

Minutes of Regular Meeting – March 29, 2007

The third meeting of the board of the North Shore Chapter was held on March 29, 2007 at the Northbrook Library, attended by board members: Matt Lowry, Sharon Sanders, Bob Wilson, and Paul Cooper.

The documents for tax exemption status were signed as required and are to be forwarded by Bob Wilson.

Sharon Sanders spoke on federal issues, especially the "Faith Based Initiative", explaining its background and current diffusion through "Faith Based" offices in a number of government departments. It seems to many that it is in violation of the Establishment clause, and Sharon related the progress of the Hein Case, now before the Supreme Court, to test that very issue. The Court heard arguments in late February, and will hand down its decision at the end of the current Court session.

Matt Lowry spoke on the Illinois State issue of "Mandatory Moment of Silence" which was just passed by the state Senate, and is now awaiting the House vote, and Senate/House conference. This apparently unnecessary bill makes mandatory what is now optional, and seems to open the door for future substitution of prayer for silence, especially because the bill's sponsor, State Senator Lightfoot of Maywood was quoted as equating her bill with the Legislature's practice of opening sessions with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer, and seeing no need for differing opinion on adapting this practice to the state's public schools.

Bob Wilson will post information regarding this on the NCSAU website in few days, and Matt suggested that everyone contact his/her state representative on this matter.

Carol Javens spoke on the issue of the forthcoming controversial April 17 school board election in District 214. Other speakers had been invited to present differing views on the election, but none appeared. This large district which includes Arlington Heights, Wheeling, and part of Buffalo Grove. among others, has had a history of right-wing board members who have attempted, through the group "Citizens for Quality Education", organized to oppose homosexual education, to revise the curriculum, oppose education about homosexuality, censor teachers and subject content, and exclude certain books from the school libraries and classrooms. Examples of these books, some charged with being pornographic, sought for exclusion: Slaughterhouse 5 Beloved (by Toni Morrison), The Awakening, The Things They Correct. Freakonomics Catcher in the Rye. Botany of Desire The Curse of Being a Wallflower, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents

(Some 1200 people came to the Board Meeting to protest the proposed book ban. The vote was 6 to 1 to keep the books, which they saw as instructional and not for titillation).

A leading right-wing former board member, Ms. Leslie Pinney, a candidate for re-election, is campaigning as a "Christian With Christian Values" and who promised to bring her beliefs to bear if she were to be elected, but will not run after completing this term. She has circulated her "information" to area churches, and is substantially financially supported by some people of similar views. The well known Mr. Jim Oberweis is throwing a fund-raiser for the two right-wing candidates, and Ms. Pinney is doing the mailing.

Citizens for Quality Education show up at every board meeting to raise objections, under the pretext of better fiscal management, etc. They brought up a recent "Time" magazine, which contained an article about societal causes for certain prostitution practices in sub-Saharan Africa, an article they would ban from students and use to frighten teachers for proposing such challenging topics. The group seeks for every parent to "opt-in" i.e. to agree to every issue, picking and choosing "suitable" material for the students.

They also seek to encourage students to spy on their teachers. Although she has denied doing so, Ms. Pinney has even gone into classrooms with a tape recorder, despite school codes prohibiting this.

Concerned about "non-Christian" and homosexual issues and materials, the right-wing candidates and their supporters recently demanded disclosures through FOIA (Freedom of Information Act). Compliance with one such demand took two months of work to supply the requested information, a costly and disruptive effort. despite the group's claim to foster better economy and fiscal management.

The audience displayed a strong interest in Carol Javens' presentation, asking a number of serious questions, and some even offering their support on sex education, and will try to get Ed Wohnka of ACLU to speak to us at some future date.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul R. Cooper
Secretary