

Freethought Society Event Checklist

To guarantee a successful Freethought Society (FS) event the following tasks should be done:

1. Choose a theme
 - A. Most monthly nontheist/freethought events will have a specific date assigned to it for the purpose of coordinating national recognition. See:

<http://secularseasons.org/celebrations/seasons.html>
2. Select a speaker/actor or presentation keeping the event theme in mind (suggestions from other groups, research the Internet using the theme topic, or create a new theme).
3. Secure a location suitable for a speaker, actor, or presentation
 - A. The first option for a location should be a place where a 501(c)3 group can use for free or for a minimal charge (library, public school, office, public hall, University, etc.).
 - B. The second option for a location should be a place that gives a discounted rental rate (Unitarian Church, private country clubs to which your members might belong, a University that a student member attends, etc.).
 - C. The third option for a location should be a place that your group would have to pay full rental prices.
4. Ask other local groups to co-sponsor the event with FS. Depending on the event theme and/or speaker a University, Humanist group, school club, skeptic group, Unitarian Universalist Church or American Atheists group, may be interested.
5. Obtain board approval to spend FS money on items such as:
 - A. Location rental fees
 - B. Speaker expenses
 1. Honorarium
 2. Hotel expenses
 3. Transportation costs
 - a. train/plane/auto
 - b. parking
 - c. taxi service
 4. Meals for speakers/volunteers
 5. Gift for speaker

6. Call for volunteers to assist with pre-event, event, and post-event needs (a list of FS volunteers will be provided)
 - A. Pre-event
 1. Phone tree calling
 2. Speaker pick-up and transportation
 3. Event set-up
 4. Notification literature, event literature design, proofing, and printing (literature using FS's name must be reviewed and approved by board).
 5. Purchase complimentary drinks and food (if needed) for volunteers and/or attendees (if promised in advertisement).
 6. Design and set up a Facebook page specifically for the event
 7. Post the event on a local Meet Up, website and/or Facebook page
 - B. Event
 1. Hosting or welcoming guests (includes literature distribution)
 2. Staffing literature table
 3. Video taping of event
 4. Audio taping of event
 5. Photographs of event, speaker, volunteers, etc.
 6. Decorating if necessary
 7. Speaker introduction/Master of Ceremonies
 - C. Post-event
 1. Clean-up
 2. Written report of event
 3. Development or scanning of pictures for use in report
7. Obtain information from speaker in preparation of hosting
 - A. Bio
 - B. Photograph
 - C. List of food and other allergies
 - D. Hotel likes and dislikes
8. Accommodate speaker needs if not done by speaker
 - A. Travel plans
 1. Use Suzi Davis Travel for flight needs (1 800 397-1455)
 2. Get train information from AMTRAK (1 800 872-7245)
 - a. Schedule station pick-up and departure according to the location of a volunteer who will take care of speaker transportation).
 3. Provide any MapQuest directions a speaker using vehicle transportation may need (to hotel, to location of event, etc.)
 1. Use a 20 - 22 point font for easy reading

- B. Hotel or other overnight accommodations
 - 1. Ask if any member can accommodate speaker if the speaker is willing to stay in a private home.
 - 2. Find a hotel near the event location (board must approve expense) and make a reservation keeping in mind the needs of the speaker (smoking/non-smoking, size of bed/beds, etc.) and the date of the event.
- 9. Press release
 - A. Using the speaker bio (and possibly a photo) and/or event description write the first draft of a press release.
 - B. Email, fax, or mail the draft to FS volunteer proof readers.
 - C. Sending out the press release (only after fully proofed by at least three volunteers)
 - 1. Remember to send the text in an e-mail message to members!
- 10. Notification/invitation literature
 - A. Using the text of the press release, a post card or flyer notification should be designed.
 - B. If not using the proofed press release text or if additional text has been added, please have at least three volunteer proof readers approve the notification/invitation layout.
 - C. After approval, send the text/layout to the printers (FS has established discounts with some publisher and/or book distributors).
 - D. Mail the invitation/post card (via bulk rate or first class depending on time frame and volume)
 - E. Make reminder calls or assign a volunteer to make event reminder calls (see the FS membership phone list).
 - F. Send reminders through any FS Action Hot Line, Facebook, Website, Meet Up and Yahoo Chat group.
- 11. Thanks and acknowledgements
 - A. Within a few weeks, send a “thank you” note to speaker and/or anyone who provided assistance with the program/presentation (include photos if possible).
 - B. Within a few weeks, send a “thank you” to all volunteers (include photo of volunteer if possible).
- 12. Solicit critiques from people who attended the event and from those who helped with the event
 - A. A survey sheet can be designed for the event and handed out to all attendees
- 13. Critique yourself to determine what could be done better next time.
- 14. Give yourself a pat on the back for having put on an FS event and helping the organization provide a venue where like-minded people can meet, socialize and share ideas!