation between church and state by declaring our national recognition of a deity, and is insensitive to the many non-religious Americans who object to government encouragement of religion and belief. The American Humanist Association opposed this

resolution by joining a coalition of likeminded progressive and secular groups. This coalition lobbied against this motto through direct meetings with Congress and by soliciting letters from Americans in opposition to this discriminatory resolution.

Congress should not waste valuable legislative time by considering unnecessary legislation that serves only to further divide the American populace. The American Humanist Association supports the wall of separation between church and state, and opposes any government action that violates the secular tradition found in our Constitution.

Oppose the Passage of H.R. 358, the Protect Life Act

Rather than focusing on the many important issues that lie before it, the House of Representatives has ramped up efforts to legislate on divisive topics, including the right of women to make their own decisions regarding pregnancy and abortion.

A bill was recently presented in the House of Representatives that would prohibit federal funds from being used to cover any part of the costs of any health plan that includes coverage of abortion services. The Protect Life Act (H.R. 358) was introduced in the House by Representative Joseph Pitts (R-PA) on January 19th, and passed the House in October. Contrary to existing law, the bill would also allow hospitals to refuse to provide life-saving abortion care for women if that procedure violated the staff's religious beliefs. Current federal law requires hospitals to provide appropriate medical care to a patient facing an emergency, including medically necessary abortions. This bill would allow a hospital to turn away a pregnant woman experiencing a life-threatening complication without further regard for her health or well-being.

The American Humanist Association opposed this bill by meeting with legislators on the Capitol and by calling for public comment from its membership. The American Humanist Association supports the right of women to make their own decisions regarding their own body, and opposes any government intervention that would remove that autonomy or threaten the life of a patient.



the
Humanist Hour
Audio Podcast

A monthly one-hour talk show by the American Humanist Association covering humanist thought, from politics to pop culture. Hosted by Jes Constantine.

www.americanhumanist.org/hnn/podcast

Helping Others: Establishing a Caring Committee for Your Local Group

By Eric Nguyen

While the rejection of supernaturalism is important to humanistic philosophy, the cornerstone of humanism is its concern for the well-being of society. Humanism is about action: helping each other out, not because of a god, but because it's the ethical thing to do. Taking this idea in stride, many local groups have continually been their community's heroes in times of need.

One such program is the Humanist Helpers of the Humanists of Greater Portland in Oregon. Part of their social committee, it was implemented to assist members during times of need or emergency. According to Willie Willworth, a member of the Humanist Helpers, the Humanists of Greater Portland have always helped each other on an ad hoc basis, but having a program made it more official. Establishing such a committee can also attract more volunteers to help with anything ranging from moving assistance to home and hospital visits to picking up medication and supplies for home-bound members. This is perhaps something important for a minority group like atheists and humanists who can be often ostracized from mainstream communities where it's assumed that without religion one simply can't be good.

Such help is always appreciated, says Tom Ikelman of the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area, which also has a similar program called the Caring Committee. Tom was a beneficiary of his group's caring committee and appreciated the acts of kindness from his fellow humanists in his time of need. He mentions that being in need—being sick, disabled, or house-bound—is often a lonely situation. Visits from group members, get well cards, and errand runs are small gestures that can help a lot. It was through his experience as a beneficiary that Tom began volunteering as well. It's about community, he says; people go to church for the community, and humanist groups can and must offer the same. It's a part of the "ideals that we espouse," he says, "We have to demonstrate these ideals and show charitable giving in our own community."

He mentions that humanist groups are in the right when they're doing political actions—protests, education, voicing their concerns for social justice—but the support system that

we can give each other is just as important. Tom says other groups should not forget about social programs: not just helping each other, but also celebrating and meeting with each other. He recommends activities such as potlucks, parties, and secular holidays such as HumanLight (December 23), Darwin Day (February 12), and National Day of Reason (first Thursday of May).

Willie Willworth agrees: "I would highly recommend it to groups that have a big enough group of active volunteers."

Reason makes us atheists. Community makes us humanists.

If your local group is interested in establishing a caring/helping committee, or if you'd like to share your stories of how your local group helps its members, email us at enguyen@americanhumanist.org.

Eric Nguyen is the Grassroots Coordinator and the Humanist Society Coordinator for the American Humanist Association.

Meet the New AHA Staff



Meet Brian Magee, the American Humanist Association's new communications associate! Brian hosted an atheist radio show in Fargo, North Dakota (where he was also a member of the Red River Freethinkers) and worked as a reporter and editor for a local newspaper in Ocean City, Maryland. As a communications associate Brian is responsible for media contact, membership outreach, and organizing the Humanist Press.



Meet Kayley Whalen, the American Humanist Association's new development associate! Kayley worked for three years as a financial analyst for Fannie Mae, and was a fundraiser for Safe Access DC, a medical marijuana advocacy organization. As a development associate Kayley is responsible for fundraising and donor outreach, and occasionally contributes to the Humanist Network News.



Meet Matthew Bulger, the American Humanist Association's new programs assistant! Matt comes to the AHA from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law where he formulated policy papers on civil rights issues related to housing, employment, and voting rights. Matt has also interned in the offices of Senator Al Franken (D-MN) and Representative Travis Childers (D-MS). As a program assistant Matthew lobbies on matters related to progressive humanist issues, plans and implements public policy campaigns, attends coalition meetings and Congressional hearings, and drafts opinion editorials for publication. Matthew also serves as the new editor of *Free Mind*.

Federal employees can now donate to the American Humanist Association through the Combined Federal Campaign.
CFC number 19492

The American Humanist Association logo features a stylized human figure with arms raised, next to the text "AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION". The CFC logo features a five-pointed star with the letters "CFC" inside, and the text "Combined Federal Campaign" below it.

AHA in the News

Executive Director Roy Speckhardt serves as a columnist for both the *Huffington Post* and *Patheos* on issues relating to church-state separation, humanism, and free-thought in general. Here are his most recent publications:

Patheos:

- “Eroding the Era of Discrimination with the ERA” 23 Oct. 2011.
- “Addicted to the Supernatural?” 2 Oct. 2011
- “Why Are Politicians Pandering to the Religious Right?” 18 Sept. 2011

Check out more of Roy’s articles on Patheos at: <http://www.patheos.com/About-Patheos/Roy-Speckhardt.html>

The Huffington Post:

- “In God We Trust: Choosing Faith Over Freedom” 5 Nov. 2011
- “The Religious Sex Abuse Epidemic” 18 Oct. 2011.
- “Church or Jail Is No Option” 27 Sept. 2011.

Check out more of Roy’s articles on Huffington Post at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/roy-speckhardt>



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IN MEMORIAM

Grace Abrahamson, longtime AHA member of Brookfield Illinois, died July 21, 2011 at the age of 71. She was also a member of the National Organization for Women and the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. Grace spent her childhood living in several cities throughout the Eastern U.S. before putting down roots in the Chicago area during high school. After a career in home health and hospice nursing, she retired to enjoy traveling the world (all 50 states and 6 continents), biking, watching her grandchildren and volunteering at the theater, political events and social causes. A proud mother and grandmother, she raised her family in Brookfield, IL, where she lived until her death. She is survived by her husband and AHA member Brant Abrahamson, four siblings, four children and six grandchildren and was preceded in death by her daughter Tanya Abrahamson.

John E. Bowen, longtime AHA member and lifelong advocate for social justice from Vacaville, California, died on

April 8, 2011 at the age of 79. John was an outspoken humanist and also advocated for voting rights, desegregation, anti-McCarthyism, Beyond War, universal health care, and public education. A graduate of the University Wisconsin Law School, he joined the Air Force, becoming a captain while serving as a lawyer in Alaska and then at Travis Air Force Base. He started a private law practice in Vacaville, and then became a civil servant, eventually rising to and retiring as an administrative law judge for the state of California. He was an avid traveler and life-long learner. He taught and attended numerous classes at the University of California, Davis in a variety of areas including acting, literature and constitutional law. He is survived by Sally, his wife of 55 years, as well as two siblings, three sons, three granddaughters, and two daughters-in-law.

Michael B. Collins, AHA member of Denton Texas, died on May 12, 2011. Born in Turlock, California in 1930, Michael received his doctoral degree in music at Stanford

Continued on page 11

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In Memoriam-Continued from page 9

University. A long-time resident of Denton, Texas, Prof. Collins taught the history of music at the University of North Texas for 33 years. Before that he taught for a number of years at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. His instrument was the piano, and he specialized in the performance of Baroque music and the history of opera. His many publications include the book "Opera and Vivaldi." He also served in U.S. Army intelligence in Germany during the Korean War. He is survived by two siblings, as well as eight nieces and nephews and eleven great-nieces and nephews, and was preceded in death by his younger sister, Linda Collins Maurer.

Larry M. Hamby, AHA Honor Roll member from Athens, Georgia, died on August 28, 2011 at the age of 84. He was a Reverend in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, and served a number of congregations from New Orleans to Maine, Pennsylvania, and coastal Georgia. He graduated from Emory University and Tufts University.

Joseph Jurich, longtime AHA member of Chestnut Hill MA died at the age of 84 in July 2011. He is remembered as a profound teacher, humanist and humanitarian, who was deeply generous, compassionate and curious. Joseph taught writing and literature at the University of Florida, Washburn University, the University of Arizona, Boston University, Boston State College, Bunker Hill Community College and Framingham State University, where he retired as Professor of English. He inspired others to see that art and literature are both sources of beauty and means to social change. He was also a nurturing and inspiring friend, father and husband. A recently elected Member of the Brookline Town Meeting, Joseph was also involved in local politics. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn Jurich, daughter Joscelyn Jurich and many other loving friends and relatives.

Dorothy Neitzke, longtime AHA member of Lakeland Florida, died on June 23, 2011 at the age of 102. She was also involved in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

Joseph A. Renihan, longtime AHA member of Paden, Oklahoma died on December 15, 2010 at the age of 97. He was also a longtime member of the NAACP and the Michigan Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is remembered for his easy manner, quick wit, quiet confidence, and openness to new ideas. After earning his law degree from the University of Chicago in the early 1940s, Joe joined the U.S. Navy and served throughout World War II. Returning to Grand Rapids, he began practicing law, embarking on a career that would span 60 years. During that time Joe was elected chairman of the Kent County Board of Supervisors (1953); served as prosecuting attorney for Kent County (1959-60); made a run for the Michigan State Legislature (1961); and served as president of both the Torch Club (1966) and the Grand Rapids Bar Association (1975-6). He was an

avid golfer as well as accomplished tennis player and billiards champion. He is survived by his wife Ruth and several nieces and nephews, and was preceded in death by his three sisters.

Marvin Rosenblum, AHA Life Member of Chester, New Jersey died on September 27, 2011 at the age of 80. He was the former president of the International Federation for Secular and Humanistic Judaism. He was a founding member and second president of Temple Emanuel in Edison. Marvin was a 1950 graduate of Rutgers University, and was a self-employed entrepreneur merchant, having owned Fords Hardware in Fords, N.J. and later served as the CEO and President of Precision Polymers. He was a long standing member of the Young Presidents' Organization/ Women Presidents' Organization. Marvin is survived by his wife Esti Rosenblum to whom he was married for 58 years, three children, six grandchildren, and his sister.

Sidney N. Stone Long-time supporter of the AHA and the Humanist Society of New Mexico, died on July 9, 2011 at the age of 89. Sidney spent his youth in up-state New York, where he built his first telescope at age 11, grinding his own mirrors. While studying Astrophysics at Cal Tech, he became friends with astronomer Edwin P. Hubble, who helped place him as a ballistics and optical physicist at the Ballistic Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, MD, from 1944-1950. During this time he pioneered the early optical tracking instrumentation at White Sands Proving Grounds, NM. After the war, he attended the University of California at Berkeley, earning his BS, MS and PhD in Astrophysics. In 1957, Sidney accepted a position at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico, where he participated in nuclear weapons testing experiments, airborne solar eclipse expeditions in the Pacific and Africa, and rocket-borne X-ray astronomy experiments at White Sands Missile Range. He was a member of NM Governor's Scientific Advisory Committee from 1962-1967, as well as a founding member of the Los Alamos Committee on Arms Control and International Security. One of his last projects was lost aboard the Challenger Space Shuttle when it exploded on liftoff in 1986. While living in Los Alamos, he and his wife, Marcia, became charter members of the Unitarian Church there. Sidney was an active folk dancer, skier, and tennis player, often winning the #1 ranking in New Mexico for his age group.

Sidney retired from the Los Alamos Laboratory in 1985, and he and Marcia moved to Albuquerque, where they were active in many organizations, including the Humanist Society of New Mexico, New Mexicans for Science and Reason, and the Albuquerque Astronomical Society. They were both honored as Humanists of the Year in New Mexico in 1995. Marcia died in June 2009.

Sidney is survived by his daughter Susan Stone and her husband, Jeffery Mather, of Savusavu, Fiji Islands, and daughter Wendy Shray, her husband Steven, and their two children, Aaron and Julia, of San Carlos, CA.

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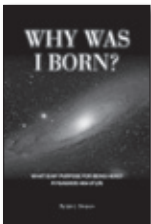
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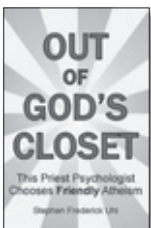
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