



Humanists Hawaii

NEWSLETTER

January 2006

January meeting

Traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail

With Cleo and Hank Kocol

Stories and pictures of the journey of discovery

200 years later

January 29, 2006

10:30 a.m.

Krauss Hall 112

University of Hawaii

On February 28, 1803, President Thomas Jefferson won approval from Congress for a visionary project, an endeavor that would become one of America's greatest stories of adventure.

Twenty-five hundred dollars were appropriated to fund a small expeditionary group, whose mission was to explore the uncharted West. Jefferson called the group the Corps of Discovery. It would be led by Jefferson's secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and Lewis' friend, William Clark.

In Jefferson's words to Lewis and Clark:

" . . . the object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado or any other river, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce . . . "

Over the next four years, the Corps of Discovery would travel thousands of miles, experiencing lands, rivers and peoples that no Americans ever had before.

Now we are celebrating the 200th anniversary year of the completion of the journey of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery. In 2003, Cleo and Hank Kocol traveled the Lewis and Clark Trail through South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Oregon. They gathered stories and pictures and prepared a comprehensive presentation of the expedition.

Theirs is NOT a "vacation slide show." The Kocols will follow the original expedition of the Corps of Discovery from beginning of their expedition to end. The historical story will be accompanied by slides of the places where the Corps of Discovery camped, and where it encountered difficulties, made important decisions and literally changed the direction of U.S. expansion.

Cleo and Hank have given this presentation to various groups in California and received extremely positive reviews.

The Kocols are prominent Humanists from California who have visited us in the past. We're always happy to welcome them and especially pleased when they've prepared a presentation. Veteran HH members will remember their February 2001 presentation of "George Washington: His Life and Thoughts." Which presentation rekindled interest in the early history of our country and the role of Humanism in American history.

Expect entertainment and enlightenment about the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery.

PFLAG's Happy New Year!

by Carolyn Golojuch

PFLAG-Oahu purchased pencils engraved with the message "All you need is LOVE" to pass out at Honolulu Hale near its Holiday Lights display.

The evening of December 29, Mike and I took to the streets around Honolulu Hale to spread the word by passing out free pencils. Overall, it was a very positive experience. There were a few people who refused the offer of a free pencil. We just thanked them and walked away.

Two women accepted a couple of pencils for their families. One of them asked if I was with Mike Gabbard. I assured her that PFLAG-Oahu has nothing to do with Gabbard. She then accepted a pencil and said one couldn't be too careful around him. This gave me a big smile in the dark!

One group stopped to read the placard with the message and PFLAG-Oahu name and phone number. A man took a couple of photos but declined a pencil. As they walked away, one of the women turned and asked if I was with the display. When I said I was, she thanked me and said that we had a very important message because no child should be abused regardless of anyone's political stand. I told her that it was refreshing to hear someone else explain the meaning for the display. I offered her a couple of pencils and she accepted them. She hugged me and offered me a donation. I told her that I couldn't accept a donation as the pencils had been paid for by other donations. She said the donation was to keep the message going. It turns out that she is a professor at UHM. What a delight she was! She made the time more that worth the effort.

I gave a couple of pencils to a neighbor who came out to me about his sister. I would never have known he figured out that we are part of PFLAG-Oahu as I try to keep a low profile around the neighborhood. And even with my PFLAG license plate, the letters are not spelled out. I thought it was a code for those in the know. He and I had a great conversation about diversity! I know now that I have another supporter in the neighborhood!! What a great New Year's present.

At the Gallery on the Pali

by Norma Nichols

Regina Bode: "There are more things in heaven and earth . . ."

January 8 - February 3, 2006

Chinese calligraphy, watercolor and mixed media

Regina Bode studied music and fine arts in Hamburg, Germany and Vienna, Austria. After graduating from university she has been working as an art and music teacher and a freelance artist in

Germany, The Netherlands and in Hawaii. The peaceful co-existence of different cultures and the natural beauty of the Hawaiian Islands are important sources of inspiration for Regina Bode. Her calligraphies wander between eastern and western cultures, between figurative and graphical, abstract and realistic worlds. Regina's watercolors zoom in into the microcosm of randomly found natural objects. They illuminate some forgotten spaces in between heaven and earth.

The Gallery on the Pali is located at the Unitarian church at 2500 Pali Highway. Entry and Parking are free and it is open M-F 9-8; SS 1-4. You can call the Director, Norma Nichols, at 526-1191.

A Note from Ed Corl

Ed Corl's continuing work with the Institute for Human Services keeps him busy during meeting times, but he manages to send us a note every now and then. This observation is from January 5:

History was made Tuesday, Jan. 3, when the first open Lesbian was named to the Arizona Senate.

By a unanimous vote, the Pima County Board of Supervisors named Paula Aboud (r) to the vacant District 28 seat for the remainder of the term.

"I'm very honored by the Supervisors and District 28," Aboud is quoted as saying after the vote. "I look forward to standing up for the rights of the people of Arizona."

Wait

– this would be the second outbreak of sanity in two days.

Yesterday they legalized pot in Rhode Island, today lesbians can openly hold Arizona state jobs?

Did we lose a war?

Were we conquered by Canada?

Bush, Hoover put country to shame

The Honolulu Advertiser, December 20, 2005

Your Dec. 18 front page says it all. President Bush wants to spy on us, and that reprobate, J. Edgar Hoover, spied on Patsy Mink, no doubt for her Japanese ancestry.

It is a shame that this garbage is coming out now that her husband is no longer alive to defend her.

Hoover represents all that is shameful and ugly in America, and his name should be stripped from the FBI building. He spent valuable time and resources trying to defame Martin Luther King Jr. and many others, to hide the fact that his own life and career were entirely questionable.

This is why Bush's zeal in allowing spying on us should never be allowed. He speaks of "freedom and democracy and fair elections" for Iraq while violating them here.

Nancy Bey Little

Cindy Sheehan and Ann Wright

On January 4 many Humanists joined an overflow crowd at a peace rally featuring Cindy Sheehan and Ann Wright at Church of the Crossroads.

After her son, Army Spc. Casey A. Sheehan, was killed in action in Sadr City, Baghdad, Cindy, along with other family members of soldiers killed in Iraq, founded Gold Star Families for Peace.

Late last summer Cindy spoiled George W. Bush's vacation by going to his Crawford, Texas ranch to demand that he meet with her. When he refused, she set up camp along the road leading to his ranch. Over the next month, thousands of people joined Cindy at "Camp Casey" (named after her son). Cindy's courageous action inspired millions in the U.S. and around the world, and reinvigorated the anti-war movement.

At the rally, Cindy told her story and exhorted the crowd to active participation in seeking peace. She castigated larger local churches that had refused larger venues for the rally.

Cindy was introduced by Ann Wright. Ann is also recognized as a hero of the peace movement. A career diplomat in the Foreign Service and a colonel in the Army Reserves, she resigned on March 19, 2003, the day the US launched the Iraq War.

Ann was among the organizers at Camp Crawford, was arrested with Cindy at Washington D.C. in September, and then in Crawford, Texas during the Thanksgiving holidays. She has also been on a speaking tour and told the audience stories about her experiences advocating for peace and being arrested on several occasions.

HH's January Disasters

On January 8th members of Humanists Hawaii had planned to join in a brunch at the Outrigger Canoe Club. The brunch was cancelled because of a lack of participants. However, several members indicated that they had planned to attend, but failed to notify the hosts in time to be counted. HH members are unaccustomed to announcing themselves ahead of time and ingrained habits are hard to step out of.

On January 15th we met at Bob Wilcox's beautiful residence to hear a talk by visiting Humanist philosopher and writer Vic Stenger. Miscommunications regarding the time and place of the meeting left Vic visiting not too far down the shore from where the HH group was gathered. Contacted later, Vic was forgiving about the snafu and said he'd be visiting Oahu again and would contact us again next time.

These confusions underline the urgent necessity of assembling a definite slate of officials to arrange meetings and other activities in a coherent manner.

Humanists Hawaii Officials

President: Andi van der Voort – 261-3452
President@Hawaii.Humanists.net

Vice President: unoccupied

Secretary: unoccupied

Treasurer: Marcia Lambeth – 955-2086

Sunshine Lady: Lolly Poole – 234-1864

Program Chair: unoccupied

WebMaster: Mike Mueller – 926-9995
WebMaster@Hawaii.Humanists.net

Newsletter Editor: David Mielke – 836-6303
Newsletter@Hawaii.Humanists.net

See scheduled events, pictures of officers and current and archived newsletters at our website:
www.hawaii.humanists.net/

If you'd like to receive your personal email at the prestigious Humanists.net address, contact WebMaster Mike at the address or phone number above.

HH's Meeting Place

Driving on Dole Street past the University, turn mauka on East West Road then ewa on Correa Road. Drive to the end and turn makai toward the circle with the big tree. There's free parking on part of the circle, on the other side of Krauss Hall and various lots around campus. The entrance to Krauss Hall 112 is at the Diamondhead end of the lily pond.

We'll have an HH sign by the door. Hope to see you all.



Stealing God's Thunder : Benjamin Franklin's Lightning Rod and the Invention of

America by Philip Dray, Random House, New York. 279 pp. Hardcover \$25.95.

Reviewed by H.W. Brands

The concept of degeneration in American political history is so broadly accepted as to be almost unchallengeable. In the days of the Founding, giants walked the earth; Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison and the others seized independence from Britain and placed the new nation on its republican path. Since then it's all been downhill; no subsequent generation, and certainly not ours, could have accomplished what those demigods wrought.

This conclusion is correct, but the cause typically adduced is wrong. What separates us from the Founders is not a talent gap but a temperament gap; what we lack is not intellectual power but collective confidence. Philip Dray's succinct recounting of the role of science in Franklin's life and thought affords a useful reminder of how thoroughly America's republican experiment was a product of the mindset of the Enlightenment: a belief that all things are possible to self-confident human reason.

Dray points out that while later generations looked on Franklin as a statesman and diplomat who dabbled in science, his own generation deemed him a scientist who moonlighted in politics. Dray covers all the high points of Franklin's scientific career: his apprenticeship as a journalist during a violent debate over inoculation for smallpox (literally violent: Cotton Mather escaped death when a homemade bomb tossed by an opponent in the debate failed to explode); his observations of the Gulf Stream and other marine and atmospheric currents (which finally convinced stubborn British sea captains to heed the advice American whalers had been giving them for decades); his prescient studies of demography (which forecast with uncanny accuracy the growth of the American population); and, of course, his investigations into electricity (which won him world fame and might have brought him a fortune had he not eschewed a patent on the lightning rod). Dray relates these parts of the Franklin story with energy and economy. His treatment of the electrical investigations, especially of the development of the lightning rod, is the fullest currently available. Other authors have noted the skepticism that naturally greeted the concept of the lightning rod -- who of sound mind would want to crown his house with something that seemed to attract lightning? -- but none has pursued the battle over lightning rod design -- one point or several? sharp or blunt? -- with such thoroughness.

Dray makes clear that Franklin brought to his political work the same rationalism that informed his science. Franklin wasn't irreligious; he believed in a Creator who paid some attention to what His creatures were up to. But he had no patience with theology; he considered sectarianism a blight and judged reason

the appropriate measure of faith rather than vice versa. His parents, solid Puritans, lamented his lapse from orthodoxy; he responded with his own statement of faith: "At the last Day, we shall not be examined [by] what we thought but what we did; and our recommendation will not be that we said Lord, Lord, but that we did GOOD to our Fellow Creatures." One of Franklin's revisions to Jefferson's draft Declaration replaced "sacred and undeniable," in reference to the truths the Americans were defending, with "self-evident." The difference was crucial: "sacred" summoned the authority of God, "self-evident" the authority of human reason.

At a critical moment of the Constitutional Convention, Franklin uncharacteristically -- or so it seemed to most of those present -- moved that each morning's session begin with a prayer to the Almighty for guidance. [Perhaps] Franklin simply wished to remind his opinionated colleagues that they didn't have all the answers. Significantly, the convention rejected the motion; Alexander Hamilton reportedly declared that this was no time to seek "foreign aid." Franklin would no more have looked to Heaven for political guidance than he would have consulted the Bible in fashioning his lightning rod. God gave man reason, he believed, and expected man to use it. Franklin did so with confidence, as did his colleagues.

That was their genius, and it's what separates Franklin's generation from ours. Religion hasn't driven reason from the public square, but it has gained political leverage it never enjoyed in the days of the Founding. Biblical literalism (currently cloaked as "intelligent design") has fought the science of evolution to a standstill in many schools. The very idea of the Enlightenment evokes derisive sneers. Orthodoxy of some Judeo-Christian sort has become a de facto requirement for American elective office; deists in the mold of Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson need not apply. Franklin's partners weren't all as scientifically minded as Dray reveals Franklin to be, but they all believed that reason was a surer guide to political progress than religion. And in this belief they accomplished the great things they did.

As Franklin left the Constitutional Convention in September 1787, he was asked what he and his colleagues had produced. "A republic," he replied, "if you can keep it." We've kept it, after our fashion. But we couldn't reproduce it. Franklin would be disappointed.

From a review by H.W. Brands in Washington Post Book World, August 7, 2005. H.W. Brands is the author of The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin.

Idle Thoughts of a Retiree

Anonymous NetPerson

I planted some birdseed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it.

I had amnesia once – or was it twice.

I went to San Francisco. I found someone's heart. Now what?

Protons have mass? I didn't even know they were Catholic.

All I ask . . . is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.

If the world were a logical place, men would ride horses sidesaddle.

What is a "free" gift? Aren't all gifts free?

They told me I was gullible and I believed them.

Teach a child to be polite and courteous in the home and, when he grows up, he'll never be able to merge his car onto a freeway.

Two can live as cheaply as one, for half as long.

Experience is the thing you have left when every thing else is gone.

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

The shampoo promised me extra body and I gained three pounds.

One nice thing about egotists: They don't talk about other people.

A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.

What was the greatest thing before sliced bread?
HmMMM?

My weight is perfect for my height – which varies.

I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.

The cost of living hasn't affected its popularity.

How can there be self-help "groups"?

Is there another word for synonym?

Where do forest rangers go to "get away from it all"?

The speed of time is one-second per second.

Is it possible to be totally partial?

Is Marx's tomb a communist plot?

If swimming is so good for your figure, how do you explain whales?

Show me a man with both feet firmly on the ground, and I'll show you a man who can't get his pants off.

It's not an optical illusion. It just looks like one.

Is it my imagination, or do buffalo wings taste like chicken?

Darwin Awards 2005

Found on the net by Ed Corl

In case you have been waiting breathlessly for this year's Darwin Awards, here they are. The awards this year are, once again, truly classic.

These awards are given each year to bestow upon (the remains or estate of) that individual, who through single-minded self-sacrifice, has done the most to remove undesirable elements from the human gene pool. Just think . . . until these events, these same people were walking the streets like normal people.

3rd RUNNER-UP: Goes to poacher Marino Malerba of Spain, who shot a stag standing above him on an overhanging rock and was killed instantly when it fell on top of him.

2nd RUNNER-UP: 'Man loses face at party.' A man at a West Virginia party (probably related to the winner last year, a man in Arkansas who used the .22 bullet to replace the fuse in his pickup truck) popped a blasting cap into his mouth and bit down, triggering an explosion that blew off his lips, teeth, and tongue. Jerry Stromyer, 24, of Kincaid, bit the blasting cap as a prank during the late night party, said Cpl. M.D. Payne. 'Another man had it in an aquarium hooked to a battery and was trying to explode it. It wouldn't go off and this guy said 'I'll show you how to set it off.' He put it into his mouth, bit down and it blew all his teeth out and his lips and tongue off, Payne said. Stromyer was listed in guarded condition the next day with extensive facial injuries, according to a spokesperson at Charleston Area Medical Division.

1st RUNNER-UP: Doctors at Portland University Hospital said an Oregon man shot through the skull by a hunting arrow is lucky to be alive and will be released soon from the hospital. Tony Roberts, 25, lost his right eye last weekend during an initiation into a men's rafting club, Mountain Men Anonymous (probably known now as Stupid Mountain Men Anonymous) in Grants Pass, Oregon. A friend tried to shoot a beer can off his head, but the arrow entered Robert's right eye. Doctors said that had the arrow gone one millimeter to the left, a major blood vessel would have been cut and Roberts would have died instantly. Neurosurgeon, Doctor Johnny Delashaw, at the University Hospital in Portland said the arrow went through 8 to 10 inches of brain with the tip protruding at the rear of his skull, yet somehow managed to miss all major blood vessels. Delashaw also said that had Roberts tried to pull the arrow out on his own he surely would have killed himself. Roberts admitted afterwards that he and his friends had been drinking that afternoon. Said Roberts, 'I feel so dumb about this.' No charges have been filed, but the Josephine County district attorney's office said the initiation stunt is under investigation.

[2005's winner next time!]

Delhi vs the Monkeys

EarthWeek

An Indian court has ordered Delhi's civic body to catch hordes of monkeys that have menaced lawyers and court staff for years or close down the court facility. The Times of India reports the judges are annoyed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's failure to tackle the monkey menace at the Tis Hazari courts complex. Lawyers, their clients and court staff complain that they are under constant threat from the simians, which often go after food being carried. India's Hindu faithful try not to harm the monkeys because one of their main deities is the monkey-faced god Hanuman. A government attempt to use keepers of langurs (black-faced monkeys) to scare off the marauding monkeys has been a failure.

Villagers Shun Man They Believe Is Dead

Associated Press

BHOPAL, India – Is Raju Raghuvanshi alive or dead? Ask Raghuvanshi, he'll tell you he is alive. But ask his friends and family, and they'll tell you the man you just spoke with is a ghost sent to haunt them.

Believed by his friends and family to have died in prison, Raghuvanshi returned home earlier this month from his short jail stint to shouts of "Help! Ghost!" and the sounds of neighbors locking their doors in his home village of Katra.

"My family thinks I am dead," he said in a phone interview Monday. "They will not permit me to enter my home because they think I am a ghost."

Ostracized by the people of Katra, about 280 miles from Bhopal, he's now living in a nearby village and struggling to prove he's alive.

The best proof he had – that his feet were still properly attached, not turned backward as ghosts' feet are thought to be – was dismissed by villagers.

He said his brothers even "argued that they had completed all religious death ceremonies" and he should not have come back to haunt them.

Rural India remains deeply traditional and many in Katra share the traditional Hindu belief that they will be haunted by a ghost if ceremonies are not performed to ensure the soul of the deceased makes a peaceful transition into its next life.

Rumors over Raghuvanshi's death began when he was sent to prison in October for a minor tax infraction.

He fell ill there and was transferred to a prison hospital in another district, from where word spread that he had died and that his body had been cremated because no one had retrieved it.

After being turned away by his neighbors after his release, Raghuvanshi finally went to the police, who are trying to help convince the people of Katra that he is alive, said police superintendent, N.V. Vaigankar.

"Intelligent Design" not Science says Vatican Paper

by Tom Heneghan, *Reuters*, January 19, 2006

PARIS – The Roman Catholic Church has restated its support for evolution with an article praising a U.S. court decision that rejects the "intelligent design" theory as non-scientific.

The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* said that teaching intelligent design – which argues that life is so complex that it needed a supernatural creator – alongside Darwin's theory of evolution would only cause confusion.

A court in the state of Pennsylvania last month barred a school from teaching intelligent design (ID), a blow to Christian conservatives who want it to be taught in biology classes along with the Darwinism they oppose.

The ID movement sometimes presents Catholicism, the world's largest Christian denomination, as an ally in its campaign. While the Church is socially conservative, it has a long theological tradition that rejects fundamentalist creationism.

"Intelligent design does not belong to science and there is no justification for the demand it be taught as a scientific theory alongside the Darwinian explanation," said the article in the Tuesday edition of the newspaper.

Evolution represents "the interpretative key of the history of life on Earth" and the debate in the United States was "polluted by political positions," wrote Fiorenzo Facchini, a professor of evolutionary biology at Italy's Bologna University.

"So the decision by the Pennsylvania judge seems correct."

Tenet of faith

Pennsylvania Judge John Jones ruled that intelligent design is a version of creationism, the belief that God made the world in six days as told in the Bible, and thus could not be taught without violating a ban on teaching religion in public schools. It is not science, despite claims by its backers, he said.

Many U.S. Catholics may agree with evangelicals politically, but despite suggestions that humanity was an "intelligent project designed by God," in a *New York Times* article by Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn earlier this year, the Church does not share their theology on this point. Intelligent design has few supporters outside the United States.

While not an official document, the article in *L'Osservatore Romano* had to be vetted in advance to reflect Vatican thinking.

The Seattle-based Discovery Institute – the main "think tank" of the ID movement – said on its website that reading the *Osservatore* article that way amounted to an attempt "to put words in the Vatican's mouth."

Victory for Religious Liberty in Death with Dignity Case

American Humanist Association

On January 17, the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 vote, upheld the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, the controversial law allowing physician aid in dying.

"Ashcroft's effort to prohibit the Oregon law was a thinly veiled attempt to enforce a sectarian point of view – tantamount to creating national policy based on one religious perspective," said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association.

"The Supreme Court, bounded by the Constitution, had a clear obligation to respect individual freedom and recognize the variety of faith traditions by enforcing government neutrality toward religion," said Mel Lipman, AHA president. "The Bush administration's directive to block the Oregon law disregarded Americans who support ethical end-of-life decisions – inspired by respect and compassion."

The AHA supported a friend-of-the-court brief, endorsed by fifty-two religious freedom organizations as well as leaders supporting civil liberties and freedom of conscience for all Americans.

The brief urged the Court to uphold "the states' sovereign power to protect not only their citizens' substantial liberty interests in dignity, independence, and relief from suffering, but also their citizens' substantial religious liberty interests in keeping this decision free from governmental interference."

"Humanism endorses the ethical viewpoint that death should be seen as part of a life continuum. Every individual should have the right to live with dignity and that includes a death with dignity. The AHA will work to broaden today's victory for the citizens of Oregon to preserve the dignity of all Americans," concluded Speckhardt.

A Very Short Essay on Doubt

(composed of very famous quotes)

by Michael Canfield

I think we ought always to entertain our opinions with some measure of doubt. I shouldn't wish people dogmatically to believe any philosophy, not even mine. (Bertrand Russell)

To have doubted one's own first principles is the mark of a civilized man. (Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr)

If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things. (Descartes)

But,

The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts. (Bertrand Russell)

The best lack all convictions, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity. (Yeats)

Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd. (Voltaire)

Therefore,

Doubt 'til thou canst doubt no more . . . doubt is thought and thought is life. Systems which end doubt are devices for drugging thought. (Albert Guerard)

This essay appeared in eSkeptic, Dec 8, 2005.

Humanist Hawaii Dues Due

We're a low overhead organization, but we still need dues to get along. To pay for meeting necessities – including a donation to Osher Lifelong Learning Institute which graciously permits us to use its Krauss Hall facilities for meetings, also for newsletters, notifications, snacks and other organization expenses.

HH dues are collected on a calendar year and are \$25 a year for individuals and \$40 a year for couples. Please use the coupon below.

Do you think that humans should search relentlessly for truth, that they feel compassion for all humankind and determine and promote what is right?

Do you think people can live meaningful, responsible and ethical lives without the need for believing in supernatural beings or places?

Would you like to join a group that shares your thoughts. Humanists – generally – believe these things.

If you'd like to join Humanists Hawaii, please complete and mail this form with a check for your annual membership fee of \$25 if you're single, \$40 if you're a couple, to: Marcia Lambeth at 825 Coolidge St. #310 Honolulu HI 96826.

Dr/Mr/Ms _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phones: Home: _____ Work: _____ email: _____

Happy Birthday Ben!

American Progress Report

Benjamin Franklin, the "first great American" celebrated his 300th birthday January 17th. Franklin was probably the most significant founding father of the United States of America who never served as its President. He was much more than a statesman, he was the founder of America's first library, fire department, electricity, and *Poor Richard's Almanack*, among other accomplishments. "He signed every document central to America's founding" and "was a true egalitarian."

Franklin's last public act was to petition Congress against slavery, reminding lawmakers that liberty should extend "without distinction of color to all descriptions of people." He "was not only the prince of self-invention, but the king of second acts."

Unlike today's lawmakers who head in droves to K Street for lucrative lobbying careers, after his retirement, Franklin "completed his experiments in electricity, served as representative of the colonies in England, returned to Philadelphia to help draft the Declaration of Independence, served as minister of the new nation in France, invented the lightning rod, an odometer and bifocals, charted the Gulf Stream, and helped write the US Constitution."

ACLU v. NSA Lawsuit Seeks End to Bush's Illegal Spying

by Anthony D. Romero, Executive Director ACLU

For over eighty-five years the ACLU and its members have been there to stand up for freedom when our leaders disregard and defy the Constitution.

ACLU follows that tradition in filing *ACLU v. NSA*, a lawsuit seeking to end the secret program of illegal electronic surveillance authorized by President Bush.

The lawsuit claims that this spying program violates Americans' rights to free speech and privacy under the First and Fourth Amendments of the Constitution and that the president has exceeded the limits of executive authority under separation of powers principles.

The suit was filed in federal district court in Michigan on behalf of several prominent journalists, scholars, attorneys, and national nonprofit organizations (including the ACLU) who frequently communicate by phone and email with people in the Middle East.

In addition to the *ACLU v. NSA* lawsuit, the ACLU has launched a multi-channel ad campaign, a wide-spread call for congressional hearings, and is urging the appointment of a special counsel to independently investigate the actions of this administration and prosecute any and all crimes committed.



Humanists Hawaii

c/o David Mielke
3033 Ala Napuaa Place #502
Honolulu HI 96818
Newsletter@Hawaii.Humanists.net

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. See www.americanhumanist.org.