



THE RIGHTS STUFF

JUNE 2004

**BONNER COUNTY
HUMAN
TASK
FORCE
RIGHTS**

THE RIGHTS STUFF is published—occasionally—by the BONNER COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE. Helping with this issue were: Sandy Lamson, Anna Gallo, Brenda Hammond, Barbara Hansen, Gretchen Hellar, & Christine Holbert.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRES

—*Sandy Lamson*

My recent election as President of the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force has left me both humbled and inspired—humbled because I feel completely inadequate to fill the position previously held so ably by Hal Hargreaves, Gary Payton, Brenda Hammond, and Gretchen Hellar, and inspired because of the wealth of human rights issues which we need to consider. Fortunately, I have a most competent and experienced board to help me along.

A few months ago, a local writer implied that since the Aryan Nations groups have dispersed, the human rights task forces of both Kootenai and Bonner Counties now have no purpose. His column was thought-provoking, but his conclusion was wrong. The white supremacists presented a very large challenge to human rights, one so large and so obvious that for a time it obscured other ongoing human rights issues. But the other human rights issues have not gone away, and because they are so pervasive, and so much part of the warp and woof of our society, they are harder to see. They are also much more difficult to combat.

One thing you will learn about me is that I am a reader, and when I read a good book, I try to get everyone else to read it, too. I recently read Derrick Jensen's *A Culture of Make Believe* (it's in the library, and I highly recommend it). His points—too numerous to be listed here—include the institutionalized hatred of women and children in our country (what else can you call it when one quarter to one third of all women will be raped or assaulted in their lifetimes, and the basic necessities of life are withheld from

needy children by state legislatures?). He mentions the culture of war, made possible by demonizing people unlike our majority, which pervades the United States. He mentions the intolerance of fundamentalists toward those who believe or live differently. He mentions the plutocracy (a government in which the wealthy class rules), and how millions of Americans are allowed to vote, but they are not presented with candidates who represent ordinary people. He mentions the fact that the United States is the only first-world nation without universal health insurance coverage for its citizens, and that health insurance provided by employers is becoming more limited, more expensive, and more uncommon. He mentions the poverty in which many Americans live, and the two-tiered society we are devolving into. He mentions the hatred for the environment in a society in which the only value of a tree is as a saw log, and the hatred for animals, which are tolerated only as long as they don't impede anyone's economic efforts.

The Task Force is currently a strong supporter of conflict resolution training in the schools. I intend to continue this emphasis. Conflict resolution represents our best opportunity to teach children skills that will help them throughout their lives; as the number of people holding those skills increases, we can expect to see large changes in the way our society responds to untoward events.

Well, you can see that we have a lot to do. We need to attempt to change some underlying attitudes on a multitude of topics, and do it in a way that is perceived as helping, not lecturing. And we need to constantly monitor our own attitudes, because they can harden into intolerance if we are not careful. And, I intend to learn and to grow during my term as President, with the help of all of you.

ACLU EVENT

—*Gretchen Albrecht-Hellar*

The Task Force feels it important to let you know of other events in town, which deal with civil and human rights issues. At 7pm on Saturday, June 25th, at the Gardenia Center—located at Church Street and South Fourth Avenue in Sandpoint—Liz Brandt, who serves as a member of the Board of the ACLU of Idaho and who is a past member of the Board of the national ACLU—will hold an informal, lively discussion of ACLU positions on important and current civil rights issues. Liz is the past president of the ACLU of Idaho and currently serves as a member of its legislative and legal committees. She is a Professor of Law at the University of Idaho and a member of the editorial board of the *ABA Family Law Quarterly*.

There are many human rights and civil rights issues with which the ACLU deals that overlap and reinforce the concerns of the Task Force. Some of the salient issues include the Patriot Act, gay marriage and discrimination, the recent controversy in Boise over the Ten Commandments in public places, and the status of the Idaho legislature on civil rights concerns. This is an opportunity for the public to ask questions of and raise issues with a state and national leader of the ACLU. Don't miss this chance to learn more about these important issues and their impact on our community. Hope to see you there.

PFLAG FUNDRAISER

—*Barbara Hansen*

The Sandpoint Chapter of PFLAG—Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays—presents its annual fundraising event with the Sandpoint debut of *THE CELLULOID CLOSET*, a star studded, award-winning documentary about the depiction of lesbians and gays in film, from silent movies to today's pictures. This R-rated film will be shown on Wednesday, June 23, 2004 at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint. Doors open at 7pm; the film begins at 7:30 pm. A cash bar and home baked goods will be for sale. A drawing for seven great prizes and a discussion of the film follows the showing. Tickets are \$7.00, and are available from PFLAG members, at The Main Stage Cafe and Monarch Mountain Coffee. Raffle tickets cost \$3.00 each or 4 for \$10.00, and are available from PFLAG members. For info or to order tickets, please call 263-6699.

SCHOLARSHIPS

—Anna Gallo

June is the traditional month for high school graduation and for awarding the Human Rights Task Force scholarship to a most deserving senior. This year because of the high quality of the applicants, we chose to award two scholarships. Scholarships of \$1500 were awarded to Jaime Hedrick and Liam Orton, both of Sandpoint High School. A special recognition award of \$500 was presented to Cinnamon Miller of Lake Pend Oreille High School.

The Task Force scholarship committee requires two essays as a part of the scholarship application. The first is a 500 word essay on one of four quotes from Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, or Walt Whitman. The second is a 300 word essay on any single incident or series of incidents which were of seminal importance in the student's development of his/her concept of human rights.

For the members of the Scholarship Committee, our work with these young adults is a highpoint of the year. Their promise is the hope for our future—a promise of respect and human dignity.

4TH OF JULY PARADE

—Brenda Hammond

The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force is inviting Sandpoint community organizations to march with us in the 4th of July parade. For the past five years, members of the Task Force have walked beside representatives of other local groups, including the Kalispell, PFLAG, North Idaho Arts Center, Lost Horse Press, and The Panida Theater. This year, we encourage your organization to join us in celebrating "United Through Music."

We realize that it takes much more than a human rights task force to bring a community together. We honor the contributions each of you makes to help create a community that respects the rights of all its members and guests. Beyond that, we honor the various ways we each bring people together to make this a community and not just a place to reside.

We invite you to send representatives from your organization to march with us and carry a banner or placard that identifies you and defines your contribution to our community. An option if you do not have anyone to march and would like to be represented, is to provide the Task Force with a banner so that one of our members may carry it for your organization.

Please let us know if you will be joining us. You can call and leave a message at 263.0275. Please leave a number where we can call you back and confirm plans, including a place to meet on the day of the parade.

4TH OF JULY PARADE

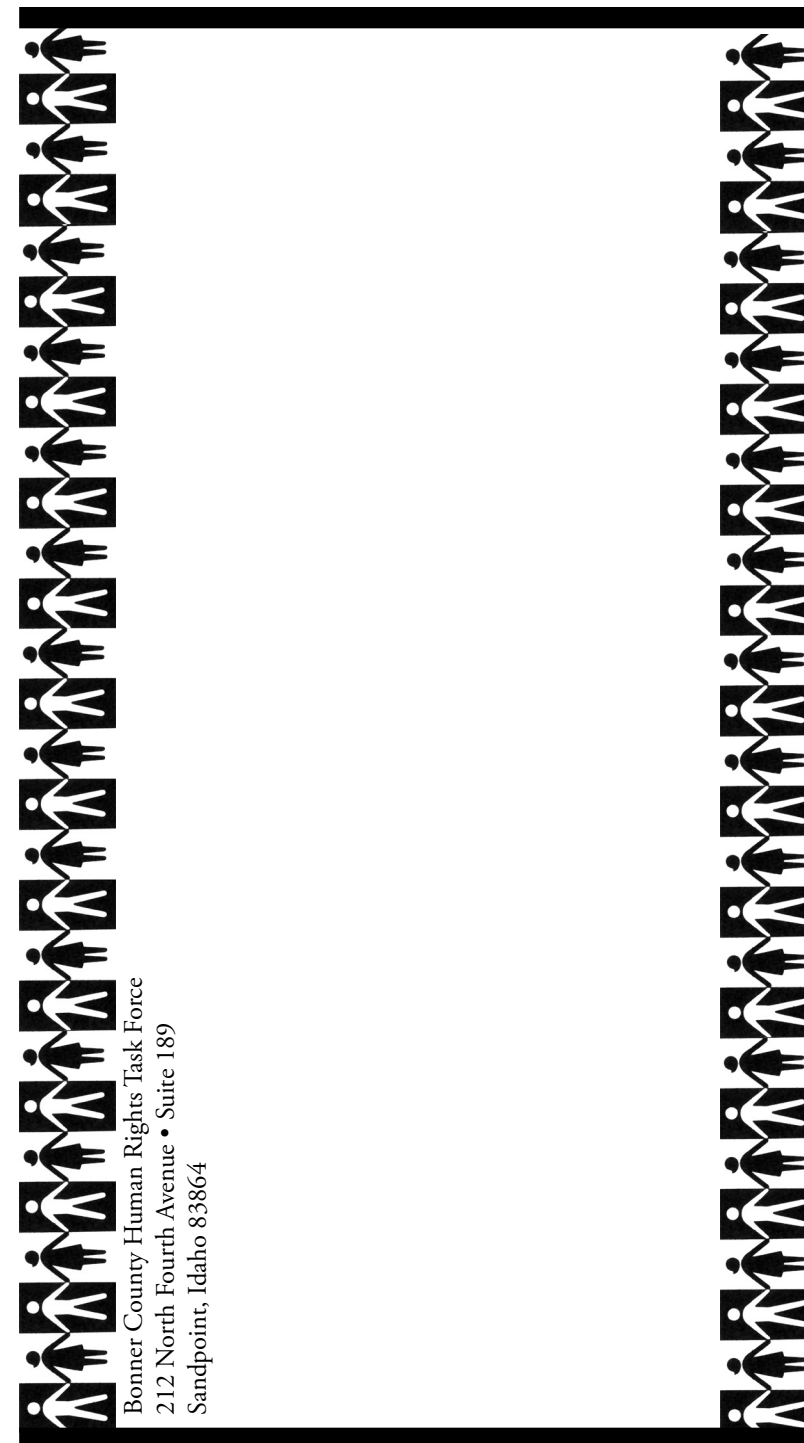
—Christine Holbert

It's getting close to the 4th of July, and the members of Human Rights Task Force Parade Committee are energetically creating a float that will emphasize the significance of music and its ability to transcend language and cultural barriers. Music holds a special place in all people's lives because everyone is affected by music and everyone can make music. Music truly is capable of conquering barriers to understanding and expressing things that we cannot consciously understand, but know on a deeper, subconscious level. Humans are all music makers and dreamers of dreams. This 4th of July, the Parade Committee celebrates the musical creativity inherent in all of us with the theme, "A Joyous Noise."

This year's parade float—built of recycled steel by professional white water kayaker and welder, Ed Lucero—will carry an assortment of local musicians, young and old, who will play popular songs from a variety of cultures, while members of the TF pull the melodious, human-powered float through the streets of Sandpoint. We hope you will join us! (We'll surely need help pulling that float . . .) Call the TF Office at 263.0275 to join the fun, with or without your tuba.

BCHRTF WEB SITE

Visit our updated BCHRTF website at www.bchrtf.org! View photos and articles on human rights issues in north Idaho. Suggestions and new ideas are always welcome.



Bonner County Human Rights Task Force
212 North Fourth Avenue • Suite 189
Sandpoint, Idaho 83864