



**BONNER COUNTY  
HUMAN  
TASK  
FORCE  
RIGHTS**

# THE RIGHTS STUFF

OCT 2003

THE RIGHTS STUFF is published—occasionally—by the BONNER COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE. Helping with this issue were: Hal Hargreaves, Gretchen Hellar, Brenda Hammond, Phil Deutchman, Christine Holbert.

The TF has never been more busy and some activities are driven by a sense of urgency. For example, Phil Deutchman writes of a petition that makes our opposition to the Patriot Act, known to those at the highest levels of government. Martin Luther King day will be celebrated on the slain civil rights pioneer's birthday, and held at the Panida; participants will come from the high school and the community at large. The Fall Forum is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup>. Montez Fargo will speak on the "Middle East-How Did We Get There?"

We think the community can benefit from exposure to events which shape our lives. The life of the TF is vigorous and full of good energy. Read on!

## GOALS FOR 2003

by Brenda Hammond

Members of the Task Force Board of Directors held a retreat this summer to review the Mission statement and to set priorities for activities in the coming year. We want to share the results of this brainstorming session with our membership and ask for your feedback as well.

Ideas that ranked highest in priority were:

1. To establish a procedure and committee to investigate complaints regarding local law enforcement.
2. Address issues of homophobia and church sponsorship of this kind of thinking
3. Offer a for-credit course for teachers on Kalispel history.
4. Write regular articles on economic justice, on national, state and local levels for local papers.
5. Sponsor a Martin Luther King Day program for young people that will kickoff the annual human rights scholarship for graduating seniors.

Other ideas considered important were the need to humanize the face of poverty in our area; to study the Patriot Act and be informed about it, especially as it relates to the Bill of Rights; to seek a Board member who is a teacher of counselor at Sandpoint High School.

## OCTOBER 28TH FORUM FOCUSES ON THE MIDDLE EAST

by Gretchen Hellar

The Middle East! Ever wondered how the U.S. became so embroiled in the political and social issues facing this part of the world? What past and present U.S. policies and positions resulted in our current involvement? What policies and positions espoused by the nations of the Middle East created the tense and often antagonistic relationship with the U.S.?

Is conflict the inevitable result of the differences among the cultural, economic, and political worldviews of the U.S. and the Middle East nations or is it the result of failing to deal with those differences in an enlightened and informed manner? Indeed, is there a monolithic culture in the Middle East or are they as diverse as the nations of Europe; and what does that mean for our policies in that area of the world?

As part of its continuing forums on conflict resolution the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force is presenting "The Middle East: How Did it Get To This Point?" on October 28th at 7PM at the Community Hall. Our featured speaker in Dr. Mumtaz Fargo who received his Ph.D. in Middle East History at the University of Utah in 1969 and served as chair of the history department at Montana State University from 1977-2000. He has written extensively on the U.S. policy in the Middle East and the rise of Islamic religious/political extremism. His research required extensive travel throughout the region. He will speak about the prospects and implications of U.S. policy in the Middle East and the challenges stemming from the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

This forum is free and open to the public. Everyone who is concerned about the effectiveness and efficacy of U.S. policy in this area of the world and is wondering what we can do now is encouraged to attend.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE TF PRESIDENT

by Hal Hargreaves

This issue of the newsletter is special for a number of reasons. Many of you have read the article in the *Spokesman-Review* describing the apparent demise of the Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity—the regional organization that had its roots in Bill Wassmuth's effort to counter the Aryan philosophy and create fertile ground for diversity in this area. Sadness is mixed with gratitude in such an event. Gretchen Hellar writes of this below.

*The River Journal* carried a decidedly negative article about our Task Force last month. We responded with a measured article in the next issue, but the bad taste had already been spread around. Bad press is to be expected but is hard to counter, unless by continued action. We can never rely on words alone to heal wounds or affect change.

It would be cliché to say that when the times are tough the tough get going, but something of that sentiment is appropriate. Criticism, when directed at the TF for its very existence, calls for a thoughtful, powerful initiative to say just what justifies our existence, and more. That is the tone of this issue.

It also provides an opportunity to accelerate our efforts in the community to stamp out violations of anyone's rights and to create or support those programs which work towards a more compassionate community. Lately, the TF has focused on "quiet" programs that bring resources to our school rooms and playgrounds. Not that conflict resolution is above controversy, or that integrating Native American heritage in school curriculum, is free from traditional biases. The revolutionary nature of these efforts has been played down. As a "first response" to criticism, we should revitalize our commitment to these projects, and portray them as beneficial to our community.

## HEALTH CLINIC

by Brenda Hammond

The vision of a Free Clinic in Sandpoint has finally become a reality. The Bonner Partners in Care clinic came out of needs identified over two years ago by a local coalition of agencies working with low income residents called SEED. When grant money became available to Bonner County, SEED members worked on an advisory Board to take the steps necessary to open the doors.

Currently the clinic is open Tuesday evenings from 6 until 8 p.m. at the Panhandle Health building at 1020 Michigan Avenue. It provides care for uninsured, low income residents.

Procedures that are excluded are routine pap smears, pregnancy, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and immunizations. However, there is assistance for these needs through Panhandle Health. Cuts and broken bones should be treated in the emergency room, and there is no help at this time with dental or vision needs.

Volunteers, including doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other community members who assist with registration, screening and applying for medication assistance from pharmaceutical companies, staff the clinic. There will soon be a paid Director who will coordinate all services, and seek means both to continue and expand the program.

Partners in Care is modeled after the Dirne Clinic in Coeur d'Alene, which until now was the closest facility for those unable to afford medical services. The Dirne Clinic expanded from one to two nights a week as well as one morning by appointment only. They have also expanded to include mental health services. The vision for the local clinic is that similar growth of services will occur in Sandpoint and the response from the medical community has been positive. In the future, there are also plans to offer workshops on wellness issues such as nutrition, management of diabetes, and other topics promoting a healthy life-style.

## HEALTH CLINIC

by Phil Deutchman

The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force (BCHRTF) has sponsored a resolution and petition to reaffirm and defend our civil rights, civil liberties, and human rights.

The petition was motivated by the growing recognition that the US Patriot Act, which was hastily passed by Congress shortly after the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy, is deeply flawed, since sections of the Act appear to violate parts of our Bill of Rights and human rights as enunciated in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

The Task Force hopes to collect signatures for the purpose of joining a statewide effort already underway that recognizes our need for safety, but does not infringe on our civil rights, civil liberties, or human rights. Along with a number of diverse groups, the BCHRTF is working to petition the Idaho Legislature to create its own resolution in support of our rights and liberties. We plan to collect the petitions by December 10<sup>th</sup> and send them to the state ACLU, which will gather petitions from all the state groups. These will then be presented to the Idaho Legislature in the hopes that it will pass its own resolution opposing the egregious sections of the US Patriot Act, and also reaffirm and defend the Bill of Rights and Constitution.

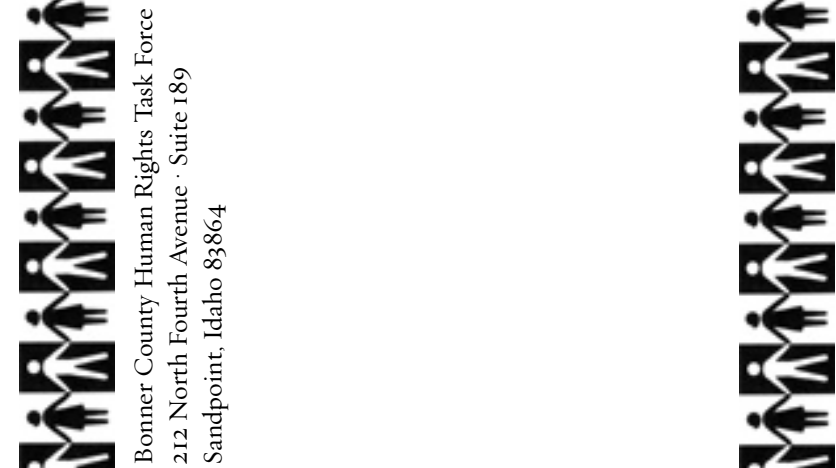
If you wish to sign a petition, they have been placed in the following locations:

*Army Surplus Store  
Be&D's Barber Shop  
Bonners Books (in Bonners Ferry)  
Eichardt's Pub Grill & Coffee House  
Monarch Mountain Coffee Shop  
Packages Plus  
Pine Street Bakery  
Winter Ridge Natural Foods*

If you wish to collect signatures, call Phil Deutchman at 263-2694 for a petition.

## BCHRTF WEB SITE

Visit our updated BCHRTF website at [www.bchrtf.org](http://www.bchrtf.org)! See photos of the Civil Rights Award Banquet, the text of Gary Payton's acceptance speech, and 2002 newspaper articles on human rights issues in north Idaho. Suggestions and new ideas are always welcome.



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