



The Mid Ohio Atheist

A Newsletter for Atheists in the Mansfield Area

TWENTYTH ISSUE

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Editorial writer makes up facts to suit agenda

By Ron Stephens

The December 24th editorial in the Mansfield News Journal proves that with the first amendment right to freedom of the press and freedom of speech, their editorialists don't have to worry too much about in getting their facts right.

The News Journal printed an editorial about the recent controversy where Lind cancelled our contract for three billboards at the last moment. The editorial stated, "*The atheist group says Lind discriminated against it and it should be compelled to run its message. They have it right. Lind did discriminate.*"

Since I have not contended that Lind does not have the right to reject billboards, I'm not sure what the purpose of this editorial was.

When News Journal reporter Linda Martz contacted me about the billboard controversy, I plainly stated that I knew this was not a first amendment issue and that Lind had a right to not run the billboards. Although Martz did not include this in her article, which appeared in the December 23rd edition of the paper, it would have been a simple matter for the editorial writers at the News Journal to get these facts from their own reporter instead of making things up as they go along.

There have been two press releases concerning this issue as well as blog posts and it was covered in our newsletter. Nowhere in these did we state that Lind should be compelled to post our billboards. I have instead stated that we were upset it took Lind so long to finally decide to not run our billboards that we were unable to find another company that would run them in the desired time frame.

Another point- The editorialist goes above and beyond the

usual bounds of just making things up by saying, "*While many anticipate the arrival of Santa Claus tonight, a group of nonbelievers considers the celebration of this holiday symbol offensive.*" To say that is laughable. We have never said, or even thought, that Santa Claus was offensive. Anyone who would believe that has absolutely no clue as to what atheists believe or what offends us. If you're going to make things up, at least have some reasonable resemblance to the facts in your mendacity.

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I do want to thank Lind and the News Journal though. With Lind's rejection, and the News Journal printing two articles and an editorial about us, and continuing letters to the editor from Christians congratulating Lind for rejecting us, we are on our way to accomplish our goal of getting the word out to the Mansfield area that there is an atheist group in town and we are trying to find like-minded people. This has also caused many bloggers to cover this story which spreads the word far and wide across Ohio, the U.S., and even into other countries. Daily we receive emails from atheists in this area that are surprised to learn there is an atheist group in Mansfield. Many express interest in coming to our meetings.

Jessica Ahlquist wins battle against prayer banner and pays the price

When Jessica Ahlquist was a freshman at Cranston West high school in Cranston Rhode Island, she saw a prayer banner on display in her school auditorium. She knew that was against the Constitution, to have a public school support religion.

the ACLU contacted Jessica about being a plaintiff in a lawsuit to have the banner removed. Jessica said she said yes right away. In her mind, she was defending the law. This is when backlash began from fellow students.

“shes not human shes garbage”
“I’ll drop anchor on her face”
“I think everyone should just fight this girl”
“Let’s all jump that girl who did the banner”
“When I take over the world I’m going to do a holocaust to all the atheists”
“i cant wait to hear about you getting curb stomped”
“everyone is going to beat you up prob”
“what a little bitch lol I wanna snuff her”

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Jessica Ahlquist

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After a parent of another student complained to the ACLU about the banner, Jessica went to facebook and created a group to have the banner removed.

Jessica went to a city subcommittee meeting where the subject of the prayer banner was to be discussed. Jessica said other people we complaining about socialism and Hitler and gay rights and how this is a Christian nation. Jessica decided to speak and said, “As an atheist student, this prayer offends me.” She said some people gasped and one person even accused her of being a witch.

After subsequent meetings, the city decided to keep the banner. At that time,

On Wednesday, January 11, a Rhode Island federal district court found that the banner violated the Establishment Clause of the 1st Amendment and had to be removed immediately.

Jessica went online to social media to announce the decision and to celebrate with her friends. Unfortunately, she wasn’t the only one posting online. Other students from the school decided to post their feelings about the decision in the form of threats-

The authorities are aware of these threats and they are being investigated. It’s too bad these students that wanted the banner to stay don’t actually follow what it stated- *“Help us to be good sports and smile when we lose as well as when we win,”* .

The Mid Ohio Atheist
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What Kind of World

By Drenn Workman

What kind of a world would we have if a fundamental Theocracy were erected in the United States? Supposing that a fundamentalist Theocrat were elected as president and a majority of fundamentalist Theocrats were elected to both House and Senate what would we become in the United States. ([There are now 50 or more in the House and Senate that do not accept the principle of Separation of Church and State](#))

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First of all, I would imagine, they would act to rid us of that pesky document, the Constitution. The Bill of Rights would soon follow it onto the dung heap. A new constitution would be written which reflects God's law. As a result, the presidency would become a hollow position, holding no real power beyond enacting the dictates of the Church, whatever church that president is a subservient.

The first to be realized, of course, is the fall of the concept of free speech, at least any speech that might be critical of religion. (Even now any speech critical of religion is frowned upon by the majority, silenced where possible) Any one who dare speak any words that can so much as be taken as a criticism of biblical law would face formidable fines, possibly

imprisonment. (Islamic peoples have already attempted to [pass motions](#) on this in the United Nations)

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Science, the search for knowledge, could probably continue, under close scrutiny. Anything that would contradict biblical doctrine, like evolution, would have to be abandoned; text books for schools will be written to reflect this policy. ([Texas is doing so now](#)) Those educators that opposed such, and continued to teach such topics would either be out of a job or imprisoned. America would continue it's decline in technological supremacy and the economy would follow suit. The only field of study, the only technological advances, would be in the area of weaponry, war. Medical advances, research, will no longer be present. Who needs them when the only medicine accepted is prayer?

Weaponry needed for the advancement of Christianity in those countries that resist it will flourish. New ways will be found to vanquish the enemies of America. If it seems that other entities opposing the will of God are close to shutting down America, the final answer, a bomb of unimaginable power, will be ready at America's command, to bring on final annihilation, the end of life on Earth.

Church attendance will be mandatory. Those who cannot prove affiliation with a Christian church will be restricted in employment and other areas. Perhaps some way to establish Christian alliance will be found necessary. Maybe a mark of the wrist or forehead. Many would balk at this, saying it was "[the mark of the beast](#)", so maybe instead a chip implanted in the wrist, so a simple swipe over a detection device will be sufficient. Those who do not possess the mark will be limited in employment, education, and choice in buying or trading.

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In my opinion the "mark of the Beast" will not come from an "evil" society, but will have it's source in religion. The beast will not be the mythical Satan, but the Church. (or as surmised below, the Mosque)

Christianity isn't the only religion in the world, we could end up under an Islamic regime. It is not inconceivable that with the passage of time the numbers of Muslim adherence could out number any other. Life under such a regime would be similar to the life described above. Punishments would no doubt be much harsher, with "death" to the infidel being the order of the day.

Disappointed but not Defeated

By Michael Adams

Many of you are familiar with the billboard fall out we had here in Mansfield Ohio. If you follow us on Facebook or Twitter, then you're probably pretty familiar with the continuing backlash in our local media. Our local news paper, the Mansfield News Journal, had chosen to mostly ignore us in hopes we would go away. We sent them a press release when everything first happened and nobody cared. We sent them a copy of the American Atheists press release, and they ignored it. After the Associated Press picked it up, they did reprint the AP article and followed it up with a second article in which the President of our group, Ron Stephens, was misquoted and our stance misrepresented. They also had a member of their staff write an opinion piece in support of Lind Media. That was followed by a landslide of Letters to the Editor, in which Christian after Christian congratulated Lind for standing up to the Atheists.

of their duty to share that with everyone- especially us nonbelievers, daily in our jobs, personal life, and sometimes in our own families. I suppose sometimes I delude myself into thinking that most people would stand up for equal rights and equal protection under law, despite someone's beliefs. It was like having a pan of cold water thrown on

local group like ours existed in their area. If anything this should give our group and other groups that much more motivation to get their message out to the public, to remind religious people we exist and to let other nonbelievers know they are not alone. Because of all of this we have a continuing motivation that our Billboards will go up in the Mansfield Ohio Area! It is our hope that our attempts will not be in vain, that we continue to make contact with other non-believers in our area and that they can learn they are not alone.

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The Mansfield News Journal had chosen to mostly ignore us in hopes we would go away.

me with the reaction in our local media and the repeated comments about how the founding fathers promised freedom of religion, not freedom from religion, implying that to be truly American, we had to subscribe to some religious dogma.

So sure, I'm disappointed, but not defeated. In the last couple of months the continued press from this and the repeated letter writing from our new theistic fans has had the positive effect of introducing Mid Ohio Atheists to many new people in our local area. Our monthly meeting, which normally varies in attendance between 15 and 20 members, is expected to have over 30 people in attendance with many other local people contacting us via email and Facebook to show their support and to say how excited they were to learn a

On another note, I haven't forgotten how critical many of our fellow nonbelievers were of the designs we came up with for our Billboard Campaign. (You know who you are!) As I recall when we announced them one person described our designs as something their 6 year old nephew could have done with Paint. So here is your chance to show us what a real graphic artist can do and submit your own billboard. The Billboard Contest will begin January 23rd and will close February 29th. We will be begin accepting submissions on that day so watch for the post in the upcoming weeks with the contest details and start thinking about your submission. The winner will receive a few neat prizes that will be announced soon, along with getting to sign their work, which will appear on the final billboard design.

You might think that our little band of atheists here in Mansfield might find all this negativity discouraging, and you would be kind of right. Disappointing is probably more accurate. While we live in a very Right Wing/religious area, and I, along with most of our members, deal with people who not only consider themselves religious, but also consider it part