

Thursday, September 4, 2025

## Humanist Society of Iowa Board Meeting

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- Meeting Called to Order at 5:51 pm
- Attendees: Warren Stine, Al Powers, Steve Lipshutz, and Brenda Trickler
- Email issue: Since August, a number of our emails to our members have not gone through to recipients with email addresses controlled by AOL (including @msn and @yahoo). Steve found that new security protocols were being enforced by AOL, and he created a workaround to enable emails to go through, then worked out a more permanent solution for his Fastmail account. He offered to assist Brenda with setting up the solution using ProtonMail as well.
- Steve recounted a conversation regarding the tagline “Good Without God” and questioned whether it is sufficiently inclusive. He also referenced a recent Braver Angels meeting in which some of our members described how humanism does not preclude spiritual beliefs. Steve suggested removing it from our business cards and website. Warren noted coming up with something catchy to replace it would take time. “Science and Reason with Compassion” was suggested. Brenda provided background on a disputed bus advertisement with similar wording, and suggested including “wonder” in the mix. We planned to solicit input from members.
- Iowa Secular Summit. \$798.47 in revenue from the ISS. Should we participate in future such events? Warren mentioned struggles dealing with planning with the IAF, citing the large amount of work, and noting that the planning skills of IAF leadership left a lot to be desired. The IAF is also more politically active (suing the governor) than we are. The president of the IAF expressed a desire to make the Summit bigger, though that would be costly. Steve suggested taking a smaller role (not planning menu or speakers, but Steve volunteering to keep the books and polish the website), and taking a smaller share of the revenue. We will offer our counter proposal along these lines, opening with our group taking a third of the proceeds.
- Should we do more community service? If so, what kind? Should we spend money? Al suggested joining in with First Unitarian’s efforts, though Steve noted possible confusion. Warren noted the advanced age of our membership, and suggested a project would be a big ask. West Des Moines Human Services (part of that city’s government) has contacts with our membership (Greg Nichols), so we might

contribute there. Steve suggested having the members bring donation items to our meetings on an ongoing basis.

- Membership: 50 single and 10 family memberships (60 total). Steve mentioned working on the Facebook page, and Warren noted he's regularly on the site. New passwords are needed, since the former member who took care of the page has moved away.
- Treasurer's Report: Dues are currently \$15 annually; Steve asked if we need to raise it. Cost of last month's annual BBQ was \$90. \$7327.63 on hand. Anticipated membership revenue approximately \$1000.
- Al Powers mentioned the group seeing the film *The Last Class*, but it's only running at the Varsity through 9/11. It's unclear if the run will be extended, so a group viewing may not be possible.
- Steve met journalist Harry Smith in conjunction with a storyteller project, and invited him to be our speaker at our annual meeting. Steve offered to contact him and try to get a firm answer. Steve also suggested moving the meeting to January on a permanent basis (since December is a busy season), and the board agreed unanimously to make the change permanent.
- The Humanist Society has the Stine Barn reserved for our Christmas Party. Steve wants to use the name "Christmas Party" and explain why we're using it. All board members agreed, with Brenda noting that we call this day of the week "Thursday" without worshipping Thor. Tentative date for the party is the second Friday in December. Possible entertainment (seasonal songs) from a duo playing guitar and keyboard.
- Book Discussion report: Main book discussions are one the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, with an additional session of essays ("A Little Light Reading") on the 4th Sunday. Members requested more humanist topics, and some expressed a desire for shorter readings due to busy schedules. Warren noted our good fortune in obtaining the use of the room at First Unitarian three times a month. The essays have proved very popular, and some members participate in both the main book and the essays. Current source for essays is A.C. Grayling's *The Challenge of Things* (2014). The use of a ranked choice voting site for book and essay selection has worked well; a small donation from the treasury has been sent to the site's creator. Steve suggested a commendation to Brenda for her efforts in planning and leading the discussions, seconded by Al and Warren.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.