

"MUSE" THE NEW RBH NEWSLETTER PREMIERES

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." - Charles Darwin

Since the Red Bank Humanists appeared on the scene back in the fall of 2003, I have experimented with countless variations of electronic newsletter formats. For several years we made the newsletters as web pages within our website. Those archives remain on our web site on the "Press Room" page. It's fun to look back at them and ponder all the events we created.

As we got busier, we began to simplify the artwork and put the information in an email. That saved time, but it wasn't as much fun to read.

Now that we have some new skills on design software, we hope to publish this online newsletter in "PDF." Every computer should be able to read the PDF format. If you don't have a PDF reader, you can download it for free off the Internet. We will start out by attaching MUSE to your email, as well as including a link to the RBH web site where you can read it. . .if you prefer not to download the file.

Please submit any comments, story ideas, and/or photos for inclusion to me at:
ron@steelmanonline.com

- Ron Steelman, MUSE Editor

TABLING AS A VERB

On June 5 & 6 Red Bank Humanists "tabled" at the Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Festival at Monmouth Park Race Track. We took a table (of course), chairs, a pop up canopy, and our RBH parade banner. We handed out RBH literature, chatted with passersby, and encour-



(Board members Jon Kalfus & Bruce Fowler)



aged those who were interested to sign up to receive our emails. Hundreds of people saw our banner. About 30 people took our literature and 12 signed up for emails. Thanks to all the volunteers who came to help: Bruce Fowler and Jon Kalfus. At left, Board member Eric Seldner joins Kalfus for clean up. Other "tabler" volunteers were Pat Barr, Joan Cavalluzzi, Herb Stubbmann, Art Weiner and Ron Steelman.



HOLD THAT DATE!



There is no Forum in August. Instead, the annual RBH picnic will be held on Sunday, August 8, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The location is the same as last year, Bodman Park in Middletown, only minutes from Red Bank.

The event is FREE! Directions & suggestions for (more)

HOLD THAT DATE (CONTINUED)

food to bring will come soon. This popular event is open to everyone, young or old, member or non-member. There will be fires to cook on, ice, condiments, and other picnic supplies. You should bring something to share & if you cook it, something to grill. Come socialize with other folks of a like philosophical bent in a pleasant and informal atmosphere. We have a covered pavilion with picnic tables & benches, so it's rain or shine. There's a volleyball net. Bring a lawn chair if you like, Frisbees or balls & any toys to improve the picnic experience. Join us. See you there!

MEMBER LIAISON

DEAR MEMBERS,

We are interested in making Red Bank Humanists a more cohesive and supportive community. To do so we would like to create a master list of members who would be willing to share their knowledge and/or expertise with other RBH members.

We believe our members have a wide range of skills and knowledge that might be helpful to others in the group. Perhaps you have a medical, legal or computer background, or your expertise is in finances, or you may be willing to visit or call members who are ill. Perhaps you could give a ride to someone who needs to go see a doctor, or who needs a ride to our monthly Forum.

There are so many ways to be of service to others in our organization. Please give us a call and tell us ways in which you might be able to help other Red Bank Humanists. We will collate the information and as the Member Liaisons be ready to share it with those who call us for assistance.



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WORTH QUOTING

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.

- Ansel Adams

EXPLORING HUMANISM



Excerpts from the Introduction to "Meditations for the Humanist - Ethics for a Secular Age" by A.C. Graying

"...Socrates famously said that the unconsidered life is not worth living. He meant that a life lived without forethought or principle is a life so vulnerable to chance, and so dependent on the choices and actions of others, that it is of little real value to the person living it..."

"...The book is divided into three Parts, one of which concerns some of the things that are enemies to human flourishing, among them racism, nationalism, religion, revenge, poverty and depression. Doubtless, some will take offence at the inclusion of religion in this category. If all espousers of religion behaved like Quakers or shared the views of Theravada Buddhists, there would be little to quarrel with in religion save its supernaturalistic beliefs. But religion has for the greatest part been omitted from discussion of the considered life.

Yet I believe passionately in the value of all things spiritual -- by which I mean things of the human spirit, with its capacity for love and enjoyment, creativity and kindness, hope and courage. Although mankind is the author of much monstrous cruelty, of despoliation, greed, conflict and ugliness, it is also the author of much that is best in the world, which is a reason both for celebration and optimism. Some people seem unable to allow that mankind is the source of what makes the world bearable -- pity, beauty and tenderness -- nor that it is human genius which is responsible for the achievements of art and science. Such people have to believe in the existence of supernatural agencies as the source of the world's good, while fathering its evil exclusively on human beings. That is a calumny on mankind, as well as an irrational hangover from mankind's ignorant and fearful infancy, when nature was believed to be governed by invisible and often hostile powers. One thing that a consideration of life should help to achieve is liberation from such tyrannies of belief, replacing them with informed commitments instead to the human affections, tolerance, and the wisdom taught by individual experience."



PASSIONATELY MORAL

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE (1962 - 2008)

"David Foster Wallace used his prodigious gifts as a writer — his manic, exuberant prose, his ferocious powers of observation, his ability to fuse avant-garde techniques with old-fashioned moral seriousness — to create a series of strobe-lit portraits of a millennial America overdosing on the drugs of entertainment and self-gratification, and to capture, in the words of the musician Robert Plant, the myriad "deep and meaningless" facets of contemporary life." - *New York Times*

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According to Wallace, "fiction's about what it is to be a f@*king human being," and he expressed a desire to write "morally passionate, passionately moral fiction" that could help readers "become less alone inside." In his 2005 commencement speech at Kenyon College, he describes the human condition of daily crises and chronic disillusionment and rejects solipsism, invoking compassion, mindfulness, and existentialism:

* * *

"...the world will not discourage you from operating on your default-settings, because the world of men and money and power hums along quite nicely on the fuel of fear and contempt and frustration and craving and the worship of self. Our own present culture has harnessed these forces in ways that have yielded extraordinary wealth and comfort and personal freedom. The freedom to be lords of our own tiny skull-sized kingdoms, alone at the center of all creation. This kind of freedom has much to recommend it. But of course there are all different kinds of freedom, and the kind that is most precious you will not hear much talked about in the great outside world of winning and achieving and displaying. The really important kind of freedom involves attention, and awareness, and discipline, and effort, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them, over and over, in myriad petty little unsexy ways, every day.

....The only thing that's capital-T True is that you get to decide how you're going to try to see it. You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't....The trick is keeping the truth up-front in daily consciousness. . .That is real freedom. . .The alternative is unconsciousness, the default-setting, the "rat race" -- the constant gnawing sense of having had and lost some infinite thing."

To read the complete commencement speech, Google "Wall Street Journal David Foster Wallace"

David Foster Wallace was the author of the acclaimed novel, *Infinite Jest*.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **July Forum - Sunday, July 11 - 10:30 a.m.**
Red Bank Charter School, 58 Oakland St.
Topic: "Environmentalism & Sustainability - Globally, Locally, & Personally"
- ◆ **"Drinking Post-Theologically" returns! Thursday, July 22, 2010 - 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.**
The Dublin House, 30 Monmouth St., Red Bank (Upstairs). A mixer..for those who are simply post-theological.
- ◆ **RBH Book Club - Thursday, August 5, 2010**
7:30 - 9:30p.m. "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. Call Carol Auer @ 732-671-8327 for location
- ◆ **Annual RBH Picnic - Sunday, August 8, 2010**
11a.m. - 4p.m. Bodman Park, Red Bank

RED BANK HUMANISTS

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