

PROTEST WORKS FOR SENIORS; CHRISTMAS FOES RETREAT

Newsweek recently did an article on the annual Christmas controversies that included comments by Bill Donohue. It maintained that “The War on Christmas Is Over” and “Christmas Won.”

We are happy to report our role in achieving a victory in California this past Christmas season.

On December 6, we learned that a Christmas tree was removed from a senior citizens’ housing complex in Newhall, California; the management company told the staff that the tree was a religious symbol and must be taken down. On December 7, after an organized protest by the Catholic League, the Christmas tree was restored.

The decision to ban the tree was made by a private company, thus it was within their purview to make such a choice; it also made moot any separation of church and state argument. But there was still the moral issue: the idea that senior citizens couldn’t enjoy a Christmas tree at Christmastime struck us as mean-spirited. It was also a dumb move—a Christmas tree is a secular symbol.

We decided to notify our e-mail list about this matter; it reaches a huge audience. Indeed, we provided the e-mail address of the company’s department of human resources, making it likely the message would get through. It did. After being bombarded with angry missives, management decided it wasn’t worth the effort, and so it yielded.

To show how things are changing for the better, consider that last year the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a threatening letter to city authorities in Faribault, Minnesota complaining about a nativity scene in the local library. This

year the Faribault City Council voted unanimously to display a crèche on public land. As one council member put it, "This really bugs me. I mean, one person complained. There are 17,000 members [of FFRF] in the whole nation. That's really a minority. We're the majority here."

Also, after years of court battles, the Thomas More Law Center scored an impressive victory when a nativity scene that was built by a local resident was returned to its longtime home on a median in Warren, Michigan.

Citizens of Oskaloosa, Iowa turned out in large numbers to attend a city council meeting on whether to keep a nativity scene in the city's public square. The city council voted to keep it.

The authorities in two New Jersey towns, Woodbridge and Woodcliff Lake, successfully took on Christmas foes in their respective localities.

There were many more examples like these. While it may be premature to say our side has won, we're definitely gaining momentum, and our foes are in retreat.