

THE ATHEIST VOICE

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SOCAS

Poorly designed case: Fallout from the Dover decision

Rob Boston
AMERICAN UNITED

Fallout continues from U.S. District Judge John E. Jones' Dec. 20 ruling striking down the teaching of "intelligent design" in Dover, PA.

First off, a local newspaper, the York Daily Record, has suggested that some of the former school board members who voted to implement the policy may have lied on the witness stand and may be open to prosecution for perjury.

During the trial, two former board members, Alan Bonsell and William Buckingham, told stories that conflicted with the accounts they had given during depositions. Jones noticed the discrepancies and in Bonsell's case questioned him about it from the bench. (The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that a "red-faced" Jones subjected Bonsell to a "blistering 10-minute cross-examination.")

The newspaper reminded the ex-board members that lying is "sinful according to the 9th Commandment" and added, "And perhaps also criminal. We can only hope that the appropriate authorities are investigating possible perjury charges in this case. There should be some consequences for what Mr. Bonsell and Mr. Buckingham have done in depositions and on the witness stand by otherwise misrepresenting the facts."

The Daily Record noted that Dover voters kicked out the pro-ID board during November's elections, but it called for more penalties against them. "They've cost Dover its reputation. The district, even after sensibly voting out the entire school board, again has been made a national laughingstock - last week 'The Daily Show' aired yet another embarrassing and insulting piece on Dover," observed the paper.

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SOCAS

Appeals court upholds commandments display

AMERICAN ATHEISTS

In the latest skirmish over the role of religion in the public square, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last week that a Kentucky courthouse display featuring a copy of the Ten Commandments alongside other historical documents did not violate the First Amendment.

The ruling by a three-judge panel was unanimous, and affirmed a lower court decision that the Commandments presentation in Mercer County passed constitutional muster.

This comes following two rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court this past summer that similar displays of the Decalogue in

McCreary and Pulaski counties violated the separation of church and state.

Adding to the confusion was another finding that a granite monument to Ten Commandments in front of the state capitol in Austin, TX that had been in place for four decades was permissible.

Writing for the panel in the latest Kentucky case, Judge Richard Suhrheinrich blasted the American Civil Liberties Union which had brought the suit, and criticized "tiresome" legal arguments about the "wall of separation" between government and religion. He added that ACLU, and presumably other groups and individuals challenging such displays, did not represent a "reasonable person," and said that there

was no evidence that county officials had a religious purpose in mind by allowing the display.

"Our concern is that of a reasonable person," wrote Suhrheinrich. "And the ACLU, an organization whose mission is 'to ensure that ... the government (is kept) out of the religion business,' does not embody the reasonable person."

He also criticized "repeated references to the 'separation of church and state,'" opining that "This extra-constitutional construct has grown tiresome. The First Amendment does not demand a wall of separation between church and state. Our

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THE BACKSIDE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Anarchists: America's Forgotten Insurgents

ED WALLACE

The past few years have changed all of our lives. For what we now believe is the first time, Americans know that we are no longer isolated from terror in the world. Could it be possible that we're helpless to defend ourselves, should those who hate the United States decide to strike again on American soil? After all, if New York and Washington can be struck with seeming ease, why not Detroit, Chicago, or even Dallas Fort Worth?

However, in our shock over the events of the last three years, we have forgotten that at times our ancestors also feared for our society. Enemies operating within our country have sought before now to destroy the American way of life, for no other reason than that they simply disagreed with the policies of our government. We all perceived the media's portrayal of the destruction of the twin towers and the Pentagon as the first time America had come under attack since the war of 1812.

That's curious, because those statements are not entirely accurate; and it's discouraging, because it reveals a great ignorance of our history - certainly of our recent history. The last attack from within started right at 100 years ago. The scope and reach of our government's reprisals lasted for half a century, before the public finally realized we were only chasing shadows.

Leon Czolgosz was a 28-year-old blacksmith, an immigrant German Pole living in Cleveland who fervently believed in the writings of Emma Goldman, a well-known anarchist writer of the time. A registered Republican who just weeks earlier had voted in the primaries, he believed that our government was corrupt, at least in saying that it stood for the people of the United States.

After all, Leon had only to look around him to see the poverty and despair of the masses, the use of our children in factories and mines, the 60- to 70-hour work weeks that paid too little to cover both rent and food. To this anarchist's mind, the government represented only the wealthy. It offered no protection to the masses that elected it.

With that in mind, Leon went from Cleveland to Buffalo, New York, where he

assassinated President William McKinley at the Pan American Exposition. America was stunned to discover that we had enemies within our borders. Distrust of recent immigrants had been a way for life for the previous 20 years; now we knew that that distrust had been valid.

For the next couple of decades robberies, occasional murders and bombings took place across America, as these heinous anarchists went about their business of trying to disrupt our economy and topple our government.

One bomb, at a San Francisco parade in 1914, killed 10 people and injured a hundred others. The turning point came on June 2nd, 1919, when anarchist bombs went off in eight American cities, including Washington DC. That particular explosion partially destroyed the house of our Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer.

When Lenin and Trotsky and the Red Army overthrew the Czar of Russia, at first it was considered an anarchist revolution. But anarchists in Russia had the same stated goal as our homegrown terrorists had in this country: creating a fair distribution of wealth. The Russians would label their country a worker's paradise, though nothing could have been farther from the truth. By that time in America, anarchy was being given a new name: Bolshevism.

Mitchell Palmer went into action after June 2nd, 1919; he sent out federal agents to round up and deport any immigrant that they even suspected of being against our form of government. The feds rounded up 249 suspects in just the month of December that year, 1,200 in total.

And most of America was glad to see Washington being so forceful. No one cared about the rights of those accused; they weren't even Americans, they were

bad people who took advantage of our kindness and liberal immigration laws - and then turned against us. Many of those arrested were sent to jail, some even executed, for crimes that, as likely as not, they didn't commit. That may have well been Sacco and Vanzetti's problem.

Patriotic fervor became hideously apparent on May 6th, 1920, at a Chicago baseball game: George Goddard didn't rise to his feet for the playing of our national anthem. Such disrespect infuriated Samuel Haggeman, a member of a naval honor guard there for the game, and he shot Goddard dead on the spot. The audience attending the ball game stood and cheered the sailor for doing so.

And then in the twenties, just as suddenly as our fear of anarchists had begun, it disappeared. Washington, still just as fearful that someone might overthrow the government, followed up the Palmer Raids of 1919 to 1921 by forming the Federal Bureau of

Investigation under J. Edgar Hoover and severely limiting foreign immigration.

The Ku Klux Klan and the Black Legion also rebuilt themselves in the twenties. This was a direct response partly to America's falling morals, partly to the nation's fear of immigrants and anarchists. In the end, the Klan and the Black Legion, claiming to be 100% American, waged violent guerrilla war on anyone who disagreed with their narrow-minded beliefs.

America's fears didn't go away, however, even though no one opposed our government any longer. No, we still had enemies, but their nationality was no longer front-page news.

Foreign-born criminals had been replaced by American criminals - Al Capone and his ilk. Page-one headlines now focused America's attention on organized crime.

"We all perceived the media's portrayal of the destruction of the twin towers and the Pentagon as the first time America had come under attack since the war of 1812. That's curious, because those statements are not entirely accurate"

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SOCAS

Religious Right pushes court nominee at church event

Joseph L. Conn
 AMERICANS UNITED

In a nationally televised rally Jan. 8, Religious Right leaders insisted that the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito Jr. will help reverse judicial decisions upholding church-state separation.

“Justice Sunday III,” as the event was dubbed, took place at the Greater Exodus Baptist Church in Philadelphia on the day before Senate confirmation hearings for Alito were scheduled to begin in Washington. The rally, sponsored by the Family Research Council, drew an array of Religious Right activists and their allies, including the Rev. Jerry Falwell, James Dobson of Focus on the Family and U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.).

Rhetoric in the pulpit was shrill and often partisan.

Falwell, for example, depicted the fight to confirm Alito as an extension of three decades of Religious Right work on behalf of the conservative Republicans.

“We were able to hold off Michael Moore,” he thundered, “and most of Hollywood and most of the national media...who fought so fiercely against

the reelection of George Bush.”

“Now,” he said, “we are looking at what we really started 30 years ago: the reconstruction of a court system gone awry.”

Falwell urged his audience to call the Senate in support of Alito.

“Go to the telephone, write your letter, get to your U.S. senators,” the controversial Lynchburg evangelist demanded. “Let’s confirm this man, Judge Alito, to the U.S. Supreme Court. And let’s make one more step toward bringing America back to one nation under God.”

Santorum told the crowd that liberal judges are intent on “destroying traditional morality, creating a new moral code and prohibiting dissent.”

“The only way to restore this republic our founders envisioned is to elevate honorable jurists like Samuel Alito,” he continued. “Unfortunately, the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee seem poised to drag these hearings into the gutter, so they can continue their far-left judicial activism on the Supreme Court.”

The Rev. Herb Lusk, pastor of the host church, was even more inflammatory,

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SIGHTINGS

Scratch and win: The Virgin Mary appears in Dallas

William McEwen
METROPLEX ATHEISTS

I think that I shall never see

The Virgin Mary in a tree

When I was a kid, our house had wood ceilings. I saw patterns in the wood, and distinctly remember what looked like a biplane above my bed. But even at a young age, I knew the biplane was my imagination and a coincidence.

I certainly didn't think it was something to alert the media about. And even if I had, the reporter manning the phone at the local TV news desk would have hung up on me.

But now it's modern times in Dallas.

One day in November, Eva Alejandro's five-year-old daughter was picking at the bark of a tree in her front yard. The next evening, Saturday, Nov. 19 to be exact, Eva discovered the Virgin Mary herself.

Or rather, a pattern in the bark that looked like the Virgin Mary. Reporters from Channel 5 and The Dallas Morning News's Hispanic paper *Al Dia* showed up to report. Eva told them the tree was a blessing and a sign, and dozens of locals flocked to see it and touch it and be a part of a holy event.

I visited the site on Dec. 2. It was a brisk morning, and I was the first spectator to show up. The Virgin Mary was dull and gray and difficult to detect. It was in a decaying portion of the tree. The scene was spruced up with candles and flowers,

which were much more eye catching than the bark.

A basket marked "donations" was front and center. It contained several dollar bills, a few coins, and a store gift card. Exactly where the donations were going was not indicated. Since all the foot traffic had turned the lawn into dirt, perhaps the donations would pay for a truckload of sod.



Alejandro, the property owner, was not present, nor was her daughter who created the thing. During my half hour visit, about eight people showed up and they stayed only a few minutes. Only one person seemed moved. An elderly Hispanic man kneeled and prayed, then touched the bark.

The Virgin Mary was losing its spark as a local attraction. Yep. Ho-hum is a great way to describe it.



William McEwen

The faithful flock traveled from around the Metroplex to witness the "Miracle" in the tree (Left). Candles and donations (Right) were offered to appease the bark.



Anarchists – From page 2

It's amazing that, when anarchists robbed our banks and payroll guards in the first two decades of the 20th century, they were rightly seen as enemies of the people. But when John Dillinger and Bonnie and Clyde did the exact same thing ten years later, they were regarded as modern-day Robin Hoods; some people still believe that today. We excuse that double standard in various ways: First, they were natural-born Americans, not foreigners. And it was the Depression; times were tough.

But that could also have also been said in 1905. For the average laborer, trying to provide for a family, times were much tougher then. Their response of some Anarchists in America was to set off bombs regularly, killing many, and going so far as to murder one president they disagreed with. Anarchists evolved into Reds, then became known as Communists during the Palmer Raids.

The Communist Anarchist scare again became front-page news in the late thirties. Prohibition was a thing of the past, and American bank robbers had all been killed or jailed; this time, we feared that Communist-Anarchists had taken over our labor unions.

So, in 1937, the House formed the Dies Committee, the forerunner of the Committee on UnAmerican Activities.

Martin Dies, a Klan sympathizer, was named its chairman. In fact, the Ku Klux Klan sent Dies this telegram: "Every true

American, and that includes every Klansman, is behind you and your committee in its effort to turn the country back to the honest, freedom-loving, God-fearing Americans to whom it belongs."

As you might know, the Dies Committee never once investigated the KKK's un-American activities. John Wood, another member of that Congressional group, explained that the Klan had never been targeted because, "After all, the KKK is an old American institution, much like the moonshiners."

For the next 15 years we were hunting and seeing Communists everywhere. That fear reached its peak in Joseph McCarthy.

In February of 1950, during a speech to a women's group in West Virginia, McCarthy said that he had in his coat pocket a list of 55 Communists working in our State Department. Later that same day at another talk, his "list" contained more than 200 names. Reporters who had covered both events knew McCarthy was lying, but they printed the story as truth anyway.

Then came the Korean War, and McCarthy's witch-hunt gained momentum. Hearings were held, and many were accused; though no one was ever convicted during that period, hundreds of lives were certainly destroyed. And, though he knew the truth about the man, the only public statement Eisenhower ever made about him was that he wouldn't get into the gutter with McCarthy. Privately, those who knew the President said that he detested Tailgunner Joe.

At the end of the Korean conflict, McCarthy turned his Communist-finding radar on the U. S. Army; it would be his undoing. Edward R. Murrow made him the focus of his See It Now program, for the first time showing Americans everywhere the damage that had been done in the name of protecting the nation. Within 15 years, the Ku Klux Klan and other right-wing groups would drift into decline, as the public would no longer accept their terrorizing of innocent people.

A decade after McCarthy's disgrace, we passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure that our government would never again deny individuals their rights under the Constitution. But don't be misled: There were two lines of history in 20th-century America. The growth of America as a great nation was one; the other was the shadow of hate chasing those who they believed might harm us.

When the Berlin Wall fell in the late eighties, the Cold War and the Communist-hunts ended for good. They were replaced recently by the next threat, international terrorism. But, if you want to find the date that most of our fears of the 20th century started, it was the day William McKinley was assassinated by an anarchist. And all Americans came to fear strangers we didn't understand.

By the way, it was prosperity for all that killed the Anarchist movement - not government action. It's just possible that prosperity for all would kill terrorism, too.



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SOCAS

'Tis the season for religious right bullies

Annie Laurie Gaylor

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

An ill-spirited public relations gimmick contending Christians are being persecuted in December is being “spun” by the likes of Jerry Falwell, Bill O’Reilly, Fox News Channel, the rightwing Liberty Counsel and American Family Association.

The media obligingly have picked up on the phony ruse, which is not only a fundraising tool but a campaign of intimidation.

“Friend or Foe Christmas Campaign” harkens back to that biblical verse in which Jesus is quoted paranoically as saying that “He that is not with me is against me” (Matthew 12:30).

The (misleadingly named) Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based rightwing Christian legal group that has interceded in several Foundation lawsuits, claims it has 750 attorneys waiting in the wings to sue public schools. They claim these attorneys, for instance, might sue if a public school neglects to schedule “Silent Night” in a December concert. The Alliance Defense Fund (which didn’t do so well defending against our victorious federal lawsuit over public funding of MentorKids USA earlier this year) claims it has 800 attorneys chomping at the bit. It looks like this battle is taking on biblical proportions (and, I expect, biblical exaggeration).

School officials are already between a rock and a hard place when it comes to December: trying to be inclusive, protecting the rights of all students (including those with minority viewpoints), balancing free speech with state/church dictates, and ensuring that activities have an educational, not a devotional, component.

Not even multinational corporations are safe from the manufactured ire of the power-hungry religious right. As columnist Adam Cohen of The New York Times

put it: “Religious conservatives have a cause this holiday season: the commercialization of Christmas. They’re for it.”

Target was targeted by this Christmas cabal for a boycott on the weekend after Thanksgiving, for allegedly committing the sin of employing the greeting of “Happy Holidays” rather than “Merry Christmas.” The boycott was a flop, despite Fox News’ best efforts.

Even Wal-Mart, the world’s largest corporation best known for its international sweatshops, its failure to dispense the morning-after pill to women customers and its refusal to pay many employees a living wage, was not safe from the far right feeding frenzy. The Catholic League’s Bill Donahue called a boycott of Wal-Mart in early November, also for the crime of using the greeting “Happy Holidays.” The boycott was short-lived; Wal-Mart quickly capitulated.

Boycotter, heal thyself: O’Reilly’s own website sold “The O’Reilly Factor Holiday Ornament” in its “Holiday Collection,” until bloggers pointed out the contradiction and he renamed it.

The weekend of the Target boycott I was in New York City, and I appeared briefly on a Fox News weekend report opposite aptly-named Don Wildmon of the American Family Association (who is never happy unless hysterically calling a boycott). I mentioned the irony of the Christian right demands.

“The Christians stole Christmas,” I observed, pointing out that today’s tokens of Christmas, which the far right is so eager to promote, stem from pagan festivities practiced for millennia around the time of the Winter Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere.

Wildmon pricelessly responded that he had never heard of “this Winter Solstice.”

The original Puritans certainly knew about it. That’s why they banned the cele-

brations of Dec. 25, correctly viewing the partying, gift exchanges, festivals of light and decorating with evergreens as vestiges of the infidel past. Christmas carols often plagiarized traditional music (the love song “Greensleeves” became “What Child Is This?”). The custom of Christmas cards only came on strong with British Victorians, along with the decorated tree.

There is no reference to “Christmas” in the bible. New Testament references would place the supposed birth of Jesus in spring, not winter. It is actually the returning sun, not the birth of a son, that is society’s traditional reason for rejoicing. As is typical with vanquishing religions, Christians found it useful to absorb some of the favored customs of their missionized prey. Then they conveniently forgot the origins, to the point today where a majority of believing Christians do not know they are actually observing a “natural holiday”—the shortest and darkest day of the year, the harbinger of the new year—in a manner similar to that of pagan predecessors.

The December “war” is not being waged by non-Christians, it is being waged against them. Turning our public schools into Christian-celebrating factories, assaulting commercial attempts to include all customers, is the opposite of “Peace on Earth, Good Will to All.”

I can attest to the “No Peace for Infidels, Malice to All (non-Christians)” mentality. Two five-minute appearances on the Christmas subject on Fox News, including The O’Reilly Factor, have yielded hundreds of poorly spelled, ungrammatical and mainly vicious emails from pious believers (I’m told I am a “drunken whore” who “should be kept off the airways”). In two brief (and sober!) interviews, I was outnumbered two to one.

For expressing a view in favor of diversity,

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Are you searching for Atheists on the internet?

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groups.yahoo.com/group/DFWatheistTalk/

Alito – From page 3

bitterly denouncing critics who noted that his ministry received over \$1 million in “faith-based” funding from the Bush administration, after Lusk endorsed Bush in 2000.

Lusk said he didn't mind being called a sellout, an Uncle Tom and a maverick if it meant defeat for abortion rights and same-sex marriage.

“My friends,” Lusk warned ominously, “don't fool with the church because the church has buried a million critics. And those the church has not buried, the church has made funeral arrangements for.”

Advocates of individual freedom said Religious Right support for Alito is part of the movement's scheme to overturn church-state separation and impose a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible on all Americans.

In a press conference call Jan. 6, progressive religious leaders denounced the rally, called for an independent judiciary and supported freedom of conscience.

The Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, director of the Department of Religion at the Chautauqua Institution in New York, observed, “We count on the Supreme Court as an independent body. Religious liberty is one of the least understood and most valued freedoms in the country: to worship in the

we see fit, and never, never, to be coerced.”

The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, told reporters that Justice Sunday III is nothing more than “a big play” by the Religious Right “to gain control over the one branch of government they don't now control.”

Added Lynn, “The folks putting on the event have every right to do so. We are concerned solely about [Alito's] judicial philosophy and whether he truly understands that the Supreme Court is the last great protector of the rights of the people.”

Americans United has announced opposition to Alito's confirmation and is urging Americans to contact their senators about the nomination.

WWII & Korea:

James Hardwick (Ret), Navy

Korea:

Chris Gregory, Air Force

Iraq:

Brian McIntosh (Ret), Marines

Shawn Ruzek, Marines

Deanne Dice

To the “Atheists in foxholes”
proudly serving the United States:

Thank you for your unselfish
sacrifice so that we may
all live in a safer world.

Display – From page 1

nation's history is replete with governmental acknowledgment and in some cases, accommodation of religion."

The Mercer County display was titled "Foundations of American Law and Government," and along with the Commandments included renditions of the Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, Magna Carta, Star Spangled Banner, the National Motto, Preamble of the state Constitution, the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights and a picture of Lady Justice. Supporters argued that by blending historic documents along with the Decalogue, the presentation was "secularized" and did not serve to establish religion.

But David Friedman of the Kentucky ACLU disagreed, and said that there may be an appeal to seek review by the full 6th

Circuit or the Supreme Court of the United States. He told the Louisville Courier-Journal newspaper that the Mercer County display was "thinly disguised" as a historical presentation.

"I don't think anyone understanding the context - (with the Commandments display) put up in the midst of the McCreary County litigation - seriously thinks anyone was trying to teach history. They were looking for a way to get the Ten Commandments on the wall."

Mr. Friedman added that public officials should not be permitted to promote religion and post religious slogans on public property simply because they do not explicitly announce an explicit religious intent.

Another attorney in the case, Scott Greenwood, said that the 6th Circuit ruling "creates a situation where a court of appeals is essentially ignoring a Supreme

Court decision." He described the panel's ruling as "a slap in the face." The 6th Circuit finding did appear to be a rebuke to the June SCOTUS decision that barred identical displays in Pulaski and McCreary counties, just 50 miles from the Mercer County courthouse.

But contradiction seems to be rampant in the Kentucky case. Judge Suhrheinrich wrote that the Commandments "are part of an otherwise secular exhibit," and that that the display of the Decalogue in such a fashion "is not an endorsement of religion." Attorney Francis Manion of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) who argued the case on behalf of Mercer County told the Cincinnati Enquirer newspaper that the ruling "lays to rest the idea that the Ten Commandments are so religious and sacred that there can be no purpose for displaying them that is not religious."

Season – From page 6

government neutrality and freethought, I was told by these emailers that I "should be shipped out of this country" and consigned, eventually, to hell.

The rightwing needs to listen to their friend George Will, whose column this year, "The Christian Complex," derided the fact that "many Christians are joining today's scramble for the status of victim... their persecution complex is unbecoming because it is unrealistic."

The campaign may be based on make-believe, but the threat implied is not. Wildmon has said that non-Christians "should know that they are living in a predominately Christian nation."

He should know that even if a majority is nominally Christian, our nation remains secular.

"Happy Holidays" is inclusive-and for that matter, so is "Reason's Greetings."

The Freedom From Religion Foundation, based in Madison, Wis., is a national association of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics) that has been working since 1978 to keep church and state separate.

Dover – From page 1

"They have potentially cost Dover taxpayers perhaps a million or more in legal fees. The judge has indicated the plaintiffs are entitled to such fees. The unintelligent designers of this fiasco should not walk away unscathed. They've damaged and divided this community, and there should be repercussions - a perjury investigation - beyond a lost election."

In another development, a U.S. senator who has enthusiastically backed intelligent design is suddenly less interested in the concept. Rick Santorum, a Pennsylvania Republican who faces reelection next year, announced that he is resigning from the advisory board of the Thomas More Law Center, a far-right Catholic group that handled the Dover School Board's defense - and some say botched it.

"I thought the Thomas More Law Center made a huge mistake in taking this case and in pushing this case to the extent they did," the Associated Press reported Santorum as saying.

As recently as 2002, Santorum backed ID in a newspaper opinion piece. He

wrote in the right-wing Washington Times that intelligent design "is a legitimate scientific theory that should be taught in science classes." Santorum also endorsed ID in a book he published this year titled *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good*.

Intelligent design backers, meanwhile, vow to press on, desperately hoping to make lemonade out of lemons. "This galvanizes the Christian community," William Dembski, a leading ID proponent, told the AP. "People I'm talking to say we're going to be raising a whole lot more funds now."

Left unanswered was this interesting question: If intelligent design is, as its proponents claim, a purely secular idea untied to any religious perspective, why would this loss galvanize the Christian community?

Americans United is a religious liberty watchdog group based in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1947, the organization educates Americans about the importance of church-state separation in safeguarding religious freedom.

"They've damaged and divided this community, and there should be repercussions."

SOCAS

Will trail of corruption & influence peddling lead to evangelicals?

Beltway insider and lobbyist Jack Abramoff pleaded guilty Tuesday to a battery of federal charges including tax evasion, conspiracy, mail fraud and influence-peddling.

U.S. District Court Judge Ellen Huvelle said that the influential power broker who has ties with both political parties as well as the White House, engaged in a blatant conspiracy involving "corruption of public official" through a systematic campaign of financial contributions, junkets and gift "in exchange for certain official acts."

In what was described as a "heavily scripted court appearance," Abramoff responded to each of the three charges with a curt "I plead guilty, your honor."

The scandal has fueled speculation that as many as 20 members of Congress from both parties could be indicted, as Abramoff "names names" for federal prosecutors. Already former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, a booster of conservative and religious right causes, is under investigation for accepting campaign donations, free golf trips and other pleasure excursions over a three-year period.

But while news reports and much of the federal probe centered around Abramoff focuses on members of Congress, there are indications that another key figure in the story, former Christian Coalition director Ralph Reed, may also have forthcoming legal problems.

Reed is a candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Georgia, and has served as Chairman of the state Republican Party. His expertise as a campaign strategist is widely credited with helping in the election of Sen. Saxby Chambliss, putting Sonny Perdue in the governor's mansion, and allowing the Republicans to win control of the state senate for the first time since the days of Reconstruction.

Reed is also founder and president of

Century Strategies, a public relations and political advisory firm based in Washington, DC and Atlanta, GA. He and his company have worked on 88 campaigns for the U.S. Senate, Congress and governorships in two-dozen states.

A trail of money, charges of illegal lobbying and a greedy effort to maintain a lucrative gambling monopoly link Reed, an almost self-righteous booster of Christian family values, with Jack Abramoff and partner Michael Scanlan. Testimony, legal documents and news reports show that Reed, with his network of contacts throughout America's religious right evangelical churches - especially in the deep South - was heavily involved in a behind-the-scenes lobbying effort on behalf of a \$300 million-a-year gambling enterprise operated by the Coushatta Indian tribe of Louisiana.

In 2002, the tribe was threatened by plans of the rival Jena Band, part of the Choctaw Indian nation, to construct a competing casino in southwestern Louisiana. Jena Band had hired former GOP National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour to win approval for the project from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At this point Abramoff and Scanlon were already under contract to the tune of \$32 million to stop the Louisiana gambling complex. According to Jack Newfield of *The Nation*, what Abramoff needed was someone with enough political "juice" in the conservative South and contacts with corporate and political insiders to quash the proposal.

Enter Ralph Reed.

In 1997, Reed resigned from the Christian Coalition after transforming the evangelical political advocacy group into an electoral machine capable of pumping out tens of millions of "voters guides" and mobilizing congregations from evangelical, Pentecostal and fundamentalist

churches across the country on behalf of ambitious political hopefuls. It was estimated at the time that over half of state Republican organizations were either outright controlled or heavily influenced by the Coalition. The group had promoted its "Contract With the American Family" as a religious cure-all for the alleged shortfalls of secular modernity, and lavished evangelical conservatives with a new and awesome political influence everywhere from local school boards to the corridors of power in Washington, DC.

After his departure from the Coalition, Reed reinvented himself as a campaign strategist and corporate lobbyist. His dedication in supporting George H.W. Bush at a time when many religious conservatives were wary of his political credentials, and mobilizing support behind son George Bush in 2000, began to pay off. Even before the younger Bush moved into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, campaign guru Karl Rove was putting the boyish Reed in touch with one of his first clients, the Enron Corporation. According to Neufield, Enron paid Century Strategies more than \$300,000 to lobby on behalf of energy deregulation. Bigger contracts followed when Reed took over Bush's 2004 campaign in the Southeast running up \$3.7 million in fees. *Time Magazine* dubbed him "the right hand of God."

In 1981, Reed moved from Georgia to Washington, D.C. to become an intern for Jack Abramoff who had just been elected Chairman of the College Republican National Committee. Reed quickly moved up the GOP organization ladder, and in 1983 Abramoff promoted his protoge making him Executive Director of CRNC. Reed replaced Grover Norquist, who later would become President of Americans for

Continued on page 13

Are you searching for Atheists on the internet?

Join in the discussions at the DFW Atheist Talk group.
groups.yahoo.com/group/DFWatheistTalk/

EVOLUTION DEBATE

The illusion of design

Richard Dawkins
THE SKEPTICS SOCIETY

The world is divided into things that look as though somebody designed them (wings and wagon-wheels, hearts and televisions), and things that just happened through the unintended workings of physics (mountains and rivers, sand dunes, and solar systems). Mount Rushmore belonged firmly in the second category until the sculptor Gutzon Borglum carved it into the first. Charles Darwin moved in the other direction. He discovered a way in which the unaided laws of physics - the laws according to which things "just happen" - could, in the fullness of geologic time, come to mimic deliberate design. The illusion of design is so successful that to this day most Americans (including, significantly, many influential and rich Americans) stubbornly refuse to believe it is an illusion. To such people, if a heart (or an eye or a bacterial flagellum) looks designed, that's proof enough that it is designed.

No wonder Thomas Henry Huxley, "Darwin's bulldog," was moved to chide himself on reading the *Origin of Species*: "How extremely stupid not to have thought of that." And Huxley was the least stupid of men. The breathtaking power and reach of Darwin's idea - extensively documented in the field, as Jonathan Weiner reports in "Evolution in Action" - is matched by its audacious simplicity. You can write it out in a phrase: nonrandom survival of randomly varying hereditary instructions for building embryos. Yet, given the opportunities afforded by deep time, this simple little algorithm generates prodigies of complexity, elegance, and diversity of apparent design. True design, the kind we see in a knapped flint, a jet plane, or a personal computer, turns out to be a manifes-

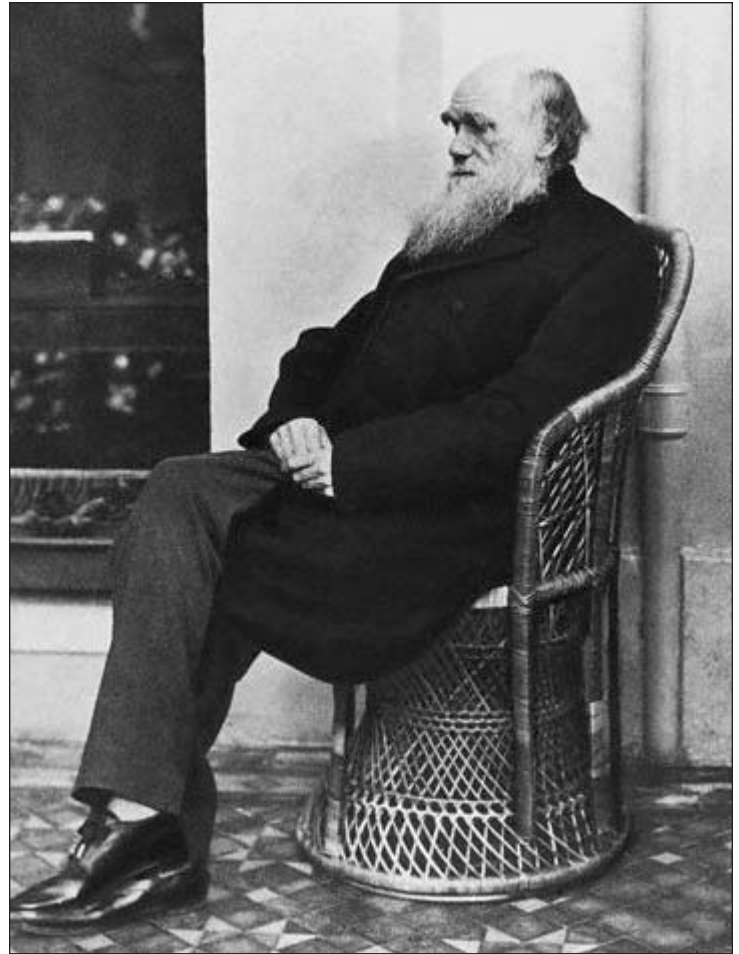
tation of an entity - the human brain - that itself was never designed, but is an evolved product of Darwin's mill.

Paradoxically, the extreme simplicity of what the philosopher Daniel C. Dennett called Darwin's dangerous idea may be its greatest barrier to acceptance. People have a hard time believing that so simple a mechanism could deliver such powerful results.

The arguments of creationists, including those creationists who cloak their pretensions under the politically devious phrase "intelligent-design theory," repeatedly return to the same big fallacy. Such-and-such looks designed. Therefore it was designed. To pursue my paradox, there is a sense in which the skepticism that often greets Darwin's idea is a measure of its greatness.

Paraphrasing the twentieth-century population geneticist Ronald A. Fisher, natural selection is a mechanism for generating improbability on an enormous scale. Improbable is pretty much a synonym for unbelievable. Any theory that explains the highly improbable is asking to be disbelieved by those who don't understand it.

Yet the highly improbable does exist in the real world, and it must be explained.



Adaptive improbability - complexity - is precisely the problem that any theory of life must solve and that natural selection, uniquely as far as science knows, does solve. In truth, it is intelligent design that is the biggest victim of the argument from improbability. Any entity capable of deliberately designing a living creature, to say nothing of a universe, would have to be hugely complex in its own right.

If, as the maverick astronomer Fred Hoyle mistakenly thought, the spontaneous origin of life is as improbable as a hurricane blowing through a junkyard and having the luck to assemble a Boeing 747, then a divine designer is the ultimate Boeing 747. The designer's spontaneous origin *ex nihilo* would have to be even more

Do you know of any Church/State separation violations?

Some things to look for are the posting of the ten commandment in public (government) buildings including public school buildings, city parks, municipal buildings, and libraries.

To voice your concerns, please email the Metroplex Atheist Director:

director@metroplexatheists.org

improbable than the most complex of his alleged creations. Unless, of course, he relied on natural selection to do his work for him! And in that case, one might pardonably wonder (though this is not the place to pursue the question), does he need to exist at all?

The achievement of nonrandom natural selection is to tame chance. By smearing out the luck, breaking down the improbability into a large number of small steps - each one somewhat improbable but not ridiculously so - natural selection ratchets up the improbability.

As the generations unfold, ratcheting takes the cumulative improbability up to levels that - in the absence of the ratcheting - would exceed all sensible credence.

Many people don't understand such nonrandom cumulative ratcheting. They think natural selection is a theory of chance, so no wonder they don't believe it! The battle that we biologists face, in our struggle to convince the public and their elected representatives that evolution is a fact, amounts to the battle to convey to them the power of Darwin's ratchet - the blind watchmaker - to propel lineages up the gentle slopes of Mount Improbable.

The misapplied argument from improbability is not the only one deployed by creationists. They are quite fond of gaps, both literal gaps in the fossil record and gaps in their understanding of what Darwinism is all about. In both cases the (lack of) logic in the argument is the same. They allege a gap or deficiency in the Darwinian account. Then, without even inquiring whether intelligent design suffers from the same deficiency, they award victory to the rival "theory" by default. Such reasoning is no way to do science. But science is precisely not what creation "scientists," despite the ambitions of their intelligent-design bullyboys, are doing.

In the case of fossils, as Donald R. Prothero documents in "The Fossils Say Yes" [see the print issue of *Natural History* in which this article first appeared], today's biologists are more fortunate than Darwin was in having access to beautiful series of transitional stages: almost cinematic records of evolutionary changes in action. Not all transitions are so attested, of course - hence the vaunted gaps. Some small animals just don't fossilize; their phyla are known only from modern specimens: their

history is one big gap. The equivalent gaps for any creationist or intelligent-design theory would be the absence of a cinematic record of God's every move on the morning that he created, for example, the bacterial flagellar motor. Not only is there no such divine videotape: there is a complete absence of evidence of any kind for intelligent design.

Absence of evidence for is not positive evidence against, of course. Positive evidence against evolution could easily be found - if it exists. Fisher's contemporary and rival J.B.S. Haldane was asked by a Popperian zealot what would falsify evolution. Haldane quipped, "Fossil rabbits in the Precambrian." No such fossil has ever been found, of course, despite numerous searches for anachronistic species.

There are other barriers to accepting the truth of Darwinism. Many people cannot bear to think that they are cousins not just of chimpanzees and monkeys, but of tapeworms, spiders, and bacteria. The unpalatability of a proposition, however, has no bearing on its truth. I personally find the idea of cousinship to all living species positively agreeable, but neither my warmth toward it, nor the cringing of a creationist, has the slightest bearing on its truth.

The same could be said of political or moral objections to Darwinism. "Tell children they are nothing more than animals and they will behave like animals." I do not for a moment accept that the conclusion follows from the premise. But even if it did, once again, a disagreeable consequence cannot undermine the truth of a premise. Some have said that Hitler founded his political philosophy on Darwinism. This is nonsense: doctrines of racial superiority in no way follow from natural selection, properly understood. Nevertheless, a good case can be made that a society run on Darwinian lines would be a very disagreeable society in which to live. But, yet again, the unpleasantness of a proposition has no bearing on its truth.

Huxley, George C. Williams, and other evolutionists have opposed Darwinism as a political and moral doctrine just as passionately as they have advocated its scientific truth. I count myself in that company. Science needs to understand natural selection as a force in nature, the better to oppose it as a normative force in politics. Darwin himself expressed dismay at the

callousness of natural selection: "What a book a Devil's Chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low & horribly cruel works of nature!"

In spite of the success and admiration that he earned, and despite his large and loving family, Darwin's life was not an especially happy one. Troubled about genetic deterioration in general and the possible effects of inbreeding closer to home, as James Moore documents in "Good Breeding" [see November issue of *Natural History* magazine], and tormented by illness and bereavement, as Richard Milner's interview with the psychiatrist Ralph Colp Jr. shows in "Darwin's Shrink," Darwin's achievements seem all the more. He even found the time to excel as an experimenter, particularly with plants. David Kohn's and Sheila Ann Dean's essays ("The Miraculous Season" and "Bee Lines and Worm Burrows" [See November issue of *Natural History Magazine*]) lead me to think that, even without his major theoretical achievements, Darwin would have won lasting recognition as an experimenter, albeit an experimenter with the style of a gentlemanly amateur, which might not find favor with modern journal referees.

As for his major theoretical achievements, of course, the details of our understanding have moved on since Darwin's time. That was particularly the case during the synthesis of Darwinism with Mendelian digital genetics. And beyond the synthesis, as Douglas J. Futuyma explains in "On Darwin's Shoulders," [see November issue of *Natural History Magazine*] and Sean B. Carroll details further for the exciting new field of "evo-devo" in "The Origins of Form," Darwinism proves to be a flourishing population of theories, itself undergoing rapid evolutionary change.

In any developing science there are disagreements. But scientists - and here is what separates real scientists from the pseudoscientists of the school of intelligent design - always know what evidence it would take to change their minds. One thing all real scientists agree upon is the fact of evolution itself. It is a fact that we are cousins of gorillas, kangaroos, starfish, and bacteria. Evolution is as much a fact as the heat of the sun. It is not a theory, and for pity's sake, let's stop confusing the philosophically naive by calling it so. Evolution is a fact.

CHRISTIAN CRIME

The murder of Larry Hooper

Arlene-Marie
AMERICAN ATHEISTS

On October 18, 2004 Arthur Shelton, a self described Christian and Eagle Scout, murdered his friend and roommate, Larry Hooper because Hooper didn't believe in God.

After many months of postponements and on December 18, 2005, Arthur Shelton, with his defense attorney, Seymour Swartz, appeared at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit, Michigan before Judge Gregory D. Bill to face charges of murder in the first degree brought by Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Christina Guiruis.

The trial began with the taped phone call Arthur Shelton placed to the Taylor police department in Taylor, Michigan October 18, 2004 at precisely 12:44 AM. Shelton sounded calm and pridefull when he told the dispatcher he had just shot "the devil himself" with a revolver and a shotgun because "he [Hooper] didn't believe in God." Shelton told the dispatcher he was "still armed and ready to shoot again in case he moves. I want to make sure he's gone." When the dispatcher asked how many times he shot the victim Shelton replied, "hopefully enough." Throughout the 15 minute phone call Shelton often repeated, "I'm a Christian and an Eagle Scout and I wouldn't lie," and "don't worry about me, I'm fine, but he's the devil." The dispatcher struggled to persuade Shelton to lay down his weapon and go outdoors with his arms raised. Eventually Shelton complied but resisted, as he feared Hooper might not be "dead enough."

Dead enough was an understatement. When the police arrived they were confronted with the grizzly scene of Hooper sitting upright on the couch with his head blown away and his brain laying on his hand. The autopsy report presented by the prosecutor was gruesome to be sure, but for the record, Larry Hooper tested negative for all narcotics and alcohol.

Testimony by the arresting office and the transporting of Shelton to the police station revealed that while the officers were interested in gathering details about the incident,

Shelton was obsessed with talking about God, the Eagle Scouts and stating he "would not talk to anyone who didn't believe in God but that he would talk to the police because he felt they believed in God."

On the second day of the trial the court played the videotape of the late night interrogation with Arthur Shelton. He appeared calm, cooperative and enjoyed the cookies and milk he was served. Once again Arthur was obsessed about talking about God and the Eagle Scouts. He stated he "was not sorry for a second that he killed Hooper." He stated, "In the eyes of the law I was wrong and will probably spend the rest of my life in prison, but in the eyes of God I have killed an evil person - the devil himself." And when Arthur took the witness stand in his own defense he reiterated much of the same ideas.

Day three of the trial we heard summary arguments. The defense had little problem proving that Arthur is obsessed with religion, God and Eagle Scouts and pleaded for a verdict of not guilty due to insanity.

The prosecution had little problem proving that Arthur was competent, knew the difference between right and wrong and called for a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. As this was a wavered trial Judge Bill rendered his verdict quickly - guilty of second-degree murder with mental illness.

On December 19, 2005, we returned to Judge Bill's court to witness sentencing of Arthur Shelton. The prosecution asked for the 'high end' of punishment - 25 to 45 years, while the defense was still pleading for not guilty due to insanity or, at the very most a soft sentence at the 'low end' of punishment 15 to 22 years. Judge Bill invited Shelton to make a statement and after fumbling for words Shelton stated he was sorry that

Larry was dead but he did a job that had to be done. He stated that he actually, "saw fire and smoke coming from Larry's eyes and knew he was the devil himself."

to tenderly read letters written to him from Shelton's family members pleading for leniency. Shelton sat facing the audience and blew kisses to his tearful and sometimes sobbing family. In the end, the now stern faced Judge Bill pronounced sentencing - 25 to 45

years. Shelton was stunned and tried to negotiate the sentence stating, "I'm 50 years old and that is as good as a life sentence." Judge Bill responded with, "Mr. Shelton you gave Larry Hooper a life sentence by committing one of the most heinous murders to come before my court." (Note) In a private conversation, the Prosecutor, Ms Guiruis explained that Michigan law requires that Shelton must serve 25 years before being eligible for parole.

I add now a disgusting chain of events that took place in the courtroom, the hallways, the lobby of the court building, the staircase outside of the courthouse and even the ladies bathroom. George Shiffer and myself attended day one of the trial. Upon arrival we were asked who we were and I gave the court my American Atheist business card. Word that we were Atheists traveled fast in this court room that offered very limited seating and the only others in attendance were 11 members of Shelton's family who immediately began taunting George and me with "the people from hell, evil, and devils." At breaks they waited for us in the hall and continued with more of the same while adding "God loves you" and blowing us kisses and shoving their crosses worn on chains around their necks in our face. Several of the women even followed me into the bathroom and did their best to intimidate me with their crosses. Through it all George and I never flinched, but at the conclusion of the day I reported this taunting to the Officer of the Court who admitted that they were aware of the problem and escorted us to the elevator, past and to the disappointment of the waiting group of 'good Christians.'

On Day two when George and I, together with Joe Milon, entered the court room the taunting began immediately. Within an hour the Judge announced that those making gestures and faces had better cease or they would be removed.

For the balance of the day the Christians wore their neck crosses on their backs, as we were seated in the back row, while constantly flopping them about with their hand. Upon returning from lunch and without court escort, the Christians were waiting for us on the seventh floor and lunged at us with small signs they had painted - Jesus lives, God loves you

and again their crosses thrusting all of this within 2 or 3 inches from our noses. Tempers flared and a brief shouting match began. Brief because the court officers were there in a flash.

Day three found Atheist Lee Helms in the same taunting position of the previous days though he was not known to the court or the Christians. At the conclusion of the day an officer of the court detained him stating they have been having trouble with 'those' (Christians) people and given an escort to the elevators.

But, having all that behind us, December 19th, the day of sentencing was a horrific experience for myself, George Shiffer, Joe Milon, Lee Helms and Marty Maier. When leaving the courtroom the 'Christian' Shelton family lay in wait for us in the hallway. Their tears dried and surrounding us shouting these comments, "The one good thing of all of this is that another Atheist is dead and the world is better off for it." And, "the only good Atheist is a dead Atheist."

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie

William McEwen

METROPLEX ATHEISTS

Last night I attended the 10 p.m. Christmas Eve service at St. John The Apostle United Methodist Church in Arlington.

I've attended Xmas Eve services before. They are usually laid back, with a brief sermon and lots of Christmas carols. I like Christmas carols and I enjoy singing them. It's sometimes worth sitting through a brief sermon to be in a group belting out Silent Night Holy Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, and Jingle Bells. I wasn't so lucky last night. The temperatures were unreasonably high last night, but there was no warmth in that church.

Rev. Steve Langford had a message. The message was we should embrace things, and not try to understand them. Specifically, the "Christmas Story."

"We westerners are always trying to understand things," he said critically. The 40-something couple sitting in the pew in front of me nodded their

heads enthusiastically. Yeah, we're morons to try to understand things. Dr. Langford continued along these lines for just a few more minutes. Then it was on to quoting scripture. Good thing, too. I was ready to walk out. But first I might have punched Langford for good measure.

Langford has always given me the creeps. He's poor at preaching. He quickly makes his point then rambles on seemingly to only fill time. Last night he looked like Charles Manson if Manson had a good barber.

Yeah, the story of the birth of the Christ child. It's all just folklore, a fable, horseshit. I watched the laypeople giving the sermon and looked about at all the parishioners soaking it up. My god, I thought. All of the people here, and in churches around the world really buy into this crap. Feeble minds. No faculties. You know what? That's scary. Christ, their main guy. God, so nice to forgive us for our sins. And pursuit of truth, knowledge and understanding is the villain in the story. That's the whole problem with "faith," and last night in Arlington, they celebrated it.

Corruption – From page 9

Tax Reform, one of the fundraising pipelines in the Indian gaming debacle.

Two years later Reed would supposedly "find God" after a night of drinking, eating and planning at the Bullfeathers bar and restaurant in Washington. He later mused how "the Holy Spirit simply demanded me to come to Jesus." Reed claimed he walked into a nearby telephone booth and after looking for "churches" in the Yellow Pages located the Evangel Assembly of God in nearby Camp Springs, Maryland. From there, it was several more years of political activism including a stint supporting the re-election of U.S. Senator Jesse Helms and picketing abortion-rights meetings.

From 1989 - 1997 he worked closely with televangelist Pat Robertson building the Christian Coalition into a political powerhouse for religious conservatives.

In 1991, while boasting of the Coalition's success in sneaking "stealth" religious right candidates into office, Reed gushed, "I want to be invisible. I do guerrilla warfare. I paint my face and travel at night. You don't know it's over until you're in a body bag (Norfolk Virginia-Pilot newspaper, 11/9/91).

When federal agencies began looking into the activities of the Coalition and its CFO, Reed abruptly resigned, moved back to George and opened Century Strategies.

WAR ON CHRISTMAS

How Atheists deal with holidays

AMERICAN ATHEISTS

Jerry Falwell is convinced - those nasty Atheists/Secularists are out to ruin Christmas and replace this festive time of year with "Happy Holidays" greetings and "Holiday Tress," right?

Probably not. Atheists ARE concerned about government endorsement of religion especially during this season. Taxpayer money should not be used to erect or host Christian nativity crèches, Jewish menorahs or anything else suggesting sectarian religion.

Private individuals and businesses should have the right to recognize and celebrate the holidays as they see fit. "Happy Holidays" is an inclusive, broad

recognition of our country's diversity.

Over 30 million Americans profess "no religion" according to the American Religion Identification Survey. This includes Atheists, Freethinkers, Secular Humanists and others of no religious belief. Many of these celebrate this time of year by recognizing the Winter Solstice which occurs on December 21, 2005 at 1:35 PM ET.

This marks the Sun's lowest point in its apparent annual journey across the sky. It is a "natural holiday," one celebrated along with the Summer Solstice and the equinoxes) by human beings since ancient times. It has no supernatural overtones, and for many Atheists, well, it's as good a time as any for convivial gatherings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Business Meeting

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING:

What: Meeting to decide general business of the group and to discuss current events

Date: Third Sunday of the month

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Place: TBA; For the scheduled location, visit www.metroplexatheists.org

Social Meetings

DALLAS / PLANO ATHEIST MEETUP DAY:

What: Meet with other local Atheists to talk about your beliefs

Date: Every Tuesday

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: TBA; For locations near you visit: atheists.meetup.com

J. GILLIGAN'S:

What: "My dinner with Atheists," social time with a bunch of heathens

Date: Every Wednesday

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill (Meet on the grill side)
400 E. Abram Street
Arlington, TX

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP:

What: All the things you want in a church, without the gods

Date: First and third Sunday of the month. For information visit:

www.dfwfellowship.com

Time: 11:00 PM – 12:00 PM

Place: Humanist Hall
414 N. Main St.
Grapevine, TX

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP BRUNCH:

What: Sunday brunch without the gospels

Date: Second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Time: 10:15 AM – 11:30 AM

Place: TBA

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP STUDY GROUP

What: explores classical mythology's

Date: Second and fourth Sunday

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Humanist Hall
414 N. Main St.
Grapevine, TX

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP STITCH 'N BITCH

What: Knit, vent and dish. All levels of knitters (and other crafters) welcome

Date: Second and fourth Tuesday

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Humanist Hall
414 N. Main St.
Grapevine, TX

DFW ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP OBJECTIVIST LECTURE

What: For those interested in a better understanding of Ayn Rand's philosophy of objectivism

Date: Thursday, January 19

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Humanist Hall
414 N. Main St.,
Grapevine, TX

GAME DAY / POTLUCK

What: Bring a covered dish to share and your favorite games

Date: Sunday, January 29

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Humanist Hall
414 N. Main St.
Grapevine, TX

METROPLEX ATHEISTS READING GROUP:

What: The Metroplex Atheists Reading Group discusses selected books. Come join in, even if you didn't read the selection. For the latest book, visit:

www.metroplexatheists.org/read/

Date: Third Sunday of the month

Time: After the regular meeting

Place: Heritage Park
217 Main St. at Second
Irving, TX

To have your events listed email:

The Atheist Voice Editor at
editor@metroplexatheists.org

METROPLEX ATHEISTS

COME JOIN US

EVERY THIRD SUNDAY
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

www.metroplexatheists.org

January 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3 D/P AMD	4 J. Gilligan's	5	6	7
8 DFW EF	9	10 D/P AMD Stich	11 J. Gilligan's	12	13	14
15 Reg. Meeting & MARG	16 <i>MLK Day</i>	17 Atheist Meetup	18 J. Gilligan's	19 Lecture	20	21
22 DFW EF	23	24 D/P AMD Stich	25 J. Gilligan's	26	27	28
29 Game Day	30	31 D/P AMD				

February 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 J. Gilligan's	2 <i>Groundhog's Day</i>	3	4
5 DFW EF	6	7 D/P AMD	8 J. Gilligan's	9	10	11
12 Brunch Study	13	14 D/P AMD Stich	15 J. Gilligan's	16	17	18
19 MA, DFW EF & MARG	20 <i>Washington's Birthday</i>	21 Atheist Meetup	22 J. Gilligan's	23	24	25
26 Brunch Study	27	28 D/P AMD Stich				

March 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 J. Gilligan's	2	3	4
5 DFW EF	6	7 D/P AMD	8 J. Gilligan's	9	10	11
12 Brunch Study	13	14 D/P AMD Stich	15 J. Gilligan's	16	17	18
19 MA, DFW EF & MARG	20	21 Atheist Meetup	22 J. Gilligan's	23	24	25
26 Brunch Study	27	28 D/P AMD Stich	29	30	31	

***THE ATHEIST VOICE* is a bi-monthly publication of Metroplex Atheists.**

For more information, please visit our website: www.metroplexatheists.org

To submit an article or letter to the editor, please email us.

The Atheist Voice Editor: editor@metroplexatheists.org

THE ATHEIST VOICE
c/o Metroplex Atheists
3333 Southlake Park Rd.
Southlake, TX 76092

Deliver to:

“Because we must. Because we have the call. Because it is nobler to fight for rationality without winning than to give up in the face of continued defeats. Because whatever true progress humanity makes is through the rationality of the occasional individual and because any one individual we may win for the cause may do more for humanity than a hundred thousand who hug superstition to their breasts.”
— Isaac Asimov, when asked why he fights religion with no hope for victory

WHY DO WE FIGHT?