

Strengthening & preserving
marriage, family, life & liberty
in Wisconsin



Family News Connection

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The Naughty or Nice List

☆ "Nice List"

Amazon.com
Bed Bath & Beyond
Costco
Dollar Tree
Hallmark
Home Depot
JC Penney
Kmart
Lowe's
Macy's
Menard's
Rite Aid
Sears
Toys R Us
Walgreens
Wal-Mart/Sam's Club

☆ "Naughty List"

Aldi
Barnes & Noble
CVS Pharmacy
Dick's Sporting Goods
Gap Stores
Kroger
Limited Brands
Office Depot
Radio Shack
Staples

Check AFA.net for full list



Did You Know?

☆ WFA's president Julie Appling is available to speak in churches, schools, and for other events? Call 866-849-2536 for info.

☆ Eric Skelton, WFC's Director of Marriage & Family Ministry, is available to speak in churches on the topic of marriage & family? For more information, call 888-378-7395.

Contact WFC at 888-378-7395 for copies of the "Marriage Mentoring" brochure.



Emphasizing the CHRIST in CHRISTmas

Every Christmas here in Madison, we have a "battle of the signs" in the State Capitol. Wisconsin Family Council and several Madison churches put up signs in the Rotunda bearing witness to the real reason for Christmas—Jesus Christ's birth. And every year, the Madison-based Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) responds with this heartwarming sign:

"At this season of the Winter Solstice may reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds."

Well, Merry Christmas to you, too! Why is it that such a wonderful tradition full of giving, sharing, love and fellowship is so offensive to some people? Well, the answer is obvious. It is CHRISTmas after all, isn't it? In John 15, Jesus reminds his disciples that His name will bring offense: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you...But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake..." (NKJV)

You can't get around the fact that Christmas is fundamentally about Christ. Well, you can try but somehow I don't think *Winter Solstice* will ever generate a following like the 95%

of Americans who celebrate *Christmas*. Lately, however, retailers, government entities, employers and communities have taken the battle against Christmas to an entirely new level.

In the last few years, communities here in Wisconsin have had to fight to continue a decades-long tradition of the nativity scene on the grounds of city hall or the county courthouse. Employees are instructed to use "Happy Holidays" and not "Merry Christmas!" Public schools are refusing to perform the traditional carols in their Christmas productions because they're "too Christian."

What's happening here, and where did all these politically correct Scrooges and Grinches come from? We've allowed our society to be taken over by anti-Christian radicals who bully people into believing that celebrating Christmas in the public square violates the "separation of church and state" and is offensive. Make no mistake, as Christians and American citizens, we have the right to celebrate *Christmas* in our homes, our churches, our schools, our communities and even in the State Capitol.

We need to be purposeful about it, though. We can send out Christmas

cards that say "Merry Christmas!" instead of "Happy Holidays!" We can wish the person behind the checkout counter a "Merry Christmas!" We can express our support for our municipal government's nativity display or Christmas Tree.

As citizens in a free enterprise system, we have the choice to patronize stores that recognize our Christian holiday and strong American tradition and to not patronize stores that try to marginalize or ignore Christmas.

StandForChristmas.com allows you to post feedback to retailers, rate retailers and share the info with friends. Every year the American Family Association (AFA) publishes a handy "Naughty or Nice" list of stores/brands that are/are not Christmas friendly. AFA also sells "Merry Christmas" buttons on their website, www.afa.net. It's a great way to let cashiers and other shoppers know that you, at least, are Christmas friendly! And may you and yours have a very *Merry Christmas!* See sidebar for partial "Naughty or Nice" list.



Giving Couples an Opportunity to Serve Together ~ by Eric Skelton, Director of Marriage & Family Ministry

Years ago, our pastor asked my wife Jane and me if we would start a marriage and family ministry. One of our early tasks was meeting with couples who were struggling in their marriages. Only a few years ago did I learn the phrase "marriage mentors." When I did, I exclaimed "Hey, that's what we are, marriage mentors!"

What is a marriage mentor? It is a relatively joyous, more experienced, married couple who purposefully engages with less experienced couples in order to encourage, teach, share, and build the other couple's relationship.

Why does the church need to give couples the opportunity to be marriage mentors? Because they are very effective, they give couples a rare opportunity to serve together and God's word directs us to. Paul writes in 2 Cor. 1:3-4, "Blessed be...the Father of mercies

and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may...comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

For years as my wife and I would hold studies with couples, we frequently heard them say with a sigh of relief, "whew, I thought it was just us." Our enemy (Satan) had been lying to them, telling them they were the only ones struggling in their marriage. God allowed us to provide "...the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

But how does a pastor recruit, select, train and engage mentor couples? Wisconsin Family Council can help. I recently wrote a brochure called *Marriage Mentoring* after my pastor asked if I had anything he could use to recruit marriage mentors. I also assessed

the different marriage mentoring programs available and boiled the choices down to two. Finally, I put together a short leadership training seminar specifically designed to outline how a church and pastor can launch a marriage mentoring program.

Contact our office to obtain copies of *Marriage Mentoring*. If you would like help in developing your marriage mentoring program, please contact me.

Sitting in your church right now are couples whom God may be calling to mentor others. Our pastor started us on the road to full-time ministry by simply asking if we would serve marriages. I praise God for that request. It has led me to the greatest work of my life. You too may be able to give a couple in your church that opportunity. Ask them to be mentors today.

Eric: eskelton@wifamilycouncil.org

We're the Same, Yet Different ~ Musings by Julaine K. Appling, CEO

Legislative Updates

☆ **AB 458**, the so-called "Healthy Youth Act," which mandates that every school district in Wisconsin that chooses to offer human growth & development *must* teach comprehensive sex education, was passed by the State Assembly on Nov. 5. The Assembly GOP made a valiant effort to stop the bill and were successful in slightly amending the bill and stalling it's progress to the Senate. The State Senate will likely take up the bill in mid-January.

☆ **AB 453** would remove all statute of limitations on civil lawsuits involving childhood sexual abuse and allow victims to sue their abuser's employer. The bill is inherently discriminatory because sovereign immunity makes it nearly impossible to bring suit against a public entity (i.e. school) and caps damages at \$50-250K. There is no cap, however, on damages awarded against a private entity, such as a church, private school or camp. Democrats rejected amendments that would have brought a level of equity for suits against private entities. The bill is ready for a vote in the Assembly and the Senate will hold a hearing on its version on December 9th.



Health Care Update

☆ The U.S. House passed its version of the "health care reform" bill with the pro-life Stupak-Pitts Amendment that prohibits federal funding of abortion.

☆ The U.S. Senate will vote any day on Sen. Harry Reid's (D-Nevada) health care bill which includes a public option (states can opt-out but still pay some portion) and does not prohibit the use of federal taxpayer dollars to fund abortion. For more information visit fraction.org.

I hope you've noticed the slightly different look to this month's "Family News Connection." We have this slightly different look because we are making some changes that will allow us, with your help, to have even more impact than ever before. We're excited to share this news with you, our partner.

Wisconsin Family Council (WFC), our educational organization, was founded in 1986, with a mission of educating, equipping and energizing Wisconsin citizens and policymakers to be actively changing Wisconsin's laws and culture—to make them more pro-family and pro-life. Over the last 23 years, because of thousands of generous people, we've done a great deal of educating—on cultural and legislative issues that directly impact our Wisconsin families. Along the way, we've seen some things change for the better—such as a strong pro-life, women's-right-to-know law and an increased awareness of the homosexual agenda in our state's schools.

However, our impact has been limited because the government strictly limits what an organization such as WFC can

do, especially in the areas of political activity and of advocating for our pro-family values in our state legislature. Frankly, too much is at stake for us not to be able to have maximum involvement and impact—right now, right here—for you, your family and the values we share.

That's why we are making Wisconsin Family Action (WFA) our central organization. WFC will still be around, especially for our work with churches, SALT Ministries, and Community Marriage Agreements. But, with WFA's ability to do unlimited pro-family advocacy in the state legislature and to do, to the extent of the law, some political activity, we have far more opportunity to bring the critical change needed in our great state, legislatively, culturally and politically.

WFA has already registered a Political Action Committee (PAC), Wisconsin Family Action PAC, which will enable us to recruit, train, endorse and assist candidates running for local and state offices.



We believe we must be involved in finding and helping virtuous candidates get elected here in Wisconsin. In late October we held our first campaign school, in fact, with over 40 candidates and concerned citizens attending.

Money given to WFA, while not tax deductible because of IRS rulings, is extremely flexible and has maximum potential to make a difference in the issues and values you and I share—marriage, family, life and liberty. One other step we've taken is to make WFA a "member" organization, and we strongly encourage you to mark the member box on the enclosed response slip, indicating you want to be a WFA member. It comes with no obligation, but it allows us to give you information we otherwise couldn't.

So, there you have it! We're the same—yet we're different—kind of like this newsletter. Please pray for us that with all these changes we are better at proclaiming Truth and standing for marriage, family, life and liberty in Wisconsin.

Odds & Ends

Legal Update

☆ **McConkey v. Van Hollen**. On Nov. 3, the WI Supreme Court heard oral arguments on the challenge to our Marriage Amendment. On behalf of Prof. Bill McConkey, Madison Atty. Lester Pines argued that the amendment encompasses two subjects, and is therefore in violation of our state constitution. The Court also entertained briefs against the amendment from Fair Wisconsin, Lambda Legal, the ACLU of WI and the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin.

Arguing for the state, Atty. Lewis Beilin explained how the Court's own precedent for interpreting the purpose of an amendment, if applied to this case, would affirm that the amendment is single in purpose—the preservation of marriage as between one man and one woman. We couldn't agree more! One citizen group filed in support of the amendment. Now we wait for a decision from the Court, which could come at any time.

☆ **Appling v. Doyle**. On Nov. 3, the WI Supreme Court issued an order denying the original action petition filed in July by Wisconsin Family Action board members. The petition alleges that the domestic partnership registry created as part of this year's budget bill violates the Wisconsin Constitution. It is always difficult to invoke the Court's original jurisdiction, which is rarely exercised. Fair Wisconsin, Lambda Legal and the ACLU of WI filed friend-of-the-court briefs in support of the domestic partnership registry.

The action may now be brought in circuit court, and we are preparing our next steps to protect and uphold the constitution and the will of the voters.

Walker Veto Story

On November 5, during a Milwaukee County Board meeting, 13 (of 19) supervisors voted to adopt a budget provision to draft changes to the county health insurance plan that would ultimately give health care benefits to the same-sex and opposite-sex unmarried domestic partners of county employees.

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker vetoed the provision (estimated to cost county taxpayers \$4 million per year) because, as he said in his statement, "Now is not the time to be adding any new benefits for public employees, let alone this specific benefit."

The County Supervisors had the opportunity to overturn Walker's veto on Nov. 18 but we are pleased to report that they have delayed the override vote. Instead, they used a stalling tactic to send the resolution back to the committee where it originated. The resolution is not dead but it is at least delayed until the next time the County Supervisors meet, which will likely be in December. We do not yet know the date of that meeting but we will let you know as soon as we find out.

Wisconsin Family Action placed at least 11,000 calls into households in Milwaukee County and 4 surrounding counties, urging people to call/email County Executive Walker in support of his veto and encourage the County Supervisors to uphold Walker's veto. Thank-you to all who made calls and sent emails! Under public pressure, the County Board has stalled the resolution in a subcommittee and there's a good chance the resolution may never make it out of committee, in which case the veto stands.

A Challenge To Imagine!

Just Imagine. You and I could live in a state where the Body of Christ is united to ensure that; marriages and families thrive, life is cherished and protected, churches are growing and engaged, communities are safe and strong, children are protected, and religious liberty is affirmed and celebrated. That's WFA's vision for Wisconsin. Together, it can happen. And we're not the only ones who think so. A group of generous donors imagined what our state could become and offered a challenge—to match every contribution made before Dec. 15, 2009 up to \$15,000! That means your \$25 becomes \$50, or your \$100 donation becomes \$200. Little by little, person by person, our vision for Wisconsin can become a reality. You can use the enclosed response slip and return envelope, give a secure online donation at wifamilyaction.org, or make a credit card donation over the phone by calling 866-849-2536. *Thank you for your continued support!*