



INSIDE MAMMOTH

By Wally Hofmann
Publisher

Religion: Our National Heritage

(P.S. A big thanks to those who called after the Mammoth Times' truck was involved in an accident on Main Street. Neither Sandi or I were in the car, and thankfully Joe, Ferrin and Tyana are all OK.)

Two of my favorite Mammoth Times articles of '93 appeared in the last month of the year. One was the Andrea Lawrence interview by Benett Kessler, the other was the three profiles of "our elders" by Jane Dove Juneau.

Although Andrea and I disagree often on how to get where we're going as a community, I believe we agree on the goal. But more importantly, I'm awed and reminded by both of these articles of the pure and simple beauty of those who have "walked the walk," "been around the block" — the wisdom of years.

An interesting test might be to make it a requirement that only those over 50 should be allowed to lead this community.

We should never forget to look to our elders, those with the benefit of life's experiences, for answers and direction. Those of us with the youthful enthusiasm and daring to risk our opinions tend to forget this sometimes.

Which brings me to another opinion, by a reader and letter-writer this week who challenges my assertions ("Inside Mammoth," Dec. 23) that "God should not be removed from government" and that "religion was an important part of our forefathers' leadership and this nation's beginning."

Excuse me while we look at something for a few minutes. This, I think, is very important to us.

Religious principles and God were as much a part of our founding fathers' nation-building process as were the musket, paper and quill pens. History shows

that the Bible was used as a reference tool by nearly every one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence (with four mentions of "God" — with a capital "G") and the writers of the Constitution. It was an essential factor in their daily lives.

So why should we be so alarmed about this effort to remove "God" or religious concerns from government?

For our survival as individuals, a society and as a nation.

It is no coincidence that the moral slide we've seen in our lifetime is a direct result of the removal of God from the upbringing of our children and the leadership of our government.

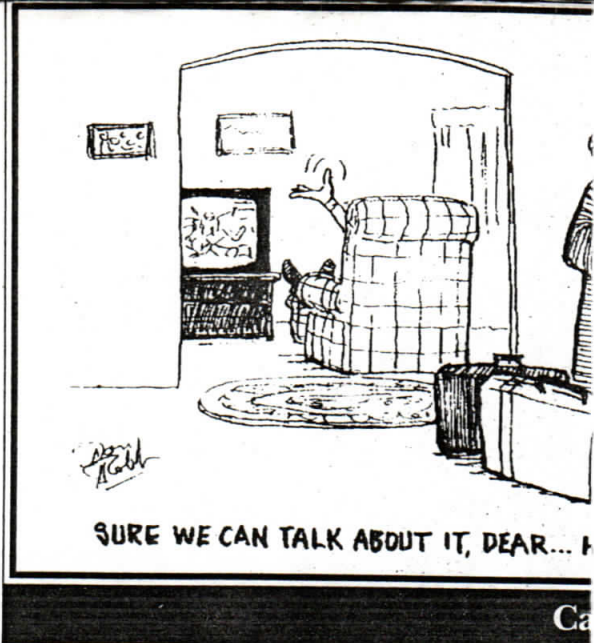
It comes as no surprise to history buffs that, prior to the early 1960s, references to God fill the pages of our nation's past. It's only been in the last 30 years that an effort has been made to remove "God" from our nation's schools and government.

And, as a nation, we are paying the supreme price in a moral lull actually unsurpassed in our nation's history.

The issue of "separation of church and state" is only a current trend, with no historical basis in our nation's founding. It wasn't until 1853 that any single governmental body even considered the concept.

As a response to this question, a House and Senate Judiciary Committee on March 27, 1854, said, "Had the [American] Revolution intended any attempt to make war on Christianity, that revolution would have been strangled in its cradle. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution and the Amendments, the universal sentiment was that Christianity should be encouraged, not any one sect. In this age, there can be no substitute for Christianity. That was the religion of the Republic and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants. The great and vital conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and Divine Truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

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Letters

Anti-Drug Hypocrites?

Editor:

I'm sure by now everybody in the town of Mammoth Lakes is aware that Mammoth/June Ski Area is claiming to be "a drug-free work place." This is a very hypocritical statement, coming from a company that owns two bars (Mammoth Mountain Inn and The Yodler), and sells alcohol in its cafeterias and tobacco in its sport shops.

I know this is a rather harsh accusation, so let's look at a few definitions and a few statistics. First the definitions:

• **drug** 1. a substance other than food intended to affect the structure or function of the body. 2. a substance that causes addiction or habituation.

(And, yes, alcohol and tobacco are considered drugs)

• **hypocrite** 1. one who affects virtues or qualities they do not have.

Now let's look at a few statistics in the "Drug Deaths Per Year" category:

- Cigarettes* 418,690
- Second-hand Smoke*** 3,800
- Infant Deaths (second-hand smoke)* 1,711
- Alcohol** 100,000
- Overdoses, Illegal Hard Drugs* 3,600
- Overdoses, Legal Drugs** 21,000
- Cocaine/Crack Overdoses** 1,696

- Heroin Overdoses** 1,046
- Aspirin Overdoses** 1,000
- Marijuana Overdoses** 0

* Federal Centers for Disease Control

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Mammoth Times

Publisher/Editor Wally Hofmann

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The Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary Board for 1994 is: (front, l-r) Jeanne Standley, president; Maryann Hughes, first v-p; LaVonne Doss, second v-p; Esther Rosewall, third v-p; and Bonnie Zwart, fourth v-p. (Back row, l-r) Carol Reynolds, recording secretary; Darla Howley, corresponding secretary; Mary Hanson, treasurer; Ellie Randol, parliamentarian.

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They said, in essence, there's no way we're going to separate it because that's what got us this far, that's what made us successful as a nation, and that's what will continue to make this nation great.

Again, in the late 1800s, another challenge to the separation of church and state arose (Reynolds v. U.S.). But the Supreme Court quoted Thomas Jefferson's saying that the intent of the founders was to protect the church from the government, not the government from the church.

And this continued to be the position of the nation's highest court until 1947 when the highest court (in Everson v. Board of Education) said, "The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable."

This was the first time it was ever stated this way. It's interesting to note that none of the founding fathers was quoted, and no legal precedence was provided in this ground-breaking decision.

In 1962 (Engel v. Vitale), the first successful separation of religious principles from public education removed school prayer — for the first time in nearly 200 years — from public education.

This was a radical change, a brand new direction for America. Prior to this, there are numerous examples of Christian teachings in public schools and textbooks, including the (in)famous McGuffey Reader which was universally used to teach reading skills.

Interestingly, that first-banned, 22-word, now-unconstitutional prayer read simply: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country."

That was it. This prayer only acknowledged the existence of God, not even Jesus Christ.

In a 1963 survey of Americans, only 3 percent said they didn't believe in God. This was the first time in American history that 3 percent became a majority.

It was determined that, in order not to offend the few, the many would sacrifice their behavior. The beginning of PC.

And so we in fact began to "legislate morality." In their decision, the court's explanation for removing religious instruction was that exposure to elements of the New Testament would cause psychological damage to young people.

But just the opposite has happened. Maybe that's why George Washington (I believe he qualifies as one of our nation's forefathers) said, "*Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*"

He knew, more than 200 years ago, that if you remove religious principles, you're going to lose national morality.

In 1962, our nation removed prayer. In '63, Bible reading. In '65, praying aloud. In '67, the high court banned a religious nursery rhyme because it might cause someone to think of God. Then, in 1980, the Supreme Court denied Kentucky's request to passively display the 10 Commandments.

Do you think for a minute the 10 Commandments would have been "banned" if they'd been written by Socrates or Plato? I doubt it.

Do you need other examples of the abiding intent of this country's greatest founding fathers? How about The Emancipation Proclamation issued by Lincoln, which concludes: "*And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice... I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.*" Or the words inscribed on the Liberty Bell: "*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof*" — (Lev. 25:10). And there's Lincoln's hope at the end of his Gettysburg Address: "*...that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom...*"

James Madison, the chief architect of the Constitution, said, "*We stake the whole future of the American Constitution not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves according to the 10 Commandments of God.*"

In a nutshell, Madison was saying if we don't obey something as simple, as basic as the 10 Commandments, we don't stand a chance.

"But we're the most powerful nation in the world," you say? "We're Number One!"

"So what if God gets the ax?"

The ax, my friends, is falling on us and our children. Don't tell me you don't notice it.

Yeah. We're Number One all right: number one in violent crime, abortion, illegal drug use and illiteracy (among industrialized nations). Despite all our laws and regulations, despite all the attempts of man to replace God with his own authority. Despite the substitution of moral law with legal statute.

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Steps from slumber. Why settle when you can OWN? Now just \$52,000.

Sierra Vista II, Lot 51, 3-BD/L/2-BA + 4-car garage. Clean, sunny and bright. Built by contractor. Only one owner! Priced below comparables. Home is priced to sell TODAY. 4-car garage is FREE. Listed for \$171,900.

Crowley Lake, 3-BD/3-BA/family room/3-car garage. Immaculate home with sun deck. Views of Crowley, lots of sun and privacy. Forced air. Enjoy the banana belt. Price dropped \$20,000. NOW \$208,000!

Bigwood #14, 1-BD/L/2-BA + garage. Views, great floor plan, cathedral ceilings for the bright and open feeling. Sauna in loft. Seller wants to exchange into another property and has dropped price to \$69,990.

Foreclosures

Forest Meadows, 2-BD/1-BA. At this newly reduced price, it is **CHEAPER** than rent. Asking only \$42,500.

3-BD/2-BA Remodeled home on oversized corner lot in the **IN ESCROW**. Large garage and nicely landscaped. Affordably priced at \$139,000..

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Majestic Pines I, Lot 13, Easy build, near Chairs 15/24, VIEWS! \$95,000

Tyrolean Pines #14, This is a flat, E-Z build, very sunny lot on cul-de-sac. Adjacent to ski-back trail. Terms possible, asking \$72,500.

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Tamarack #8 2-BD/2.5-BA + double car garage. Corner townhome with gas furnace. Efficient and bright. Asking \$97,000. Call for an appointment.

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OVER 14 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A PROFESSIONAL
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Association, presented here by past president Jill Norton and current president Carey Sigmen. Espita also recently received a scholarship check from *Mammoth Times*.

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We're number one in teenage pregnancy, and it's increased 553 percent from 1963-83 among 10-14-year-olds. We're also number one in sexually transmitted diseases.

We're also number one in divorce. Since 1963, the divorce rate has tripled every year.

And here's one we're all familiar with — PSAT scores — the same national educational testing scale we've used since it began in 1926. Starting in 1963, this nation's gone from a steady average score of 970 to an unprecedented decline to 890.

According to the PSAT Board, the scores of students coming out of private schools are 100 points higher.

But private schools *should* have smarter kids you say — it costs more to send your kid to private school. Wrong. The national average cost to send one student to public elementary school is three times more than sending one to a private school.

Further, private schools contribute to nearly one-half of the top 1/2 percent of academic cream of the crop. (Despite the fact that private schools offer less than 13 percent of our student population.)

What's the difference? Obviously, one teaches religious principles, one does not. One teaches the way it was in public schools prior to 1963, when PSAT scores were 100 points higher.

Another founder, John Adams, taught us something about the cause and effect of morality when he said, *"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion."*

For example, religious principles say "don't hate," and "love your neighbor as yourself." If our country continued to instill such moral values, we wouldn't be reeling from the effects of the breaking of one of the Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill."

Adams also warned that *"our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*

Can our "forefathers'" intentions be made any more clear?

Adams just said that the lack of individual, internal restraints would be the downfall of the U.S. Only a moral and religious people, he said, can deal with the freedoms offered by that document.

And we are not talking about just

"Christian values," necessarily. But we are talking about some kind of spiritual instruction.

Religious instruction, by its very nature, teaches that as individuals we are accountable to God. You are accountable, moment to moment, to your relationship with "the way things work," if you will. All religious instruction teaches us that we are connected.

If you kill, eventually you're going to have to answer to the Big Guy upstairs. No plea bargaining. No early parole. No illegally-collected evidence. No Politically Correct civil liberties law loopholes to weasel through.

But what about a nation that refuses to be accountable to God?

Nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world. They'll answer to God in this one — evidenced by an inevitable chain of causes and effects. Throughout history, national sins have reaped national calamities. There is no other way for a nation to answer to God.

Maybe that's why Benjamin Franklin said, *"We need God to be our friend, our ally; not our enemy."*

Another founder, Thomas Jefferson, understood this concept, too, when he wrote, *"Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever."*

One-hundred years later, when a newspaper reporter asked President Abe Lincoln during the Civil War if God was "on our side," Lincoln replied only, *"Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side. My great concern is to be on God's side."*

Later in his life, Franklin, at the time considered the most "fatherly" of all the founding fathers, said, *"Whoever leads with Christian principles will change the world."*

My world is Mammoth. My backyard. My home.

And that's why, as a publisher in this community, a father of two children and a person who tries to listen to the older wisdom of people like Ben Franklin and believes in the Big Guy upstairs, I feel so emphatic about keeping God in government.

It may not be Politically Correct to get so concerned about such an issue as this — but, when it comes to issues, I see none bigger. And, thank God, in America, it's still my right. *MT*

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