



# HOUSTON HUMANIST ALLIANCE

## THE NEWSLETTER FOR HOUSTON'S HUMANIST AND FREETHOUGHT COMMUNITY

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### Calendar of Events:

**Sunday, July 4** | 10:00 - 12:00 noon | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | Contact: Art Fay\*

**Sunday, July 4** | 12:30 - 2:00 pm | *Humanists of Houston (HOH) Brunch* | in upstairs facility of Kroger's on 1505 Wirt Rd (across street from Unitarian Fellowship) | Topics chosen by the group are discussed on first Sundays monthly | Contact: Tom Brucia\*

**Saturday, July 10** | 1:30 pm | *HAMCIAC Regular Meeting* | Montgomery Co. Library in the Woodlands (2nd floor) [From I-45 go west on Woodland Pkwy to 2nd traffic light; turn north (right) on Six Pines Dr; cross bridge & watch for wavy sculptures in the median; turn west (left) to Lake Robbins Rd; pass Woodlands Pavilion; turn left into Library parking lot] | Regular meetings are held on second Saturdays monthly | Contact: Ross Henry\*

**Sunday, July 11** | 10:30-11:30 am | *Houston Church Of Freethought (HCOF) Service* | in the Magnolia Room of the Courtyard Marriott on 3131 West Loop (northbound just north of Richmond) | Services (including song, humor, lectures & discussion with children's classes & baby sitting available) are held on second Sundays monthly | Contact: Art Fay\*

**Wednesday, July 14** | 6:30 pm | *Drug Policy Forum of Texas* | TV 26 or 95 | Drug policy reform discussed every other Wednesday | Contact: G Alan Robison\*

**Thursday July 15** | 12:00 noon | *Newsletter Deadline* | All articles, letters, and submissions of interest are welcome if on editor's desk, postmarks not withstanding (e-mail format required), | Contact: Jim Knierien\*

**Saturday, July 17** | 2:30 - 4:30 pm | *Humanists of Houston (HOH) Regular meeting* | in the Unitarian Fellowship hall at 1504 Wirt Rd) | Contact: Tom Brucia\*

**Sunday, July 18** | 10:30 am | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | Contact: Art Fay\*

**Summer Break** | 10:30 - 12:00 noon | *Ideas Club* | in Borders Books & Music on 9633 Westheimer (at Gessner) | Book reviews by members are held on fourth Sundays monthly, Contact: Bob Finch\* Will return in September

**Wednesday, July 28** | 6:30 pm | *Drug Policy Forum of Texas* | TV 26 or 95 | Drug policy reform discussed every other Wednesday | Contact: G Alan Robison\*

**Wednesday, July 28 (Tentative)** | 6:00 pm | *Houston Atheist Society (HAS)* | at Ziggy's, corner of West Alabama and Greenbriar. Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month. | Contact: Keith McCaffety\*

**Sunday, August 1** | 10:00 - 12:00 noon | *Coffee Social* | at Borders Books & Music in Meyerland Plaza (I-610 W Loop S at Beechnut) | Spontaneous informal discussions are held on first & third Sundays monthly | Contact: Art Fay\*

**Sunday, August 1** | 12:30 - 2:00 pm | *HOH Brunch* | in upstairs facility of Kroger's on 1505 Wirt Rd (across street from Unitarian Fellowship) | Topics chosen by the group are discussed on first Sundays monthly | Contact: Tom Brucia\*

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## About the Houston Humanist Alliance:

The *Houston Humanist Alliance* is a collection of local humanist and Freethought organizations in Houston which have come together to provide a wider range of services, information, and activities to their members. While still separated in their membership, leadership, and schedules, member-organizations of the *Alliance* share the same newsletter and mailing lists. This allows our organizations to cooperate effectively and enables individual members to be kept informed of virtually all activities of interests to humanists in the Houston area.

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## Publisher:

- [1] The Houston Humanist Alliance Newsletter (HHA NL) is published monthly by the Houston Humanist Alliance (HHA)
- [2] The purpose of the HHA NL is
  - (1) publicizing events, i.e., keeping members informed of regularly and specially scheduled meetings,
  - (2) providing for the public at large information about humanism and humanist thought, and
  - (3) providing a platform for members to express their viewpoints and opinions.
- [3] The HHA and the editor do not necessarily agree with nor endorse the views expressed herein. Many humanists and freethinkers pride themselves with being individuals. Consensus among Humanists is therefore difficult to achieve. No one humanist can speak for all other humanists.
- [4] Anyone may quote from the newsletter but is asked to please give credit where credit is due, i.e., cite author, newsletter issue (number or date), & page.
- [5] All articles, letters, and submissions of interest are welcome if on editor's desk by deadline (12:00 noon on the 15th of each month), postmarks not withstanding. E-mail format required [Hmailto:jim.knierien@thermo.com](mailto:jim.knierien@thermo.com)H Name, phone number, & street address required for editorial contact purposes only.
- [6] The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for space or clarity, but never with the intent to alter the thrust of the author.
- [7] Snailmail editions are sent gratis to paid members of the HHA. Email editions (Adobe PDF or plain text) are sent gratis to anyone else upon request. by sending an email to:  
[Hmailto:jim.knierien@thermo.com](mailto:jim.knierien@thermo.com)H

## Explanation of iih symbol:

The ii of the iih represents two or more people. The h of the iih represents the humanness to which they aspire. A lower case h is used instead of an upper case H to indicate that it is better to become human (as opposed to inhuman) than it is to join a Humanist organization.

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## From the Editor's desk:

By Jim Knierien

Well! Unfortunately no one submitted an essay for this month.

However this is the Newdow wrap-up issue. In addition to a press release from the AHA we have a letter-to-the-editor from Ariel Thomann published in the *Houston Chronicle* which includes comments from other area freethinkers.

Also reproduced without permission (I didn't see the copyright notice) is a *Houston Chronicle* article which mentions Jimmy Dunne and HOH.

## Ron's Ramblings

By Ron Titus

[1] It is my current understanding that Jews do not proselytize (seek to make converts). If someone wants to convert to Judaism, that someone must take the initiative, and make the first move.

Not so the Christians. "Go into the whole world, and make disciples of every nation, etc, etc" is their mandate (Matthew 28 & Mark 16). One does not have to seek out a Christian missionary; a Christian missionary is already out, LOOKING FOR YOU! 'As we speak, so to speak.

I've been told that Christians are perhaps the first to promote a proselytizing religion.

Others have observed, rightly or wrongly, that the successful spread of Christendom is largely due to this (proselytizing), plus stamping out the competition. One can extrapolate the stamping out to include the use of the sword.

Through the threat of the sword, Constantine (274-337) put Christianity on the map. Both Charles Martel (688-741) and Charlemagne (747-814) followed his example. Muslims are frequently criticized for having used such tactics (converting by means of the sword), but they probably learned the procedure from the earlier Christians.

The procedure (conversions by unfriendly persuasion) persists to modern times by the Mafia's infamous "We'll make him a proposition he can't refuse." Horse heads are herewith cited as an effective tool.

[2] Enter humanism.

Criticisms have been and are still being made for humanism's slow growth. When people ask why, I usually precede my answer with the analogy of "trying to herd cats". This is followed with the observation of the intense individuality of humanists. They resist following the crowd. Plus, "evolution takes centuries", even though it never ceases, even in nanoseconds.

See 'Ramble' continued. On pg. 3

## CULTURAL COACH

Atheists and agnostics deserve people's respect, too

By LINDA S. WALLACE

Houston Chronicle, Houston section

June 25, 2004

Some of the kindest people I know are those who care enough to argue with me and dare me to grow.

Quite a few of these good souls took me to task last week for my column urging this nation's diverse communities to work to safeguard rights for people who wish to express a love for God or religion.

Unlike many of the e-mails I received, these were from kind, compassionate and gentle readers. Their intelligent comments were conveyed in a civil manner and made a compelling point: Not all people who are good believe in God.

"I am a humanist and am proud to be an atheist because I see no evidence of a god, heaven, hell, devils, angels or a soul that leaves the body," wrote Jimmy Dunne, past president of the Humanists of Houston. "Humanists try to be the best human beings we can be but we do not recognize supernatural beings without evidence. We work to make a better world."

OK, Jimmy is the type of person I would want in my business or community. He strives to see the best in people, so I'd pick him early to be on my team. If we are to work together, however, we would have to respect each other's right to make different choices.

Too often, people decide that if others don't see an issue their way, there either is something wrong with them or some skill they lack. Unfortunately, atheists have a few folks like that within their ranks, but, hey, who doesn't?

"I am an absolute, complete, total, dyed in the wool atheist," a man from Houston wrote. "What we need in this world is not freedom of religion but freedom from religion." He went on to call the Bible and the Koran "nonsense."

How should we respond to so cruel an e-mail? Well, we should draw upon our understanding of human nature and try as best we can to find an inch of common ground. When it is clear that a writer seeks to intimidate us rather than engage us in a useful dialogue, we might simply agree to disagree.

"I support your right to express your opinion," I responded. "As you are a patriot, I am certain that you respect my right to express my opinions. So where's the disagreement, really?"

In an e-mail, a woman explained that she was constantly hounded whenever she mentioned she was agnostic. She finally stopped making mention of it to avoid the inquisition. Her friends who tried to bully her are guilty of demanding religious freedom for themselves but refusing those rights to others.

As citizens of the world, we must work to understand why our views sometimes differ, and seek ways to promote cultural literacy. Plenty of people in each nationality, religion and age group feel that their belief is the only one with any legitimacy, and they will find ways to test us.

A new reader recently reminded me that diversity is a term that should embrace all differences, not just those that are trendy or of public interest at the time. I could not agree more.

The greatest response I've received to a column came last year after I affirmed a mother's right to breast-feed in public. Last week's column on religious tolerance generated nearly as much volume and negative mail. That's fascinating when we consider that news reports on diversity almost always are limited to racial and ethnic tension.

Life is filled with sticky situations that stir debate. Once we learn the skills to handle any one of these issues, we can more ably tackle them all.

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'Ramble' continued from pg.2

Even after joining a Humanist group, humanists tend to resist conformity, resist surrendering to the norms of their communities. Efforts to make statements on which all members can agree have failed more often than not. "Live and let live" is a common, generally accepted by all (humanists), principle.

Can humanists achieve growth by proselytizing, (but) without the sword, of course?

[3] Enter paranoia, and my personal spin.

Paranoia is a mental illness or behavioral disorder in which other non-threatening people are seen as threats. Where healthy folks see friends, paranoids see enemies. There is probably a little paranoia in everyone.

In today's climate of foreign infiltration and terrorist alerts, there are grounds to be suspicious of everyone, especially strangers. Unless strangers can convincingly prove themselves friendly persons, they might very easily be identified as enemies.

We humanists are strangers, strangers to the Religious Right. We are strangers even to our representatives in Washington. We are strangers to both Bushs.

George Bush the Elder once said (and I never heard him retract his statement) that atheists don't deserve the protections of the law. George the Younger's "faith-based-initiative" (FBI) excludes non-Christian religions (Muslim applications have yet to be accepted.), so where do secular humanists fit in other than pay the taxes that support them? With the aid of the Patriot Act, Attorney General John Ashcroft is doing a fine job of identifying and incarcerating without access to legal defense anyone "he sees" as a "terrorist". (What Erikc Sadler said some time ago applies to all three: "Never attribute to malice what can be attributed to stupidity.")

See 'Ramble' continued. On pg. 6

## We'll Be Back:

### Humanist Liberty More Than a Technicality

AHA Press Release

By Roy Speckhardt

(Washington, D.C.) "This battle isn't over but, Humanists are sadly disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision to skirt the issue of including 'under God' in the Pledge," states Mel Lipman, president of the American Humanist Association (AHA). "This struggle against state sponsored sectarianism is far from over. By throwing this case out on standing, the Supreme Court implies it is willing to disregard the 30 million Americans who identify with no religion, as well as faithful Buddhists, Hindus and others who do not subscribe to this monotheistic pledge."

Humanists stand firm alongside Newdow that the words "under God" in the government established Pledge of Allegiance are an unconstitutional endorsement of religion. "The practice of reciting the Pledge in public schools specifically targets children, inculcating them with a monotheistic message not held by millions of Americans," adds Lipman.

This is not a passive reading of a historic document but an active swearing of loyalty to one's country. When these words were added on June 14, 1954, exactly 50 years ago today, our national oath of loyalty became tantamount to prayer. "The First Amendment does not require hostility toward religion, but mandates government neutrality toward religion. By imposing a religious belief on those without such beliefs, the current version of the Pledge utterly fails this test," explains Lipman.

Humanists feel the Court must inevitably recognize that "under God" is not the language of patriotic ceremony but rather the governmental endorsement of sectarian religion. "We are confident that Humanists, atheists, and defenders of church-state separation, will remain vigilant in confronting the 1954 addition of 'under God' to the Pledge, which violates the principle of religious neutrality, and will leave the teaching of religion where it belongs-with parents and in houses of worship," concludes Lipman.

The American Humanist Association will be supporting future litigation that will finally force the Supreme Court to act.

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## NEWDOW CASE

### Background from the AHA

The Supreme Court has ruled against Michael Newdow in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*. Eight members of the Supreme Court have decided that Newdow's protracted custody fight for his daughter means he does not have sufficient legal standing to sue on her behalf. Justice Antonin Scalia did not participate.

The ruling does not address whether or not having public schoolchildren recite "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is constitutional. However, three of the justices (Rehnquist, O'Connor, and Thomas) have filed separate opinions in support of "under God" in addition to the decision.

The American Humanist Association proudly stood by Newdow's challenge every step of the way and submitted a friend-of-the-court brief on his behalf.

Humanists and other freethinkers everywhere must respond immediately to this ruling. The Humanist perspective must not be absent from the media firestorm that will erupt today. This will be a landmark decision with implications that will reverberate nationwide. As Humanists we must be prepared to decry continues to render the non-religious second-class citizens.

### Letter to the editor

Yesterday's editorial, "Never Mind the Pledge" claims there is "no guarantee that the court would have spoken coherently and constructively about a genuinely gray area of law had it tried." That's off on two counts: The inclusion of "under God" is in no way a gray area, and the lack of coherence in addressing thorny social issues has never served to restrain the court.

The 1954 addition of the phrase "under God" to the government-established Pledge of Allegiance was an unqualified and unconstitutional endorsement of religion. This paring of faith and patriotism is offensive to millions of Americans who do not share the majority stance on monotheism. And one need only review some of the court's less reasoned decisions in other civil and human rights cases to confirm that they have often been fearless in the face of incoherence.

More disturbing are the political implications (and seeming considerations) at play in ducking this "hot button" issue. The Court conspicuously chose, in the midst of a presidential campaign, to announce its decision on the fiftieth anniversary of the inclusion of this exclusionary phrase in the Pledge. Was that coincidence?

Tony Hileman  
Executive Director  
American Humanist Association

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## CA May Lead Race for US Progress in Stem Cell Research

AHA Press Release

By Roy Speckhardt

(Washington, D.C., June 4, 2004) "California's proposal to provide \$3 billion for stem cell research is a welcome step toward progressive change in this field, especially with the loss of talented scientists to countries where research is not limited," states Tony Hileman, executive director of the American Humanist Association.

Advances in the biological and medical sciences have the potential to affect all our lives. Advances like these can arouse fear, consternation, and confusion among the uninformed, and should evoke caution in all. But stem cell research is a highly regarded tool in the search for treatment of such debilitating conditions as diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injuries.

The Bush administration has unnecessarily limited the number of human embryonic stem cell lines available for research. The 78 stem cell lines Bush thought would be available has shrunk to 15, not nearly enough to meet the growing demand for research. "This is a crucial moment for expanding scientific advances in medical research that will benefit millions. It's tragic that some have made it more difficult, but now Californians have a chance to remove unethical obstacles," states Bill Jacobsen, executive director, The Humanist Community in Palo Alto.

In addition to opening the doors to increased stem cell research, this ballot initiative specifically bans the funding of cloning programs designed for human reproduction. Yet, opponents mistakenly equate therapeutic cloning to reproductive cloning, the growth of a child. Therapeutic cloning, the process that creates embryonic stem cells that can be nearly any type of cell, uniquely benefits existing stem cell research by generating stem cells that are a perfect genetic match for patients, thus avoiding frequent complications. "For humanity's sake, this research must not be prohibited," adds Tony Hileman.

"We oppose efforts to indiscriminately condemn the advancement of science and resist censorship of research based on sectarian or political grounds. Scientists should be unrestricted in their freedom to ethically pursue therapeutic cloning and stem cell research," concludes Hileman.

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## Letters (Houston Chronicle)

The Founders and God

The Founders and their contemporaries were patriots who conceived and fought for our nation, signed the Declaration of Independence and wrote the Constitution. Many were religious; others less so, if at all. But they were united in wanting our government to be secular, not religious.

They respected the rights of those choosing to worship a god to do so, while not allowing governmental imposition of beliefs of one group upon others.

"In God is our Trust" was placed on coins in 1864. The Pledge of Allegiance appeared in 1892. The Founding Fathers had nothing to do with either one of these things.

Ariel Thomann, Houston

Raspberry's question

William Raspberry says that the question asked by his June 21 Editorial Page column, "What is Michael Newdow afraid of?" is a question he finds himself asking when he sees "serious-minded people working to impose their will – especially religious views – on the rest of us." Interestingly, it's the same question I and many of my members ask.

Why do religious people work so diligently to remind themselves of their faith? Is it because without these constant reminders their faith might weaken? Or is it to impress upon everyone the importance they attach to their brand of religion?

In his June 22 Outlook article, "A father's pledge of allegiance to his daughter," Michael Newdow doesn't attempt to impose his religious views on anyone. Newdow simply reminds the 87 percent of the population who claim to believe in a god, that other citizens don't share that belief and should not be compelled to acknowledge a god or goddess nor coerced to remain quiet when religion is foisted upon them.

Regarding Raspberry's other comments: No, we shouldn't have "In God We Trust" on our money, either, nor have the Supreme Court dais turned into a pulpit by our praying, "God save the United States and this honorable court."

Although self-admitted non-believers are counted at only 15 percent of the population, I suspect that number would easily double if all nonbelievers were convinced they wouldn't be ostracized by their neighbors, friends, co-workers and bosses. Non-believers simply want to be allowed to form our own opinions and reach our own conclusions, based on evidence and reason, without having god thrown in our faces everywhere we turn. One's personal religious preferences and beliefs should be kept just that – personal.

W.H. "Bud" Zenner, executive director, Texas Secular Society, Temple

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## From Alliance members:

From the HOH (Humanists of Houston)

## HOH Monthly Meeting

The Humanists of Houston (HOH) Regular meeting was held at the Unitarian Fellowship hall at 1504 Wirt Rd on Saturday, June 19.

The guest speaker was David Phillips who is with the department of Philosophy at the University of Houston.

The topic of his lecture was "The Forms and Limits of Egoism".

The lecture was very well patronized with over 25 in attendance.

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From the HCOF (Houston Church of Freethought)

## HCOF June 2004 Services

Nigel Bedrock ("Nige-the-Atheist") was the featured speaker. His topic was the "Age of the Earth", which was presented with graphics.

Nancy prepared the Freethinker of the Month; Ethan Allen.

Art Fay made a presentation on "The Journey of Life" from a non-believers' point of view.

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## 'Ramble' continued from pg.3

Until humanists get a good PR (public relations) agent, they are strangers in their own land.

[4] Since people can make themselves enemies independently of any behavior on our part, I propose for adoption the principle: **Make friends with strangers BEFORE they make themselves enemies.**

This principle is good for anyone, theists as well as atheists.

[5] What is the best, most effective way to proselytize? Hopefully, it is agreed that the sword is unacceptable. For the sword only changes bodies, not hearts or minds.

Historically, example has proven to be the best teacher, albeit takes too long for the impatient like me.

Speaking up is not the most effective means, but it is frequently better than silence in the presence of an injustice or an untruth.

Imposing the humanist philosophy on others is as odious to others as it is to humanists when the imposition is reversed. But perhaps a reciprocal and sincere sharing of one another's views would be appreciated?

[6] A final word of urgency: Just as weeds grow in a garden overnight as gardeners sleep, so also are

paranoids busy plotting defenses against attacks which we are not planning.

And just as vigilance is the price of liberty, so making friends with strangers BEFORE they make themselves enemies is the price we pay to put and keep humanism on the map.

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## Food for thought and/or thought for indigestion

By Ron Titus

[1] "Exercise daily, not just two or three days a week."

[Kevin R Stone MD, "How to Prevent Knee Problems", *Bottom Line Personal*, 2004 0515, P 11]

[2] "Perry lets mentally ill man be executed: Parole board's rare clemency vote overridden"

[*Houston Chronicle*, 2004 0519w, P 1A]

Does Texas Governor Rick Perry have presidential aspirations?

[3] More people are killed by the Drug War than are by drugs.

[Drug Policy Forum of Texas Co-Founder Jerry Epstein, TV-27, 2004 0519w1845]

[4] The US makes up 5% of the world's population. It also makes up 20% of the world's incarcerated.

[ibid]

[5] In a survey conducted by Columbia University, it was found that many convicts used multiple drugs. Of the 25% of the prison population who used only one particular drug exclusively, 84% used alcohol, 12% used cocaine or another hard drug, 4% used heroin, and less than one half of one percent used marijuana.

[ibid]

[6] When drug laws are violated, why is it that rich folks are sent to rehabilitation centers for medication while poor folks are sent to prisons for incarceration?

[7] In a democratic republic, ignorance and fear are the worst threats to liberty.

["O! Willy's Almanac", quoted by Jonathan Williams in an email dated 2004 0517]

[8] "I've stopped reading the newspapers. You've got to keep your sanity somehow."

[US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, *US News & World Report*, 2004 0524, P 8]

[9] If one owns a gun, one is advised to keep it loaded and, when necessary, USE it!

If one has a brain, one is advised to keep it informed, and, when necessary, USE it!

[10] "A few months ago I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that is true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not."

[Ronald Reagan, Iran-Contra arms for hostages, 1987 0304]

[11] "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

[US President George W Bush, Address to Nation, 2003 0317]

[12] Q: "... weapons of mass destruction haven't been found. So what argument will you use now to justify this war?"

A: "We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories. ... And we'll find more weapons as time goes on. But for those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong, we found them."

[Interview by TVP, Poland of US President George W. Bush, 2003 0529]

[13] "The tyrant, who in order to hold his power, suppresses every superiority, does away with good men, forbids education and light, controls every movement of the citizens and, keeping them under a perpetual servitude, wants them to grow accustomed to baseness and cowardice, has his spies everywhere to listen to what is said in the meetings, and spreads dissension and calumny among the citizens and impoverishes them, is obliged to make war in order to keep his subjects occupied and impose on them permanent need of a chief."

[Aristotle (384-322 bce), quoted in an email from Ann Adams to Janis Ross, 2004 0511]

[14] "Decency, security, and liberty alike demand that government officials shall be subjected to the same rules of conduct that are commands to the citizen. In a government of laws, existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously. Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or for ill, it teaches the whole people by its example. Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for law; it invites every man to become a law unto himself; it invites anarchy. To declare that in the administration of the criminal law the end justifies the means--to declare that the government may commit crimes in order to secure the conviction of a private criminal--would bring terrible retribution."

[Justice Louis Brandeis, dissenting, *Olmstead et al. v. United States*, 277 U.S. 485 (1928), quoted by Ed Benyon in an email to Sheila Doran-Benyon, 2004 0611]

[15] More dangerous than the religion of Islam is the religion of America's fundies.

[Personal reflection after reading about Tim LaHaye & Jerry B Jenkins in David Gates' article "The Pop Prophets" in *Newsweek*, 2004 0524]

[16] Since most wars are waged by people who are theists, will world peace occur only when most people become atheists?

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## THINGS YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE TO BE A REPUBLICAN

Courtesy of Tom Brucia

- Being a drug addict is a moral failing and a crime, unless you're a conservative radio host. Then it's an illness and you need our prayers for your recovery
- The United States should get out of the United Nations, and our highest national priority is enforcing U.N. resolutions against Iraq.
- Big Government should relax regulation of Big Business and Big Money but crack down on private citizens who use marijuana to relieve the pain of illness.
- Jesus loves all peoples, and He shares your hatred of homosexuals and Hillary Clinton.
- The best way to improve military morale is to praise the troops in speeches -- while sending them to death, slashing their veterans' benefits and cutting their combat pay.
- If condoms are kept out of schools, adolescents will 'just say no' to sex.
- A good way to fight terrorism is to belittle our long-time allies -- and then demand their cooperation and money.
- Global warming and tobacco's link to cancer are junk science, but creationism should be taught in schools.
- Saddam was a good guy when Reagan armed him, then a bad guy when Bush's daddy made war on him, then a good guy when Cheney did business with him and then a bad guy when Bush needed a "We Can't Find bin Laden" diversion.
- A President lying about an extramarital affair is an impeachable offense. A president lying to enlist support for a war (in which thousands die) is solid defense policy.
- Government should limit itself to the powers named in the Constitution, which include banning gay marriages and censoring the Internet.
- The public has a right to know about Hillary's cattle trades, but George Bush's driving record is none of our business.
- Republicans support states' rights! This means Attorney General John Ashcroft can tell states what local voter initiatives they have a right to adopt, and use federal tax money to "persuade them".
- What Bill Clinton did in the 1960s is of vital national interest (though it happened a long time ago), but what Bush did in the '80s is irrelevant (because it happened a long time ago).
- Trade with Cuba is wrong because the country is communist, but trade with China and Vietnam is vital to a spirit of international harmony.

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Houston TX 77072

### **Membership Information:**

*Whether you are a humanist, or seeking to pursue a meaningful life without theism, or simply reexamining your beliefs and exploring the humanist approach to knowledge and moral issues, consider contacting one of our organizations. We will be happy to answer any questions about humanism and/or membership.*

Humanists of Houston (HOH): Houston chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA) / Founded 1978 / [Hhttp://www.humanistsofhouston.org/H](http://www.humanistsofhouston.org/H)

Humanist Association of Montgomery County, Isaac Asimov Chapter (HAMCIAC): Montgomery County chapter of the American Humanist Association / [Hmailto:rosshenry@mac.com](mailto:rosshenry@mac.com)H / 281-288-6064

Houston Atheist Society (HAS): Affiliated with American Atheist Society / Founded 2003 / [Hmailto:thinkbolt@yahoo.com](mailto:thinkbolt@yahoo.com)H / 713-968-6520

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### **Statement of Principles:**

*The following are the core principles upon which our member-organizations are allied. Individual member-organizations may have missions beyond the scope of the Alliance itself, but any Houston-based group whose mission is compatible with these principles is welcome to join our community of organizations.*

We are committed to freedom of thought and expression, as well as human rights and equality.

Our beliefs are based on healthy skepticism, physical evidence, the scientific method, and naturalistic philosophy -- unfettered by faith, mysticism, the supernatural, or any other form of superstition.

We stand for the pursuit of moral excellence, ethical integrity, and social responsibility based on humanity's needs and happiness in *this* world and not in an alleged "after life."

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