



HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK NEWS

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CONSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION: FAMILY FOUNDATION CLAIMS IT HAS THE REQUIRED SIGNATURES

The Montana Family Foundation announced in March 2004 that it was leading the drive to amend the Montana Constitution to ban gay marriage. It needed to gather over 41,000 signatures by mid-June to get CI-96, also known as the “Montana Marriage Amendment,” on the ballot for November’s General Election. Montana Rep. Jeff Laszloffy (R-Laurel), leader of the Family Foundation, has framed the amendment in easily-accessible terms for Religious Right activists.

For the Family Foundation and Laszloffy, “same sex marriage will be far more destructive to the family, and cause more pain than legalized abortion.” So-called traditional marriage needed to be protected from “out-of-control courts” that are “radically” redefining marriage to include gays and lesbians. Laszloffy prayed that “God will raise up a mighty army” to support traditional marriage. For Laszloffy, the fact that Montana already passed the “Defense of Marriage Act” in 1997 wasn’t good enough. He feared that courts might someday rule that law unconstitutional. Ultimately, gay marriage threatened the very “stability of society, and the health of the next generation hang[s] in the balance.”

In June, the Montana Family Foundation announced it had gathered 70,000 signatures for CI-96. Now, both supporters and opponents are waiting for county election officials to verify the signatures. The Family Foundation needs 41,020 valid signatures from registered voters, including 10% of registered voters in 28 of the state’s 56 counties. If it passes this step, CI-96 will be on the November General Election ballot.

CI-96 opponents formed their own organization to fight the Montana Marriage Amendment. Montanans for Families and Fairness is a coalition of progressive groups, including the Network. It contends that CI-96 seeks to write discrimination into the Montana Constitution. Using the constitution to deny rights to a segment of the population (in this case gays and lesbians) opens Pandora’s Box. The Montana Constitution could just as logically be used to take rights away from people based on ethnicity, class, gender, religion, etc. Gay marriage is about legal, civil rights and whether the state should be allowed to discriminate against couples seeking to marry. It is not about religious ceremony, which is left entirely up to churches. The rights of civil marriage shouldn’t be based on any particular religious
(CI-96, continued on page 2)



Rep. Jeff Laszloffy,
Montana Family
Foundation

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Rights Network, a non-
profit organization.
Contributors: Christine
Kaufmann, Ken Toole,
Betty Kijewski, and
Scott Nicholson.*

(*CI-96, continued from page 1*) doctrine. Instead, the Montana Constitution should strive to grant and equally protect the rights of all citizens.

On the way to gathering the signatures for CI-96, the Family Foundation tapped into a seemingly ready-made constituency – churches – which ended up pushing the limits of campaign law. CI-96 supporters also faced off against Montanans for Families and Fairness on Primary Election Day and engaged in offensive behavior.

Should Churches Comply with Campaign Laws?

In late May, the Family Foundation circulated information for a telecast being put together by the Family Research Council, a national Christian Right group. The telecast was being transmitted live by satellite to local churches across the country, including 10-20 churches in Montana. The Family Foundation encouraged its activists to get their local churches to carry the event, which focused on the need for the Federal Marriage Amendment [see inset box on page 3].

The simulcast featured many leading figures of the national Christian Right. Focus on the Family's James Dobson declared traditional marriage to be the "bedrock of civilization." He claimed that gay marriage would "destroy the family," "undermine the legal foundation" of America, harm children, and signal an "end of morality." He predicted that God would perform a miracle and defeat gay marriage. Prison Fellowship Ministries' Chuck Colson echoed Dobson's sentiments, declaring gay marriage the "mother of all cultural" topics. The Promise Keep-

ers' Bishop Wellington Boone criticized the gay rights movement for "raping" the themes of the civil rights movement and said Christians needed to rise up and take the country back from the devil. The Family Research Council's Tony Perkins stated the most important element of Homeland Security was protecting the home from gay marriage.

The simulcast was carried live at Helena's Canyon Ferry Road Baptist Church. At the conclusion of the telecast, Rev. BG Stumberg encouraged all the people in attendance to sign CI-96. He announced petitions were set up in the foyer, and people were herded to those tables as they exited the sanctuary.

Montanans for Families and Fairness filed a complaint with the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices. The complaint alleged that Canyon Ferry Road Baptist Church had become an incidental ballot committee and should be required to file the same reports as any other group working on political campaigns. The complaint stated that the church had expended resources to carry the simulcast. According to the Family Research Council, local churches had to spend at least \$75 to hook up to the program. The overall cost could have been as high as \$600, if the church did not have certain technology already on hand. Also, the church provided institutional resources, such as the building and pastor's time, to hold the event. In responses to the media, Rev. Stumberg admitted that petitions were circulated and signed; however, he said no resources were spent to sponsor the event. The Commissioner of Political Practices has said she will be looking into the complaint.

After Montanans for Families and Fairness filed its complaint, the

Alliance Defense Fund came to the rescue of the church. The Alliance Defense Fund is a national law firm founded by Christian-Right icons including James Dobson and D. James Kennedy. It says it provides its services to "keep the door open for the Gospel in America." The Defense Fund filed a lawsuit in US District Court against the Commissioner of Political Practices. It stated that some Montana election laws are unconstitutional and make it difficult for citizens to express their religious beliefs. It said the laws that allowed the complaint to be filed are "vague" and "ambiguous."

Help from the Outside

The simulcast featuring national Christian Right organizations and leaders wasn't the only connection between Montana and the national Religious Right movement. With the Montana Family Foundation being a state-level affiliate of Focus on the Family, it wasn't surprising that the Colorado-based group supported CI-96.

In May, Tim Minnery, Focus on the Family's Vice President of Government and Public Policy, sent a letter to Montanans. He announced that "concerned citizens" were gathering signatures for a "marriage-protection amendment" in Montana. He said the amendment was needed, because the state's Defense of Marriage Act could be struck down by "rogue judges." The mailing included copies of CI-96 petitions and instructions on how to gather signatures. Minnery encouraged people to gather signatures in order to "stand on behalf of righteousness and God's plan for marriage." The instructions with the petitions encouraged people to

(*CI-96, continued on page 3*)

(CI-96, continued from page 2)
target churches in their area.

The push to ban gay marriage also resulted in Laszloffy being invited to Washington D.C. by the Family Research Council. As a guest of the Council's Tony Perkins, Laszloffy and other activists were there to show support for the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Shady Tactics Used on Primary Day

The Montana Family Foundation gathered most of its signatures at polling places on Primary Election Day. As part of its strategy, opponents to CI-96 also headed out to voting stations, urging people to "Decline to Sign" the Montana Marriage Amendment. Although it was expected that there would be some tension between supporters and opponents of CI-96, the tactics and level of hostility shown by Montana Family Foundation supporters at some polling places was offensive.

In Missoula, police were called to the voting station at CS Porter Middle School four times. The CI-96 signature gatherers at the polling station were Tei Nash and Chris Jones, the founders of the Coalition for Community Responsibility, a local Christian Right group [see related article on page 12]. Nash claimed that the opponents of CI-96 were "screaming at people" and "harassing people" who were

trying to sign the Marriage Amendment. The police did not take any action. Although there were "Decline to Sign" volunteers at other Missoula polling locations, the police were only called to the station manned by Nash and Jones. Also, the volunteers for Montanans for Families and Fairness received training on how to gather "Decline to Sign" signatures in a legal and respectful manner in order to avoid the situation that Nash and Jones claimed happened.

Throughout the Bitterroot Valley, the Network heard that "Decline to Sign" volunteers were threatened with abusive language. In Stevensville, a volunteer was told by a voter that gay rights supporters should be rounded up and shot. In Corvallis, a voter expressed his religious beliefs against gay marriage and then stated he should go home, get his rifle and come back to the polling station. The Network also heard reports that some election judges were telling voters to go to the tables manned by supporters of CI-96. The alleged action of these election judges in the Bitterroot were not the only allegations of election officials helping CI-96. At other locations around the state, voters reported that the CI-96 petitions were set up right next to the election

judges, where voters had to sign in to vote. The Network also heard reports that "Decline to Sign" volunteers were both physically and verbally abused by CI-96 supporters throughout the state. □

Discriminating Amendments

Montana Marriage Amendment

"Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state or its political subdivisions."

Federal Marriage Amendment

"Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the constitution of any State, shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman."

Would You Like to Volunteer at the Network?

The Network is seeking members who would like to volunteer at our office in Helena. If you live in the Helena area and would be willing to occasionally help out with putting together mailings and other tasks, please let us know! If you are interested, please call us at 442-5506 or e-mail her at network@mhrn.org.

MHRN BILLBOARD ASKS, "WHERE'S THE MONEY?" LAWSUITS, FINANCES PLAGUE FRINGE RADIO STATION

Using his radio station and talk show, John Stokes has spread his ultra-conservative ideology over Flathead-Valley airwaves since taking over KGEZ Radio in 2000. He has targeted everyone from conservationists, whom he calls "Green Nazis," to public employees, politicians, and progressive activists. He frequently discusses his distaste for paying taxes and his belief that government agencies waste taxpayer money. However, that has not stopped Stokes from seeking outrageous sums of money from the Montana Department of Transportation (DOT).

For the last four years, John Stokes has been in a legal battle with the DOT over the agency's expansion of US Highway 93. Stokes' radio station sits right beside the highway, and the DOT has been in negotiations to obtain less than an acre of land it needs for the expansion project. Stokes initially stated the DOT would have to pay \$2.5 million for the property. The agency appraised the land at \$100,500. Stokes then lowered his price to \$1.1 million. Using a law already in place, Stokes got the DOT to cut him a check for the new amount, which was deposited into an account. The same law allowed Stokes to access approximately \$750,000 of the money, which he did, but nobody knows where the money went.

Billboard Seeks Accountability

Citizens in Flathead Valley quickly noticed the irony of Stokes' actions. While he routinely demands that government agencies and non-profit organizations must publicly disclose their finances, he quickly took \$750,000 in taxpayer money. Working with its local affiliate in Kalispell, the Network designed and paid for a billboard positioned on Highway 93 [see inset picture]. It asked a simple question: "John and Pam Stokes have \$750,000.00 of Montana Taxpayers' Dollars. Where's the Money?" The billboard was up through parts of April and May, and it was even discussed during a court hearing in the Stokes-DOT case.

At a court hearing in early May, Stokes raised his asking price from \$1.1 million to \$4.7 million, claiming that the construction would force him to relocate his



The Network put up this billboard on Highway 93 to ask John Stokes a simple question.

station and the DOT should pay for it. His new asking price came on the heels of turning down an \$850,000 settlement offer from the DOT. Judge Katherine Curtis has not issued a ruling on Stokes' new monetary request. Also at the hearing, Stokes' attorney, Wade Dahood, asked Judge Curtis to order that the Network's billboard be removed. He said it would make it difficult to get a fair and impartial jury should the lawsuit go to trial. Judge Curtis declined to take any action, saying it would infringe on the Network's freedom of speech.

Stokes' Investors Foreclosing

John Stokes' investors apparently did not receive any of the \$750,000, since they started the foreclosure process early in 2004. In April 2000, Stokes obtained a \$665,000 loan from Questa Resources to purchase KGEZ. The loan was secured by KGEZ radio and 60 acres of land in Lake County. The loan came due in April 2003 and was declared in default in May 2003. The investors state they are owed \$544,400, plus 15% interest accrued since March 10, 2001. The investors are asking that the property be put up for auction to satisfy the debt.

According to Stokes, he only owes the investors about \$87,460. He also claims that his creditors were supposed to be first in line to receive part of the \$750,000 he got from the DOT. Stokes told the press that the investors refused to take any of that money, an assertion denied by the investors.

In the past, Stokes has stated over the air that his
(Stokes, continued on page 10)

RACIST DEVELOPMENTS WITH MONTANA CONNECTIONS

During the past several months, new developments occurred regarding the racist movement and Montana. Some individuals with ties to Montana have had brushes with the criminal justice system, while some hate groups are busy setting up shop in Montana, or relocating to other states.

National Alliance Targets Bozeman

In late June, the National Alliance conducted a literature drop in a Bozeman neighborhood. The National Alliance is a hate group based in West Virginia, and it has chapters throughout the country. Shaun Walker, chief operations officer of the group, told the press that the group had just started organizing in Montana. The piece that was dropped on lawns sported the title "Missing: A white future for children" on one side and a membership application on the other. Over the past couple of years, the Network has found National Alliance literature in other Montana communities, including Missoula and Helena.

"Creativity Publications" Moves to Nebraska

Rudy Stanko, a white supremacist formerly of the Billings area, is now in Nebraska. Stanko has long claimed to be the leader of the Church of the Creator (COTC), a national hate group. While serving time in prison for selling tainted meat to school lunch programs in the 1980s, Stanko corresponded with Ben Klassen, COTC's founder. Stanko was one of the people rumored to be in the running to be

Klassen's successor as COTC leader. However, Klassen committed suicide before settling on an heir, and COTC entered a long period of organizational turmoil. Matt Hale solidified the hate group when he took over in 1996. However, when it suits him, Stanko claims to be COTC's leader and has continued to sell the group's books through his "Creativity Publications."

Creativity Publications has sporadically run classified ads in *American Free Press* since December 2003 with its headquarters now listed as Gordon, Nebraska. *American Free*



National Alliance logo

Press is the latest incarnation of *The Spotlight*. *The Spotlight* was published by the Liberty Lobby, which was founded by longtime anti-Semite Willis Carto.

Stanko's Creativity Publications sells COTC's "holy" books, including *The White Man's Bible*, *On the Brink of a Bloody Racial War* and *The Little White Book*. Stanko's inventory also includes copies of his own book, *The Score*, which claims that Jews control the cattle business. Buyers can also purchase standard racist tracts like Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, a forgery that contends that Jews plan to take over the

world.

Along with the list of books available, Stanko puts a membership application for COTC and instructions on how racists can become a "Minister of the Orthodox Church of the Creator" in every mailing.

Temple Convicted of Fraud

Chris Temple, a self-proclaimed neo-Nazi who used to live in the Flathead Valley, pleaded guilty to charges of mail fraud and money laundering in February 2004. Currently living in Wisconsin, the indictment against Temple claimed he had obtained approximately \$1.6 million from investors under "false and fraudulent representations" between July 1998 and March 2003.

Temple has been a fixture in the white supremacist and militia movements since the early 1990s. He formed the United Citizens for Justice with John Trochmann, who later founded the Militia of Montana using the group's mailing list. Temple was a frequent visitor to the Aryan Nations compound, even being a featured speaker at a 1996 event. He has worked for the Council of Conservative Citizens, which has been designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a national watchdog organization. Temple lived in the Flathead Valley until 1992 when he moved to Spooner, Wisconsin. While in Montana, he ran Phoenix Financial Services, which gave investment advice from a "patriot" perspective.

The indictment against Temple stated that he used the money investors gave him to pay off previous investors, publish anti-government

(Roundup, continued on page 7)

(*Schools, continued from page 12*) while, Schallenberger only polled 295 votes. House received 301. The results signaled a change in the voting power of the school board. Now, ID opponents have the 3-2 advantage, meaning the “objective origins” policy is defeated for now.

In Hamilton, voters made sure two Religious Right activists who supported Darby’s “objective origins” policy were not elected to the Hamilton School Board. Harris Himes, pastor for Big Sky Christian Center, and Cary Monaco, pastor for Big Sky Baptist Church, were already known to Hamilton residents. They led an unsuccessful campaign in 2003 to ban Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* from Hamilton schools. They claimed the book was pornographic and promoted lesbianism. Himes is also one of the most vocal lobbyists against church-state separation at the Montana Legislature. While the winners of the Hamilton School Board race polled over 1,700 and 1,600 votes, respectively, Monaco received only 792 votes and Himes 778.

Creationist Book Challenge Fails

In February, Roxanne Cleasby asked that a book be removed from Helena’s Smith Elementary School. Cleasby complained that Juliet Clutton-Brock’s *Horse* presented the evolution of horses as fact, which for Cleasby meant that “fiction is presented as fact.” Cleasby admitted that she was challenging the book as part of the larger debate that biblical creationism is as scientifically-based as evolution. She said she realized that she couldn’t challenge every instance of evolution being taught in schools, but she could pro-

test *Horse*. She also recommended that books on biblical creationism be offered at the school library.

In her request for the book’s removal, she cited Religious Right groups pushing creationism as fact. The authors she mentioned work for groups like the Creation Research Foundation and the Institute for Creation Research. The former declared that “Our desire is to exalt the Lord Christ as The Creator to whom every human being must be accountable.” It continued by stating that “Matters of science, culture, history and experience...must be explained within the framework of a Biblical worldview.” In the end, the Creation Research Foundation concluded that “satanic deception [has] corrupted studies of natural science.”

Cleasby’s request was first considered by a five-member committee, which recommended that the school retain *Horse*. Cleasby appealed that ruling to the Helena School Board. In April, the trustees decided to keep *Horse* in the school’s library.

Pro-Lifers Pamphlet High School

For a week in May, students arriving for class at Great Falls High School were hounded by members of a local church to take literature from Operation Save America, a national anti-choice group. About 20 members of Great Falls’ Triumph Lutheran Church delivered different pamphlets each day on topics ranging from homosexuality being an abomination to anti-Islamic tirades. The school was eventually forced to get the police involved, after parents complained that the fundamentalists were chasing and badgering students into taking the literature.

It wasn’t surprising that the members of Triumph Lutheran were handing out Operation Save America (OSA) pamphlets. Jonathan Martin, one of the people handing out pamphlets, organized the Montana speaking tour of OSA’s Flip Benham in 2002. During the tour, Benham spoke at Triumph Lutheran Church. Jonathan Martin is the chairman of the Constitution Party of Montana, which combines Christian fundamentalism with the anti-government “patriot” movement. It endorses “unorganized militias,” like the Militia of Montana. It is also uncompromisingly anti-choice, even opposing abortion in cases of rape and incest. Martin also leads a group that frequently pickets Planned Parenthood in Great Falls with placards featuring pictures of alleged aborted fetuses.

OSA is the latest incarnation of Operation Rescue, which was founded in 1988. Randall Terry, one of Operation Rescue’s founders, began telling people in 1995 to “take up the sword” and “overthrow the tyrannical regime that oppresses them.” Joe Foreman, co-founder of the group, signed a petition stating that lethal force was justified when it came to killing abortion providers.

On the last two days that Martin and Triumph Lutheran Church parishioners were handing out fliers at Great Falls High School, they were greeted by protestors. With the principal’s permission, about 250 students lined up across the street from the Religious Right activists and held up signs promoting tolerance and diversity. Rev. Gary Koljonen, pastor at Triumph Lutheran Church, declared to the press, “Nothing in the fliers contained hatred. They are biblically-based and God’s law.”

(*Schools, continued on page 7*)

ABOUT THE ENCLOSED RAFFLE TICKETS

The Network is a member of Montana Shares. Montana Shares is a partnership of Montana-based nonprofit groups devoted to improving the quality of life in communities throughout the state. Inside this newsletter, there are two tickets for Montana Shares' 10th Annual Raffle. Please take a moment to show your support for the Network and Montana Shares by entering the raffle, which also gives you the chance to win a fabulous prize [see the list on the enclosed sheet]!

(Schools, continued from page 6)

Bashing Gays from Legislative Hearings to the School Board

In May, Chris Jones and Tei Nash took their anti-gay crusade to the trustees of Missoula County Public Schools. After becoming persistent parts of the anti-gay lobby at the Montana Legislature, Nash and Jones asked the Missoula trustees to censure the adviser for Hellgate High School's newspaper and to get rid of any discussion of homosexuality during the high schools' "Diversity Week."

Jones and Nash head the Coalition for Community Responsibility, an organization they claim has 500 members but has been unable to show they represent anyone but Nash and Jones. Prior to filing the group's incorporation papers, the Coalition consisted only of Jones and Nash lobbying at the 2003 Montana Legislature. They testified as individuals, until, one day, they



*Chris Jones and Tei Nash,
Coalition for Community Responsibility*

claimed to be representing their new creation, the Coalition for Community Responsibility. Throughout the 2003 Montana Legislature, Nash and Jones testified on the same side of proposed legislation as the members of the "Pro-Family Forum," a coalition of Religious Right groups pulled together by long-time Christian Right activist Tom Rasmussen. Nash and Jones saved their nastiest attacks for gays and lesbians.

After generating press over their demands to Missoula County Public Schools, Jones claimed that he and Nash had received death threats due to their political activism. This concerned the Network, since it opposes the use of violence as a political weapon, regardless of the position individuals take on specific issues. Network staff wrote to Jones and Nash, asked them for more specifics regarding the incidents, and offered the Network's help. Jones and Nash never replied.

The Missoula trustees offered Nash and Jones the opportunity to address the board. Opponents to the Coalition for Community Responsibility's proposals were allowed to comment the same night. The opposition greatly outnumbered Jones and Nash supporters. In fact, the two left before the public comment period ended. Ultimately, the Missoula trustees took no action on either of the Coalition's demands. □

(Roundup, continued from page 5)
material, and remodel his own home. Temple faces a maximum of 40 years in prison without parole.

Aryan Nations Leader Arrested in Custody Case

In April, Karl Gharst was arrested at the Idaho home of Aryan Nations' leader Richard Butler. Gharst was extradited back to Flathead County on charges of threatening a public official. Gharst, a former "staff leader" for Aryan Nations, is accused of threatening and harassing his children's case worker with the Montana Department of Health and Human Services.

Court records indicated that Gharst told the case worker that his Aryan Nations associates were watching her, and she only had about two years to live. During one phone call, Gharst told the civil servant, "I didn't think you would still be alive, you filthy mongrel." He also told her that white people are kings, and that she was a "greasy turd-colored mongrel" that God would eliminate. Aryan Nations follows Christian Identity, which is based on a racist interpretation of the Christian Bible. It holds that white people are God's chosen people, and people of color are subhuman "mud people."

During his initial court appearance, Gharst stated that he believed in preserving the white race, and he has continually boasted about his affiliation with Aryan Nations. He faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$50,000. □

COMMUNITY

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MHRN Organizers

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NEWS FROM AROUND

Bitterroot Human Rights Alliance

BHRA spent much of the winter and spring helping parents and students fight the “objective origins” policy that was adopted by the Darby School Board [see related article on page 12]. “Objective origins” is a thinly-disguised attempt to tailor high school science curriculum to accommodate fundamentalist Christian beliefs. This is part of a national campaign to discredit evolution theory by Religious Right organizations. BHRA staff was instrumental in organizing local opposition to the policy in Darby. In recent school board elections, proponents of “objectives origins” were defeated, ending the threat for now.

In support of Montanans for Families and Fairness’ “Decline to Sign” campaign, BHRA had people in Florence, Stevensville, Corvallis, and Hamilton attempting to dissuade people from signing the anti-gay marriage amendment [see related article on page 1]. Volunteers and staff put up with the expected hostility, but also experienced comments such as “those people ought to be rounded up and shot” and “I should go home and get my rifle and clean

up this thing down here” (i.e. people opposing the amendment).

Flathead Reservation Human Rights Coalition

FRHRC has taken an active role in organizing community responses to a recent string of tragic deaths involving teens and alcohol abuse. A public forum on March 31 allowed community members to voice their concerns in an open-microphone setting. Approximately 150-200 resi-

14 brought together residents for a community picnic, followed by break-out discussions on more individual issues. This gathering included discussions on gangs, the role of faith, helping teens organize themselves for fun activities, and strengthening our community.

Organizer David Daniels points to several concrete steps that have been taken to change the climate and culture within the Mission Valley that came out of the public forums. For the first time, a county-wide and res-

ervation-wide curfew has been established for youth. Uniform curfews have been adopted by the tribal council, county commissioners, and several townships. Other steps include increased educational and awareness-raising events on substance abuse, community surveys, a community pledge, and planning for teen activities.

FRHRC also sponsored local speaking engagements by Afghanistan speaker Noorjahan Parwana in

March. Approximately 100 local residents heard about Afghanistan history and culture.

The Coalition is also planning a three-day camp during the last week of July. According to organizer Dana Grant, having fun is the focus of the camp. The camp will target youth in grades 7-8. We’re seeking volunteer counselors and activity sponsors.

(News, continued on page 9)

Keenan Returns to Montana

In May, Nancy Keenan, former superintendent of Montana’s public schools and current staffer for People for the American Way, spoke in three Montana communities. She spoke about the Religious Right’s war against public education, including battles over textbooks, voucher/charter schemes, and lack of funding. The Network sponsored her presentations in Hamilton, Great Falls and Helena, with the Network’s local affiliate groups helping out with promotion. Overall, Keenan spoke to well over 200 people during her three-city tour.

dents, including many law enforcement and public officials, attended this event. A second community event on April 15 gathered concerned citizens into small discussion groups to discuss specific problems and develop action plans. Discussion topics included: curfews, teen substance abuse, parental accountability, community building, and empowering families. A third event on May

COMMUNITY

Compiled by
MHRN Organizers

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(News, continued from page 8)

If you are interested in helping or sending a teen to this camp, call FRHRC at (406) 676-8444 for an application. Space is limited to 25 campers.

Gallatin Valley Human Rights Task Force

In late June, the Task Force organized a potluck and show of support for the Friendship Caravan to Cuba. The caravan, a national event organized by The Inter-Religious Foundation/Pastors for Peace, is collecting humanitarian aid that they hope to deliver to Cuba. Currently, American foreign policy requires a special license to ship such items to Cuba. Pastors for Peace believes the current policy is both immoral and illegal, and the caravan is part of the group's protest of the policy and America's blockade against Cuba. The caravan was in Bozeman on June 24, and the Gallatin Valley group held its event at Bogart Pavilion.

Helena Human Rights Task Force

HHRTF has sponsored a few events with Helena's Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. It co-sponsored a presentation by Mary Caferro. Caferro works for Work-

ing for Equality and Economic Liberation and spoke about welfare rights and poverty in Montana. Also, HHRTF's Albert Niccolucci presented a paper on the Humanism of Jesus Christ to the Unitarians. The Task Force's Virginia Niccolucci also presented a paper on the development of non-profit corporations and the separation of church and



Youth who attended the Network's "shOUT Youth Summit."

state.

The Task Force also sponsored a celebration of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the landmark civil rights case that integrated public schools. The event featured a panel discussion by the Network's Ken Toole and the ACLU's Scott Chricton. The evening included music and singing, along with serving as a wakeup call that America is sliding back into segregation.

Along with the Network and the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff, HHRFT helped investigate two different instances of swastikas being painted on structures around town. The two incidents coincided with

Hitler's birthday. Both instances turned out to be "juvenile pranks."

shOUT Youth Summit

This year's youth summit was full of activities and panels. There was a ministerial panel of pastors speaking about their denominations' teachings or doctrine regarding LGBT issues. There were workshops on both personal and school safety; how to advocate for social change; and the anti-gay marriage amendment currently making its way through Montana's initiative process [see related article on page 1]. The youth created a piece of art that will accompany Network organizers when they speak on anti-gay harassment in Montana schools. A shOUT planning committee was also

formed to work on next year's summit, along with planning one-day summits to be held in four Montana communities during the next school year. For more information, call Betty at (406) 442-5506 or e-mail her at betty@mhrn.org.

PRIDE Celebration

As in past years, the Network co-sponsored the state-wide PRIDE Celebration that was held in Missoula this year. About 400 people attended the weekend event. Network Co-Director Christine Kaufmann gave the keynote address. □

MORE ARRESTS IN “PROJECT 7” MILITIA CASE

In early May, six members of the militia group Project 7 were arrested and indicted on weapons charges. Three of the individuals – James Day, Steven Morey and John Slater — were new names connected to the militia group, while Dave Burgert, Tracy Brockway and Larry Chezem were already known affiliates of Project 7. The group took its name from the number designating Flathead County on Montana license plates.

Law enforcement discovered Project 7 in 2002 after it apprehended the group’s alleged leader, Dave Burgert. Burgert had jumped bail while awaiting trial for assaulting a police officer. When police caught him, Burgert engaged in a standoff with authorities and threatened to kill himself with an illegal machine gun. Law enforcement’s ensuing investigation uncovered Project 7, which had stockpiled weapons and around 30,000 rounds of ammunition. Authorities also discovered intelligence files on local criminal justice employees that

they have called a hit list.

Even before the discovery of Project 7, Burgert was known to frequent militia circles. In 2001, he requested that members of the Militia of Montana provide a “physical presence” at one of his court hearings. Tracy Brockway was also not a stranger to the so-called “patriot” movement thanks to her husband, Alan Brockway. Alan Brockway ran a NORFED Redemption Center, which is part of the “patriot” movement’s attempt to subvert the financial system. He also hosted a short-wave militia radio program, “Free Thought Radio,” which carried updates on Burgert’s encounters with the law.

Until the May roundup, only Burgert and Brockway had received sentences for activities related to Project 7. Burgert was convicted on charges of being a felon in possession of a machine gun and possessing an illegal machine gun. He pleaded guilty under a plea agreement, *(Project 7, continued on page 11)*

(Stokes, continued from page 4) investors were liberals motivated by greed. He said they didn’t know they would be helping put a right-wing ideologue on the air. Stokes’ purchase of the station came after years of the DOT discussing its intent to expand Highway 93, and the prospect of this happening no doubt influenced the investors’ original decision.

Stokes’ Financial Picture

It is increasingly clear that Stokes’ financing scheme resembles a shell game. He has built his station around the possibility of a big payoff from the DOT. However, if Stokes loses the DOT suit, he will be forced to pay back the \$1.1 million the DOT paid him, including the \$750,000 Stokes has already spent.

Stokes admits over the air that KGEZ is not a profitable venture and routinely states that he has yet to receive a paycheck for his work at the

station. Stokes’ advertising rates are the lowest in the Flathead market, but he has been unable to attract many new sponsors over the last four years due to his strident rhetoric. As a remedy for that, KGEZ became a formal affiliate of Fox News in 2004, and changed its format to all-talk radio. Along with Stokes’ “The Edge,” listeners can hear talk shows by such right-wing luminaries as Tony Snow, Joseph Farah, and Neal Boortz. In on-air pitches to possible advertisers, Stokes stresses his new relationship with Fox. Going to an all-talk format means that Stokes will no longer have to pay royalties for the music that used to be played on his station. Stokes has also quit broadcasting over the Internet, saying he couldn’t afford to pay what his service provider was asking.

Rabble Rousing Continues

While fighting the DOT, Stokes and state Rep. George Everett (R-

Kalispell) filed a lawsuit against Flathead Valley Community College over a 2002 bond election. In his Notice of Suit to the college, Stokes recommended that the college trustees, “put the cork back in the Champagne and get out the Malox. [sic] (and your checkbook).” In June, Judge Katherine Curtis threw out Stokes’ lawsuit against the college and declared the bond election was legal. Stokes vowed to appeal the ruling to the Montana Supreme Court.

Throughout his legal battles, Stokes has continued his extreme rhetoric. When the DOT began doing construction work near his station, he threatened to call out the militia to defend his property. He also encouraged listeners to support his cause by calling the DOT attorneys and Gov. Judy Martz. He even filed a personal lawsuit against a DOT attorney. He has compared himself to Jewish businesses during Nazi Germany, with the DOT playing the role of Hitler’s forces. □

(Project 7, continued from page 10) which resulted in him getting seven years in prison and three years of supervised release. He was ordered never to handle a gun or associate with militia groups again. He also agreed to help federal prosecutors by providing information and possibly testifying at future trials. Brockway, who helped accumulate the intelligence files on local police while working as a janitor for the Whitefish Police Department, also agreed to a plea agreement. It resulted in a 10-year suspended sentence with supervised probation. Like Burgert, Brockway was ordered to not participate in any paramilitary groups, and she cannot associate with Burgert or any past or present members of Project 7. Both Brockway and Burgert face more charges from the May indictment.

Larry Chezem was also named in the May indictment. While run-

ning for Flathead County Sheriff as a Libertarian in 2002, his affiliation with Project 7 was an issue. He admitted that he and Burgert were friends, and that he gave 6,000 rounds of ammunition to the group's stockpile. Early in his campaign for sheriff, Chezem appeared on KGEZ Radio's "The Edge" [see related article on page 4] and freely discussed his militia associations and "patriot" ideology. Arrested in Indiana, Chezem was indicted on charges of conspiring to possess illegal firearms.

The task force apprehended James Day, Steven Morey and John Slater during the May raid. Day is charged with illegally possessing a machine gun and being a felon in possession of a machine gun. Morey and Slater face charges of illegally possessing a machine gun and possessing firearms with the serial numbers removed. The three men pleaded innocent to the charges and their trial

is scheduled for July 26. When he appeared in court to enter his plea, Morey sported a large number "7" tattoo on his right arm. Each charge against the three men carries up to 10 years in federal prison and up to a \$250,000 fine.

The indictment helped paint a better picture of Project 7's activities. Along with nearly 30,000 rounds of ammunition, the group was stockpiling explosives, body armor and night-vision gear. The indictment stated that Project 7 met in the Whitefish area and trained in the use of illegal weapons between March 2001 and May 2003. The indictment also quoted Day's wife as saying she attended a meeting where Burgert said of local police, "Kill them all. Kill them all, even their wives and children." The indictment also listed Jason Larson and Jon Erdmann as co-conspirators. □

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CHRISTIAN RIGHT TARGETS SCHOOLS ACROSS MONTANA

Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Christian Right routinely pushed its agenda by challenging local schools. The movement rallied behind “stealth” candidates for school boards who protested medically-accurate sex education and lamented that “godless secular humanism” was being taught in the classroom. Fundamentalist Christians pushed for school prayer, censorship of books, and teaching of biblical creationism in science curriculum. In Montana, the Religious Right is back to its old tricks. The buzzwords used by its activists may have changed, but the overall goal is the same – force Montana schools to teach Christian fundamentalism. The good news is that most of the attempts are failing.

Bitterroot Valley Rejects Creationist Candidates

In December 2003, local minister Curtis Brickley gave a presentation to the Darby School Board about “intelligent design.” Intelligent Design (ID) is the latest attempt by the



Operation Save America literature was distributed at Great Falls High School

Christian Right to teach biblical creationism in public schools. ID holds that life is too complex to be explained by evolution. Instead, an “intelligent designer,” generally recognized as the Christian God, is behind creation. Brickley’s presentation focused on the school board adopting an “objective origins” policy that would teach ID alongside evolution in science curriculum. For more background on the Darby situation, please see the February 2004 *Network News*, which is available at the Network’s website, www.mhrn.org.

Despite facing lawsuits for adopting the “objective origins” policy, the Darby School Board gave preliminary approval to the policy in February 2004 by a 3-2 vote. Board members Gina Schallenberger, Doug Banks and Elisabeth Bender voted in favor of ID. It was decided that the final vote for adopting the policy would be postponed until after the May school board elections, and ID became a campaign issue.

Schallenberger, the board’s incumbent chairwoman, campaigned on her support of the “objective origins” policy, as did newcomer Robert House. Meanwhile, Erik Abrahamsen campaigned opposing the policy. The other person on the ballot, incumbent Bob Wetzsteon, had voted against preliminary approval of the policy. Abrahamsen and Wetzsteon campaigned under the slogan, “Fix this mess.”

Darby voters overwhelmingly rejected the candidates who supported ID in the science curriculum. Wetzsteon received 604 votes, while Abrahamsen got 595 votes. Mean-
(Schools, continued on page 6)

MONTANA HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

P.O. Box 1222

Helena, MT 59624

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e-mail: network@mhrn.org

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