A Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation

The Freethought Society News

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The newsletter is published by the Freethought Society (FS) and offers information written specifically for the nontheist community. Articles in this newsletter, however, do not necessarily represent the opinions of the FS Board of Directors.

Attention writers! Interesting articles about freethought issues are welcomed.

Submissions will be reviewed and approved for publication by the FS Editorial Board. Article word count maximum is 5,000.
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2011 International Spring Festival Report

by Margaret Downey

It is my opinion that one of the best ways to meet and influence people is to staff an information table in a public venue. The bigger the venue — the better! The 2011 International Spring Festival held on April 16, 2011 at the North Penn High School in Landsdale, Pennsylvania was not only huge, it was well-attended and well organized. The Freethought Society (FS) table fit right in to the theme of diversity appreciation. FS was a unique addition to the 20 year-old celebration.

I came very close to canceling the involvement of FS, when in late March I realized that no donations earmarked for the event had arrived. Many specialty items were needed for the table and the FS budget could not cover such related expenses without earmarked additional funding. The table expense had already been donated by **Alan Gold**. When I advised him of the other related financial difficulties, he immediately began problem solving.

Within a few days, Gold had not only found two more financial donors (**Bob Kay** and **Glen Loev**), he also scheduled the three volunteers needed to work at the FS table (Loev, Kay and **Susan O'Connell**). Gold is an amazing person! He was also directly involved in planning and executing the entire 2011 International Spring Festival, yet found the time to make phone calls and send emails to ensure that FS would be able to participate in the event. FS is fortunate to have Gold as a supporter! There is an old adage "If you want something done, ask a busy person." After seeing Gold in action, I have no doubt the adage is true!

When I arrived to the Festival location, the forecasted rain deluge had not yet begun. I quickly proceeded to unload the car which I parked right in front of the entrance stairs. I piled three large plastic containers, two posters, my computer and miscellaneous items on the top steps of the High School entrance. Not one person entering the building offered to help during the unloading process. I received some strange looks and even several under the breath scoffs. I finally realized that the hostility was probably due to my T-shirt statement which declared, "Hi, I'm your friendly neighborhood atheist."

I found a nice man from India to stand by my pile of freethought goodies as I parked the car. The kind, gentle looking man and his family did not speak English. I had communicated with him using only the power of pantomime. Fortunately, he quickly understood that I had to move the car and the boxes needed to be watched. The rain started to come down in sheets so I put my raincoat on and walked back to the front of the High School, shielding my head from a torrential downpour with a small umbrella. I was drenched when I thanked the man who had stood guard. We shook hands and I thanked him as best I could. He rejoined his waiting family.

Ok, now how do I find the FS table and how in the world would I be able to haul all the items to an unknown location? The first step was to get the boxes inside as quickly as possible. I started pulling each item into the High School foyer bit-by-bit, making a new safe and dry pile a few feet past the very hard-to-open door.

Halfway through the process, a very nice woman stopped and said she would be happy to help. Wow! She's so nice, I thought. "Yes, you can help, Thanks so much," I said.

It was nice to chat with the woman as we moved the items. She told me that she is a 5th

grade teacher in the school district. I told her about "The Life and Work of Thomas Paine" assemblies I conduct for that grade level. She was thrilled to hear about the possibility of hosting me as presenter.

After moving everything inside, we spotted the welcome table and a few festival volunteers. The woman began talking to the volunteers about finding a cart for me as I asked about the location of the FS table. Within a few minutes the woman returned with the janitor. She confirmed that I would now have help taking the items to the gym area.

I gave her a big hug and thanked her over and over again. I asked her to stop by my table so that I could give her my contact information. All my information was buried in the boxes and it would take some digging to even find my business cards. She said she would look for me later.

Kay and O'Connell quickly helped me set up the FS table when I arrived to the gym. To my delight, the assigned FS table was located next to Americans United for Separation of Church and State. It would be a great day for sure!

The earmarked donations sent to FS allowed the purchase of many items that can be used often. Two "Famous American Freethinkers" posters were designed and created by **Carol Everhart Roper** and me. The posters will be on display at every FS meeting from now on. They are beautiful and the names on the posters make us all proud to be a part of such an intellectual and creative community.

The table banner was ordered through Goshen Signs located in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I highly recommend their services. Goshen Signs also created the FS T-shirts. They have manufactured all the *Tree of Knowledge* banners and signs FS used in the three years that the display was allowed on the grounds of the Chester County Courthouse. Please support this business, as they have helped and supported FS often. They have a terrific staff.

To tie into the "Spring" theme, we placed silk pansies on the table. The flowers added a nice touch and provided us the opportunity to tell interested people that the pansy is the official "Freethought Flower."

The French word for "thought is "pensée," The pansy became the freethought symbol because of its name and because the flower petals resemble a human face. **Annie Laurie Gaylor** researched the connection of the pansy to the freethought movement before using it on the cover of her book *Women Without Superstition*. The pansy symbol first appeared in the United States around 1890. During the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC, pansies were tossed to onlookers to represent the call for "freedom of thought."

Using pansies in a garden setting and giving them as gifts provides an opportunity to talk about the history of freethinking. Now, back to the festival report.

Soon after setting up the table I spotted the nice teacher who had helped me earlier. I saw her heading towards the table. As she neared the table location, her facial expression changed. It was then that I realized she was seeing my "Hi, I'm your friendly neighbor atheist" T-shirt for the first time. My raincoat had covered the shirt earlier.

When she arrived to the table we said "Hello" and she looked at the materials. She was not as friendly and left before I could have a conversation with her. I never had an opportunity to give her the assembly literature and she never asked for it either.

I saw her at the end of the isle talking to a friend and pointing my way. They were giggling and soon they shook their heads and mouthed something like "unbelievable."

Yes, we atheists are "unbelievable," aren't we? We dare to not believe in heaven or hell. We dare to not believe in any supernatural beings, saviors or ghosts. We do, however, believe in equality and justice, love and family and caring for others.

Later in the day, I was able to convey that sentiment to a man who engaged me in conversation as I took a look around the display area in the gym. The man had stopped me on the way to the restroom to ask "If you don't believe in anything, why are you here?" He got an earful from me!

Later, I was stopped by another man on my way to purchase a beverage. He was staffing the AAA table and noticed my T-shirt. "Hey you," he shouted.

"Yes," I said turning to greet the loud and rude "shout out" with a nice smile.

"I want you to meet a friend of mine," the man told me.

As I stood in front of the AAA table, the man continued, "I want you to meet my friend and savior, Jesus Christ."

Looking the man squarely in the eyes, I said, "Oh, where is this person? I'm always anxious to make new friends."

He knew I was being sarcastic and as he pointed upward he said, "He is up there."

"On the roof!? In this weather!?" I asked.

"The man said, "No. Jesus is invisible and lives in heaven."

"What utter nonsense," I exclaimed loudly.

The man looked embarrassed and said something like, "Well you don't have to see him to believe in him."

I invited him to visit the FS table to show him the names of real-life heroes and to learn more about the beautiful life of an atheist — free of blind faith and invisible gods. His AAA navigation system must have been broken that day. He never stopped by the FS table.

While working the table with Loev, I noticed a group of four women heading down the isle towards our table. The women were all wearing a Niqab and there was one man accompanying them. Yes, it looked as if they were all HIS wives, but we can't make that assumption unless we know for sure.

Anyway, I carefully and slowly pulled three book covers to the top of the sample tray marked by a "Recommended Reading" sign. With this maneuver any passerby could now easily see a laminated cover of *Why I'm Not a Muslim* by **Ibn Warraq**, *Infidel* by **Ayaan Hirsi Ali** and *Ananda* by **Taslima Nasrin**.

Two of the four women were walking much slower than the man and other ladies. They were lingering at tables and browsing with attention to detail. The man and his two other female companions walked past the FS table without

stopping, but the two ladies, who were leisurely walking about twenty paces behind, suddenly noticed our table. One of the ladies picked up the Warraq book cover and turned it over. Her companion slapped her hand and nudged her to put the book cover down.

The curious woman quickly dropped the item, but tried to take one last look at the other items on the table. She was reaching for Ayaan Hirsi Alli's book when suddenly her female companion pulled her away. They exchanged words that I did not understand. It was upsetting to witness the scolding. While I did not understand what was said, it was clear that touching such items was blasphemous and showing the least bit of curiosity could cause many problems. Her brain was surely shrinking in darkness. The slit intended for her eyes symbolized the narrow exposure to the world that she was allowed. It was sad to observe such a lack of freedom.

I wondered if she chose to not show her face or hair in public. I wondered if the clothing she wore was cast upon her simply because she happened to be born into a culture that forces women to be silent, obedient, and enslaved to ancient traditions. I wondered if she yearned to learn, explore and ask questions.

The festival was supposed to create an atmosphere of diversity "appreciation" and to build more understanding between cultures. I so wished that I could have spoken to the woman for even five minutes. I would have liked to confirm that the woman had chosen to wear the Niqab herself. I would have asked her if she was happy. I would have offered to provide her with any information she might have been interested in to educate herself. I would have also encouraged her to think more about her choices in this — her one and only life.

I turned the question of diversity appreciation over in my head and wondered if it was I who was uneducated about the Muslim/Islamic culture. FS representatives were, after all, at the festival asking for more understanding and tolerance of our worldview. It works both ways! I thought that maybe I was a just a hypocrite and that it was I who was the one who should overcome prejudices. I decided to read *Why I'm Not a Muslim* again. I did so before writing this article. I can confirm that I hold the same opinions of my encounter with the woman in the Niqab now as I did on the day it happened.

I still want her to find her voice, her intelligence and her independence. I can't "accept" the mistreatment of Muslim women and I can't tolerate ancient traditions that demand unreasonable compliance to unreasonable rituals. I am convinced that *all* women must be given freedoms in selecting for themselves the things that matter to them. If they make the choice to accept the Muslim/Islamic life stance, then we must "accept" and tolerate their choice.

The problem is that we can never be sure that a choice has been made. The little incident at the FS table during the festival showed me that, at least in that family, education is discouraged and the pressure to comply is so ingrained that even the women folk will stand guard to maintain the status-quo.

The day was filled with a wide variety of encounters. Mixed in with the scowls and frowns there were smiles, hugs and handshakes. Many FS newsletters were distributed and several people signed up to receive future publications and event invitations. Several supporters of FS attended the festival and they stopped by the table to thank us for being there. We appreciated those moments of encouragement and it kept us enthusiastic about being there.

Weeks before the festival, Gold warned me that my scheduled speech would probably not be well attended. The other festival organizers rejected his request to list me in the program. He was told that the subject matter was too controversial. I was offended to be treated differently than other speakers, but I knew that any opportunity to reach even one person should not be missed. I printed invitations to the 4:00 PM speech and we all tried to invite people to it during the day. I also designed a "Questions You Have Always Wanted to Ask an Atheist" form hoping that I could banter with the audience should people attending be too shy to ask questions in a public forum.

I prepared my presentation as if I would be talking to a full auditorium. I designed a colorful, interesting and somewhat humorous slide show. Laughter can dissolve many tense situations so I made sure to show a few cartoons and sprinkle in a few funny scenarios.

Even though there were only about eight people in the audience, I was proud and happy to have taken advantage of the wonderful opportunity provided to FS by Gold.

I think that FS should participate in this festival every year. Let's establish the involvement of FS as a tradition at the North Penn International Spring Festival! ◆

Pictured above at the Freethought Society table are (left to right) **Sue O'Connell**, **Margaret Downey** and **Bob Kay**. The "Recommended Reading" basket is filled with the laminated book covers used as decorations on the *Tree of Knowledge*. A vase of pansies is situated between two "Famous American Freethinkers" posters. There were a few negative reactions from passersby who noticed the name **Michael Moore**. The awful truth may be that Moore is not a well-liked freethinker, but he is famous!

Scenes from the 2011 International Spring Festival

by Glen Loev

I was surprised by how big this shindig was! My mental image until the time I arrived at the 2011 International Spring Festival, held at the North Penn High School located in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, was that there would be a smallish auditorium with a bunch of tables, a few people milling around, and that for most of the time, the four Freethought Society (FS) volunteers scheduled to staff the table would be bored. I brought a book to read, just in case.

Pictured above are **Glen Love** and **Margaret Downey**.

Was I ever off track! This festival was a really big deal! The number of attendees must have been in the thousands — an especially impressive turnout — considering the nasty weather (strong rain, blowing wind) that prevailed that particular Saturday in April.

Tables with displays representing the cultures of many countries were spread out around the very large high school, as well as a wide variety of tables featuring topics from health-related to religious organizations and political advocacy. There was an entire room for health screenings, a food court, and a succession of music and dance troupes putting on impressive shows featuring authentically costumed folk dancing from many different cultures.

The FS table was situated next to the table of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. It was nice to have some "kindred spirits" right next to the FS table..

The one disappointment for me was the tiny turnout for a wonderful (clever, interesting and humorous) presentation that **Margaret Downey** put together. She provided an overview of freethought/atheism and its place in the United States. The FS "lecture" was scheduled as the last one of the afternoon, when the weather was worsening and attendance had dropped at the festival. Still, for the audience of eight (!) Downey went through with the presentation, and answered questions. The attendees showed a high interest level in the topic.

Downey did an amazing job in setting up (*literally* schlepping) all the items needed for the table. She provided books, handouts, decorations and much more. Two wonderful new posters, artfully created by **Carol Everhart Roper** were quite the attention-grabbers. Downey, **Sue O'Connnell**, **Bob Kay** and I alternated between checking out the festival displays, and tending to visitors who stopped at the FS table.

While many people looked over our table as they walked by, not many stopped to talk. Of those that did, most were polite. Some told us that they supported our points of view and registered to receive the FS newsletter by email. Others said that it wasn't of interest to them. Very few people made negative comments.

There were two exchanges that I had with people who stopped by the FS table that I'd like to share in more detail:

A "frumpy" late-middle aged woman walked over and took a close look at the posters on the tables. She asked about the lists of names on display. I told her that the people listed were prominent American freethinkers. She looked over the lists again — this time more carefully. Then she said that she sure hoped that **Frank Sinatra** wasn't on the list, because "she really liked him." She told me that she was most definitely, "...not into the atheism thing."

After she was satisfied that her beloved Frank wasn't on the list, she started in with some of the most lame arguments that people of faith use to rationalize their beliefs. She said "I'll listen to an atheist when he can explain where everything in the universe came from."

I gently turned the tables back on her by asking for an explanation of where her god came from. She was silent for a moment then went on to her second talking point: "We're so perfect, it must have been God that created us!"

OK... Hummmm. We're so perfect? Really? After pointing out backaches, hemorrhoids, and birth defects, the women didn't have much more to say.

Her last salvo left me speechless for a moment. She said "Well, why are there still monkeys if we came from them?"

She stood there while I gave her a very concise summary of how species diverge over time, and that we had a common ancestor with the monkeys. Her glazed-over eyes made it very clear that a rational explanation wasn't what she was interested in hearing. Eventually, she just smiled and moved on.

I doubt we will be seeing her at any upcoming FS events.

This next scenario actually still tugs at my heartstrings. A father, who looked like he might be in his late 30s or early 40s, walked by the table hand-in-hand with his son. I would guess that the youngster was about eight-years-old.

The father and son stopped in front of our table and both

looked around for a short time. Here is how the scene unfolded:

Boy: (looking at Dad) "What's this one?"

Dad: (smiling) "Why don't you ask the man what their organization is about."

Boy: (looking at me) "What is your organization about?"

Glen: "We promote a rational approach, using reason and science to figure out and think about how the world works." (or something like that, probably not phrased as elegantly.)

Dad: (to Boy) "Ask him what they think about god." Boy looks at me, with a quizzical expression. (You're on the spot, Glen… think quick!)

Glen: We don't believe that god exists as a real thing, just as an idea that people came up with.

Dad: (to Boy) "Do you believe in god?"

Boy: (shrugging his shoulders) "I don't know."
Glen smiles.

Dad: (not smiling any more, bends over to be closer to his son's head and says in an insistent voice) "What about Jesus Christ! Do you believe in Jesus Christ??"

Boy: (looking down at the ground) "I don't know." (Dad straightens up.)

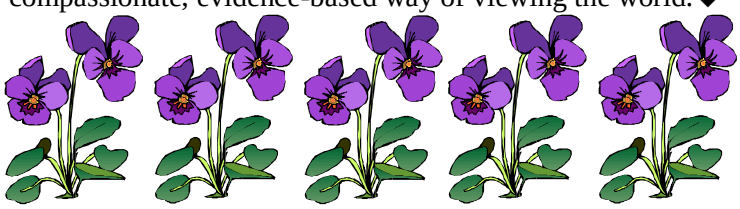
Glen: That's a great answer! When you get older you can decide for yourself.

Dad takes the boy's hand and leads him away while talking to him in a stern voice.

I felt sorry for that child, imagining how he was going to "get it" from his dad — and probably end up on the receiving end of some intense religious indoctrination.

Perhaps a seed of doubt will remain in that boy's head, and he'll think critically about what he is being taught to believe. Who knows? In a few years we might even see him at an FS meeting...

I was going to end this article after the ellipsis (above), by adding: "One can only hope." But no, we can do more than hope. We can be out in the community, at street fairs, at public festivals of all kinds — inspiring a few inquiring minds, young, old or in between, to consider our rational, compassionate, evidence-based way of viewing the world.◆



Our Festival Perspective

by Sue O'Connell and Bob Kay

What a lovely surprise it was to see how huge the 2011 International Spring Festival was compared to what I imagined when we agreed to staff the Freethought Society (FS) table. We were very impressed and had a wonderful day working at the FS table!

We especially enjoyed looking at the way various groups and individuals set up their booths. The way representatives presented their country of origin was a sight to behold. But the FS table was not only pretty, the display caused an instant positive impression on passersby.

We were struck by how frightened people looked when they realized who we were and what we represented. We knew instantly that they did not want to spend any time with us — nor did they want to even exhibit any normal curiosity. Were they feeling a preconditioned fear of risking damnation if they spent one second with the non-believer? We joked about that every so often throughout the day. Some passersby did not look frightened — they just hardened their gaze and stared straight ahead walking faster. We heard a few people muttering "Oh no..."

One woman stopped to say, "I believe in the lord Jesus Christ as my personal savior." Bob and I exchanged glances thinking the same thing — that certainly was an over-the-top, excessive proclamation! I decided to ask her point blank, "Why not just say "I believe in god?" She did not have an answer to that question.

Another woman provided us with a little comic relief. She seemed to be absolutely incapable of grasping the idea that a person could live without religion. She asked us, "So neither one of you have a religion?"

We said (at almost the same time), "That's right."

The woman apparently could not comprehend the answer and asked again, "No religion at all?"

Bob said, "Yes, that right. No religion at all."

Still appeared unable to completely understand us. The woman asked us again (this time with a quizzical look on her face), "No religion?"

Sue repeated our mutual answer. The woman was totally incredulous — as though we had disclosed that we live without food or sleep! She kept staring at us as though she thought we would realize the error of our words. Bob and I stood firm and soon the woman left the table shaking her head.

Another woman stopped at the table to ask, "So do you want to get rid of all religion?" She assumed that since we live without religion we would seek to aggressively destroy it everywhere! We told her that we couldn't — even if we wanted to.

Many Americans simply don't think that atheists can be happy or nice. On that day of the 2011 International Spring Festival, we proved those assumptions wrong.

We are looking forward to attending and staffing the FS table at the next festival opportunity. ◆

The 2011 Spring Festival from an Organizer's Point of View

by Alan Gold

The free and open-to-the-public International Spring Festival started twenty years ago by a group of volunteers — one of whom was me. We are assisted by the Lansdale Public Library and the North Penn High School. The festival was created to celebrate diversity and promote multi-cultural understanding. We do this through education, communication and entertainment. We use cultural cuisines, exhibits, and a multitude of activities. A survey revealed that an astounding seventy different languages are spoken at home by the families of North Penn students.

The parking lots of the North Penn High School were packed from about 11:00 AM until the festival ending time of 5:00 PM. Since all the activities took place indoors, poor weather is good for our festival. This year, however, the incessant downpour of rain for many hours caused some local residents to not want to venture out of their homes. It was estimated that between 5,000 to 6,000 people were in attendance.

There were many functions going on to fill the day. A "Health Fair" took place in the small gym area. Free blood testing for sugar and cholesterol was offered. Blood pressure readings and heart rate information was also provided. Doctors and nurses were on hand and gave free medical advice to attendees. Zumba and Ballywood dance classes were given all day to encourage good physical fitness.

The school opened its planetarium for lectures and shows. It was such a treat for families!

All three school cafeterias were filled with hands-on crafts for the kids, free elaborate face painting, and free balloon sculpture giveaways. Delicious foods representing a dozen nations were on sale through the day.

On the stage, in the main gym area raffles took place. Free door prizes were given away and the audience participated in games throughout the day. There were many wonderful stage performances that delighted the audience.

The children in attendance loved completing the "Passport Program" (getting a "passport" stamp for visiting various locations). Exhibits from numerous international exhibitors were located in the main gym. That is where all the featured performances took place. People were entertained by dancers from all over the world, including the Voloshky Ukranian Dance Ensemble, and the Universal African Drum and Dance Ensemble. Entertainment on four stages and throughout the hallways all day was free.

I am only able to highlight a few features of the festival in this article, but I'm sure you get the picture. It was a fantastic event!

The idea of allowing the Freethought Society (FS) to have a table was not well-received by some of the other festival organizers. It wasn't so long ago that the concept of multi-cultural diversity in this area was whether or not you were Pennsylvania Dutch!

Since the organizers welcomed church groups many opposing organizers finally gave in and approved the participation of FS. The goal of the festival is to be all inclusive! Personally, I appreciate the patchwork of diversity that comprises the fabric of our community.

With twenty years of experience we have learned what works and what does not work. Story tellers — don't work. Speakers or forums — don't work. There is just too much exciting stuff to see and do during the festival!

Bill Clinton attended the festival several years ago. He was on a stump stop for his wife **Hillary Clinton**. We hosted former president Clinton outside on the school steps the Friday night before the festival opened. His appearance did not conflict with the festival at all. By the way, Clinton let us know that he would attend with only one day's notice! The police estimated that 3,000 arrived to North Penn High School just to hear Clinton.

Despite my plugging **Margaret Downey**'s afternoon speech, I was not surprised by the lack of attendance. One time during the day I announced on stage that Downey would be speaking. After I described Downey as a famous local atheist, a man in the front row stood up. He glared at me angrily and stomped out of the venue. Oh, well!

I was proud to know that FS was represented at the festival. I stopped by the FS table several times during the day. I hope that this event is the start of an FS tradition and that more and more people will come to know the wonderful people who comprise the nontheist community. ◆

Pictured above are **Alan Gold** and **Margaret Downey**. Gold is wearing a popular Russian hat made of karakul wool. Gold has traveled the world and lived for over two years in Afghanistan. Gold sponsors the Afghan nationality table every year at the International Spring Festival. His and his wife's grandparents escaped from the pogroms of Russia in the early 1900s.

Thirteen pieces of Gold's artwork were on display during the festival. His colorful canvas paintings lined the walls of the hallway that lead from the foyer to the gymnasium at North Penn High School.

~ The Hold Religion Has On Haiti ~ An update on the situation we face!

by Billy Almoza

Religion has always played a very important role in Haiti. Religious influences can be traced to the first occupation of Haiti (once called Quisqueya or Bohio), and the arrival of the French. The French arrived to maintain black slavery in the plantations that grew and processed sugar cane.

It is not without reason that the natives of Haiti were forced to convert to Christianity. The French used religion to control and exploit their black slaves and to make them think that they were born to serve the needs of whites. Catholic priests told slaves that they would eventually become white and as a consequence no longer be slaves.

All these lies were used to convince slaves to not rise up and demand freedom. This mindset is deeply rooted in the Haitian people. It is this legacy that permits the Catholic religion to rule over Haitians.

In 1860, under the government of Soulouque, the state signed a contract with the Catholic Church to restore their control of education. In theory, Haiti is secular, but in practice it is actually controlled by religion. The Catholic religion enjoys every social benefit. It controls business franchises and enjoys government accommodations. Catholic schools are subsidized by the government. Yet the cost to attend them remains very high. In Haiti, students are not valued enough. Christian instructors, most of whom are foreigners, have a dim view of their students. The main reason religious instructors do not want to fully educate people is that they want to keep citizens in the dark in order to maintain their religious empire. Their goal is to operate in partnership with the government.

Religiously-associated teachers are a privileged elite in Haiti. High school students should go out into the streets to demonstrate against this situation!

One of the major reasons that the Catholic religion has so much power in Haiti is the absence of a reliable government. There are places in Haiti where people can't find state sponsored services. In these areas, citizens will always find a Catholic Church! Catholic representatives in these areas act as both religious and political leaders. They guide and instruct people from the altar of the church.

When a child is born, the family must contact the Catholic church to secure a birth certificate. The state has no office in which a birth is registered in a secular way.

If a village is also fortunate to have representation from the Protestant religion it is considered "diversified." Protestant representatives also convey the big religious lie, just in a different way than the Catholics! Villagers continue to live in the shadow of false information, myth and superstition no matter which church is promoted.

The conspiracy of mixing church and state continues to lead the Haitian people in the wrong direction. The goal for the church is to keep themselves in power forever and the people of Haiti are living in a dangerous and disastrous situation under the control of religion. Religious leaders want Haitians to think that the January 2, 2010 earthquake was caused by the wrath of God. These leaders have a very specific job to do — they want to attract and hold on to the people who need easy answers and help.

The earthquake was a natural disaster and it killed over 300,000 people. Yes, we are a damaged society and we are people in need of help. We must, however, try to convince citizens that they are not directly responsible for what happened on that January day in 2010. The people of Haiti must not stay ignorant and worse yet be made to feel guilty in some way for the shifting of tectonic plates.

Religious leaders do not provide the science behind earthquakes. They purposely fail to inform people about the truth of the disaster. I can only hope that if truth and science were provided, there would be public demonstrations against the lies of religion and that finally the incompetence and the power of the church would be challenged.

An "end-of-the-world" billboard was placed at the Kafou Aeroport in Port-au-Prince.

I recently saw a group of religious people arriving in Haiti to purchase and erect billboards advertising that the end-of-the-world was coming. Thousands of dollars were spent on those billboards. What a waste of money!

The people involved in the promotion of this idea have come to Haiti with a lot of money in hand. They are renting large expensive houses and very luxurious cars. It is upsetting to see much needed money going for such a silly cause while universities suffer from a lack of funding.

We must continue to try to reach out to university students. University students are eager to learn and understand things such as science, history and philosophy. The Free Thinkers of Haiti (FTH) continue to meet on the damaged campus of the State University of Haiti in Port-au-Prince. Most of us live in a tent exposed to stifling heat. We remain committed to fight against religion and government entanglement. We want to educate the public about rational thinking and freedom of thought.

Please continue to help FTH through the Freethought Society (FS). We need our own camera to capture our Solar Box Cooker project and to send photos for publication in the FS newsletter. We must borrow a camera all the time. We appreciate any and all help we get from FS. ◆

Review of Kaz Dziamka's *ADVENTURES IN FREEDOM*

ISBN 978-1-4507-5300-5

by Richard Bozarth

When **Kaz Dziamka** told me he was publishing *Adventures in Freedom*, I didn't have a single doubt about enjoying it, and I was enthusiastic to read it. Dziamka took over as editor of *The American Rationalist* in 1996. I've been reading his publication for a very long time and have liked all of it because we're philosophical siblings. Every person in the philosophical family of Freethinkers and Secular Humanists will like this book.

Who will not like this book? Those who, like **Christopher Hitchens**, believe **George W. Bush**'s "War on Terror" is consistent with Secular Humanist principles will not like this book. Religionists definitely will not like this book. Flag-waving jingoists who believe the United States possesses cultural supremacy and therefore has a right to global hegemony will not like this book. The members of many of the boards of directors and some senior officers of corporations will not like this book.

Dziamka is a Polish American who arrived in the United States in 1981. Before experiencing the real United States, he had believed all the public relations propaganda about it being a "Land of the Free."

All those lies were quickly exposed, which is why *Adventures* often expresses the betrayal that all Freethinkers and Secular Humanists in the United States resent — sometimes sadly, sometimes bitterly, sometimes angrily, but also with the hope that there's still time to change the road we're on. His academic career as a college professor was distinguished by his having taught the first two courses on Secular Humanism in the United States, and being fired each time for doing so. *Adventures* has essays about this "achievement."

Any reader who believes the United States is a "Land of the Free" should read this tale and honestly ask: Could such punitive suppression of information *in a college* have happened in an authentic "Land of the Free?"

The essays in *Adventures* are eclectic because Dziamka has (from page 30):

...often thought that one of the main reasons the humanist movement has not done well and is still far behind in popularity as compared with the fraudulent and silly religious dogmas of Christianity, for example, or Islam is that humanism does not offer much beyond exposing such fraud and silliness.

Pictured above is **Kaz Dziamka**, author of *Adventures in Freedom*. Dziamka is always willing to communicate with fellow free-thinkers. Write to him at:

kdziamka@gmail.com

Dziamka understands that Secular Humanism is a life-philosophy, meaning it is a way of living instead of solely an intellectual analysis of culture and/or the cosmos.

Adventures is as much about living the principles of Secular Humanism as it is about what those principles are. It contains content that is usually not found in an average freethought book ("Try Yoga, Try Science," for example). However, for those freethinkers who enjoy and understand the importance of exposing "fraud and silliness," there is enough exposure to make them happy. After all, the greatest obstacle to Secular Humanism is religionism's fraudulent and silly religious dogmas.

Religious readers will probably seize on an apparent contradiction to discredit *Adventures*. On page 9, Dziamka writes:

Every human being has a right to religious sentiment that helps him or her deal with the mystery and cruelty of life. It is never my intention — as it isn't, I believe, the intention of my colleagues from The American Rationalist *— to ridicule such personal, private religious feelings.*

Religionists will cry either "Liar!" or "Hypocrite!" and cite numerous examples, such as this one on page 87:

You cannot believe in "God's Son" and consider yourself a mature, responsible, intelligent, educated human being. If you do believe that "Christ is your savior," then you are as intellectually sophisticated as a 4-year-old child who believes in Santa Claus.

The "triumphant" religionist will miss the importance of the adjectives "personal" and "private" and probably not consider what Dziamka says on page 8:

"You have every right to worship in privacy as you wish, but you don't impose your religious views on anybody else, including your children. Your religion is your private business."

As soon as religionists start imposing — and don't they seriously get off on imposing? — they make themselves public targets for rebuttal from all of us who do not want to live in the theocracy theo-fascist religionists wish to impose upon us. Indeed, when religionists are energetically trying to inflict theocracy on us, our intentions, no matter how good, cannot be obstacles to our *vigorous* self-defense. *Adventures* does not advocate that freethinkers and Secular Humanists offer only lenitive resistance to the theo-fascists to avoid hurting harmless religionists' feelings.

Like any collection of essays, each reader will like some more than others. Some of the ones I enjoyed the most were about Native American culture, which Dziamka has studied for many years. He specialized in the Chiricahua Apaches, the tribe Dziamka admires the most because they were the "last free Americans." However, I found his chapter "Iroquois Democracy: A Legacy of Rational Politics" the most fascinating.

The democracy created by the Six Nations (Oneida, Seneca, Onondaga, Cayuga, Mohawk, and Tuscarora) was an amazing accomplishment. Dziamka selects the virtues of this union that clearly illuminate the most distressing vices of United States politics. Iroquois women didn't need a "Feminist Movement." An assembly of Iroquois leaders was distinguished by mutual respect, courtesy, and a requirement that a public speaker learn the art of public speaking if he or she wanted political influence. If the Iroquois had not been destroyed by the Christian invaders, they would not have needed an "Environmental Movement." But the most admirable Iroquois goal is that they created their democracy as a "commitment to securing peace."

In the United States leaders have always talked about the country being a peace-loving nation (see "We Are, We Are … A Peaceful Nation: An Open Letter to *U.S. News & World Report*"), but the walk our nation walks is war intended to protect and expand our nation's economic influence (page 65).

"We should never forget that the business of America is business, sometimes at any cost."

In other words, the "peace" all too many United States leaders and citizens want will only come when all other nations submit to a United States hegemony.

"A Lesson From The Apaches" is not primarily about the Apaches. It is actually about United States foreign policy and the military actions used to enforce it. It's presented as a conversation between Dziamka and Roger, a Vietnam vet living in Norway. The setting is an Oslo pub, during the time Dziamka spent a year in Norway teaching American Studies at the University of Tromsø. He was a participant in the Fulbright Scholar Program (1998-1999).

It's a scathing critique delivered mostly by Roger. The summary, on page 17, is:

"*We order our kids to kill against their will, against their better judgment, and we have them fight the dirty, stupid wars we have invented. The only thing the war pigs care about is their economic interests. They wage their wars to make the world safe—not for democracy, which they despise—but for American corporations, which they represent. And if that becomes impossible, then all they care about is saving face."*

Very powerful!

"The USA-DEA Cabal" is an outstanding argument for the legalization of marijuana and its amazingly useful cousin hemp. It offers a concise history of how both plants became illegal in the United States and discusses how the war on drugs has become the cancer of fascism in the nation that loves to call itself the "Land of the Free."

No freethinker will be surprised to discover that religionism, corporate evil, and the stupidity that is a specialty of U.S. politicians are to blame. At least it is understandable why marijuana was criminalized; it produces a psychoactive substance in amounts that will cause intoxication. Hemp also produces THC, but in amounts so low that it will not cause a high. Dziamka shows that the "danger" hemp posed was to established industries owned by some of the most powerful men in the United States in the first half of the 20th century. Because hemp threatened their profits, this astonishingly useful and ecologically safe plant had to be criminalized. The tiny amount of THC it produces was more than sufficient to get it declared illegal. Hemp definitely should be legalized, but Dziamka (page 61) argues strongly for legalizing marijuana as well:

"The idiocy of allowing alcohol and tobacco while banning natural THC is mind boggling. It is a story from the theatre of the absurd" (page 70). Ah, but the inexpensive medical benefits marijuana provides threatens the profits of the powerful pharmaceutical corporations, so those benefits must be ignored. Of course, the justification used to ignore them is the delightful recreation marijuana also provides, so this relatively harmless high has been distorted by lies that claim marijuana smoking is more dangerous than drinking alcohol even though booze's annual body count is 150,000 and "there is no provable case of a single death due to marijuana use."

I was delighted by "Reason's Sharp Edge: A Study of *The Razor's Edge*" because **W. Somerset Maugham** is my selection for the greatest writer of the 20th century. His two greatest novels are the one Dziamka discusses and *Of Human Bondage* (my favorite, with *Edge* being a close second). Dziamka proves that the novel ought to be required reading for all Secular Humanists. *Edge* is "an unforgettable novel" that makes an "eloquent statement of the power of reason" and offers readers a way to "free ourselves from the stranglehold of religious superstition and cleric-made nonsense."

Any reader who has not read *Edge* will want to read it after reading this essay. Any reader who read the novel

decades ago (me, for example) will want to read it again (and I will). This essay definitely accomplishes its mission.

"Back To The Past: Poland's Experiment in Theocracy" is another excellent essay that has only one fault: *it is too short!* It is an excellent exposé of Poland's foolish remarriage to the Vatican after being liberated from Communism. Poland's previous enslavement to the Roman Catholic Church, which began in 996, was a disaster that culminated in Poland's disappearance as a nation in 1795. It had become so decadent and weak after eight centuries of theocratic subjugation that it couldn't defend its sovereignty. It was eventually resurrected as a nation, suffered decades of misery under Communism, and then, almost like the punch line of a Polish joke, collapsed into the Vatican's arms again as soon as its divorce from Communism became final. And now the nation is suffering again from having the fangs of an ancient religious vampire penetrating its neck. Dziamka shows that Poland refused to learn one of the most obvious lessons its history teaches, thus is doomed to repeat the class.

I did find flaws in *Adventures*. Some of the essays, especially the ones about Native Americans, should have been longer. "Chasing Loons … in A Subaru" is good, but it is like a cat in a dog show. No matter how excellently a cat represents its breed, it does not belong in a dog show. "Loons" is well-written and amusing, but it's still an inappropriately located cat. "Saint Paul or Insane Saul?" is about the life of **Saul of Tarsus**, the real inventor of Christianity, as it can be pieced together from what little information (all of it questionable) we have. It's very good, but is flawed because it leaves out one extremely important fact about Saul that is essential to understand his theology: he was an eschatological loony. He believed he was living in the last days; hence his theology and morality commandments were profoundly influenced by that silly belief. Leaving that out of the facts of Saul's life was a major mistake. Those are all the flaws I could find.

Dziamka's book is an outstanding contribution to the Secular Humanism bookcase and freethought library. Every person who enjoys publications like *The American Rationalist*, *Free Inquiry*, *The Moral Atheist*, and *The Secular Humanist Press* will enjoy this book, and will be rewarded with plenty to think about. The goal of the freethought movement is to make the dream of a "Land of the Free" come true. The road to that paradise is paved with books like *Adventures in Freedom*. ◆

To order the paperback of *Adventures in Freedom* send **$20** to:

Adventures in Freedom
Order Department
P. O. Box 80212
Albuquerque, NM 87198-0212

Please make checks payable to the author, **Kaz Dzimka**. No credit card or PayPal orders can be processed. Sorry.

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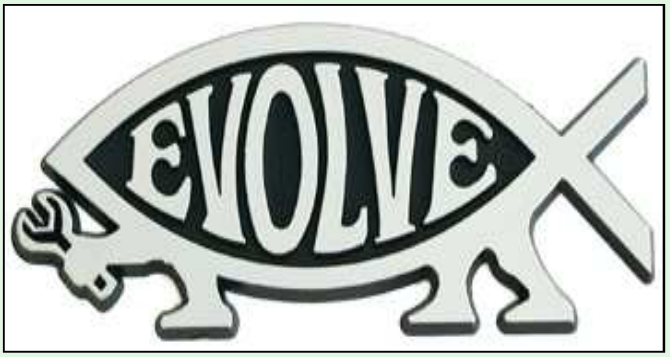

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To get the discount, add the code: **1296132938** in the Coupon Code box of the online shopping cart. This offer expires on December 3, 2011. Use your coupon as often as you like — or pass it on to a friend, so that they can get a discount as well!

Freedom From Religion Foundation's Philadelphia Region Billboard Campaign

In the March/April 2011 issue of The Freethought Society News, it was announced that the Freethought Society (FS) and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) are in need of funds to kick off an exciting "Come Out of the Closet" billboard campaign. If there are large donations earmarked for this campaign, billboards can be placed in more than one location.

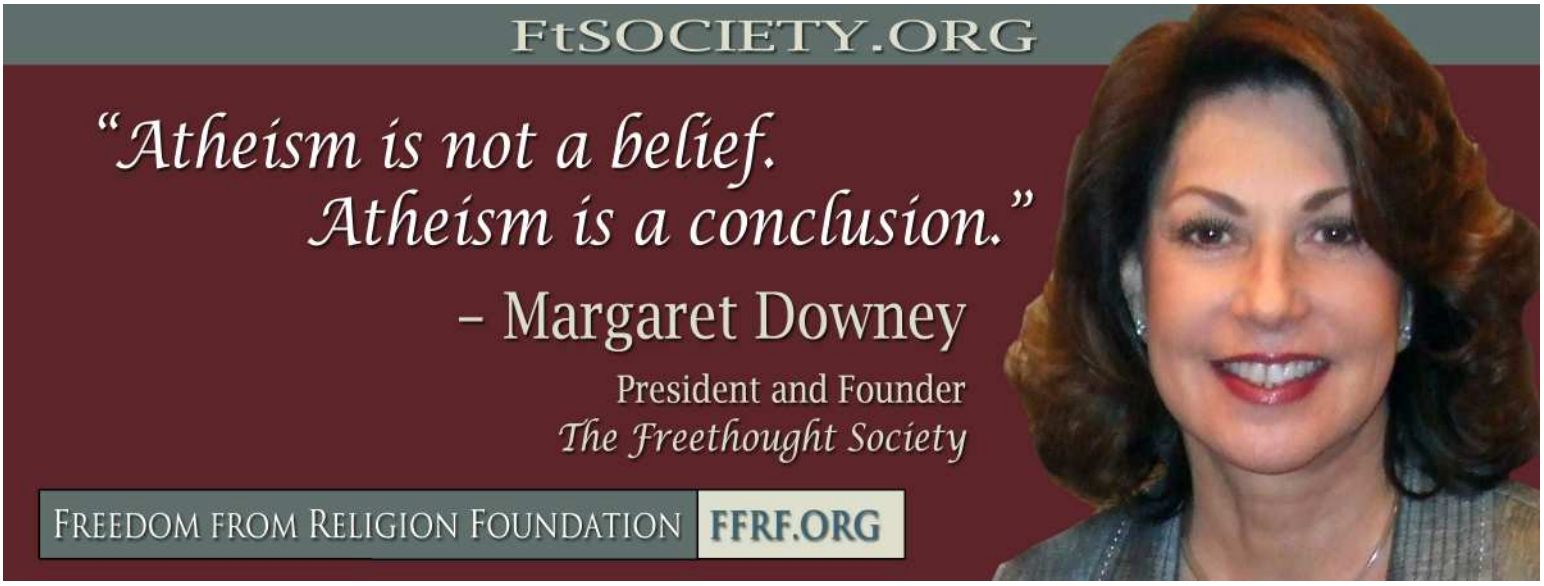
The face of about six FS supporters will appear on a digital billboard which will be located on a prominent highway in the Philadelphia area. Images and words will rotate. Leasing of the digital billboard is costly, but the campaign is sure to be a success. FFRF wants to have local members to both participate and to help pay for the costs. FFRF is hopeful that some FS supporters will want to do both!

A team of FS volunteers is needed to locate a good digital billboard in the Philadelphia area that will accept the campaign. Once a board location is found, FS and FFRF will work with the billboard artist directly.

A special photo technique will be used. FS is fortunate to have **Carol Everhart Roper** involved in the project, as she is a professional photographer and will be able to meet the standards required. Roper has volunteered to photograph billboard participants at no charge. She is prepared to take high-resolution head & shoulders photos using a white background. Roper's volunteer photography work saves participants approximately $70 each.

A clever, insightful, humorous or profound 3-8 word statement would appear with the image of an FS supporter. A **Margaret Downey** sample is printed below.

Please think of what your statement would be and make a donation to this wonderful project. Roper will photograph you at no charge and soon your image and words will be featured on a billboard. For your convenience a donation form is printed below. ◆



Yes! I want to donate to the Freethought Society/Freedom From Religion Foundation's "Come Out of the Closet" billboard campaign. Enclosed is my donation of $_____.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Phone: _____Email: _____

☐ Please keep my donation anonymous.

The Philadelphia Coalition of Reason presents

The 5th Annual UNITY PICNIC

Welcome to all

Atheists
Agnostics
Humanists
Freethinkers
Rationalists
Skeptics
etc.

July 31st
1-5pm

Rain or shine

Fort Washington State Park
Flourtown Pavilion

On W. Mill Road a quarter mile west of Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown, PA

games and activities games and activities

FOR THE KIDS

The Philadelphia Coalition of Reason
is an umbrella group
for seven local groups:

- The Freethought Society
- The Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia
- Atheist Meet-Up
- The Ethical Humanist Society
- Temple Atheists and Critical Thinkers
- Penn State Atheist Agnostic Association
- Drexel Freethought Society

$10 minimum donation per adult covers the cost of burgers, hot dogs, vegetarian grill alternatives, buns and beverages.

Please bring a side dish!
If your last name begins with:
A-G bring salad or vegetable
H-P bring fruit or dessert
Q-Z bring bread, potato or rice dish

DIRECTIONS

From the North:

From 276 take exit 339 toward PA-309/Fort Washington/Philadelphia/Ambler
Drive 1.4 miles South on PA-309
Take exit PA-73 toward Flourtown
Turn right at PA-73 W/Church Rd.
Take the 2nd left onto E Mill Rd.
The entrance to the park will be on your right about a quarter mile after you pass Bethlehem Pike

From the South:

Take 76 W to 476 North toward Plymouth Mtg.
Then take exit 20 and turn right on Plymouth Rd.
After about a half mile it will turn into Flourtown Rd. Stay on Flourtown Rd. for another two miles then turn left to stay on Flourtown Rd.
Then turn right on Stenton Rd. and left on W. Mill Road.
The entrance to the park will be on your left.

Please RSVP!

[So we can estimate our food and beverage needs.]

Contact PhillyReason@gmail.com

General Supporter Donations

Anonymous	$30
Al Palmer	$250
William R. Creasy	$10
Bob Hoffman	$250
Bob Kay	$50
Linda Mahan	$250
Marshall Martin	$25
Gladys Pffaff	$30
Jim Stix	$100

Billboard Campaign Donations

Anonymous	$100
John and Jeannette Wolff	$100

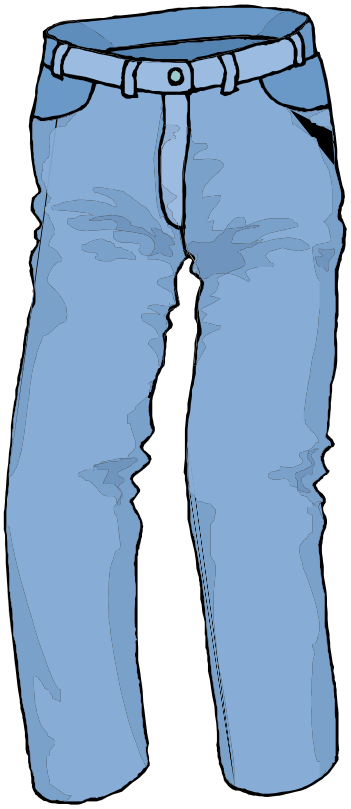
Haiti Solar Box Cooker Donations

William R. Creasy	$60

Jump Into the Jean Pool

The Freethought Society (FS) is proud to announce a "Jeans Only Clothing Drive." Donate your gently worn jeans at an FS event or monthly meeting. Jeans are too heavy to ship, so an in-person donation is necessary. All donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

When FS fills a large box with donated jeans, the box will be delivered to a homeless shelter in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This type of "Jean Therapy" can benefit many people who are in need of sturdy clothing. FS seeks all sizes including jeans for children, young adults and seniors. Please do not donate stained, ripped or torn jeans.



Ask you family, friends and neighbors to donate to this effort. The first opportunity for a jean donation is at the July 20th FS meeting at the Norristown Library.

Local businesses can be asked to participate with this collection. Please contact FS to request a poster that can be used to gather jeans from the public-at-large. Let's find merchants who are willing to help FS.

Haiti Solar Box Cooker Project Continues

The goal of sending at least eight solar box cookers to the Free Thinkers of Haiti (FTH) has been achieved. The solar box cooker kits have been shipped to Haiti through Solar Box Cookers International headquartered in Sacramento, California. Each volunteer at FTH now has a teaching kit, but more kits are needed. It would be most helpful to leave a kit in each village that a representative from FTH visits. A tax-deductible donation earmarked to this project can be sent to FS for processing.

Book Drive for the Philippines Continues

A call for book donations to assist the Philippine Atheists and Agnostics Society (PATAS) was printed in the May/June 2011 FS newsletter. This is a reminder to readers to send book donations directly to **Marissa Langseth** at 73-34 196th Place, Fresh Meadows, New York 11366. If you have any questions about PATAS, contact Langseth at:

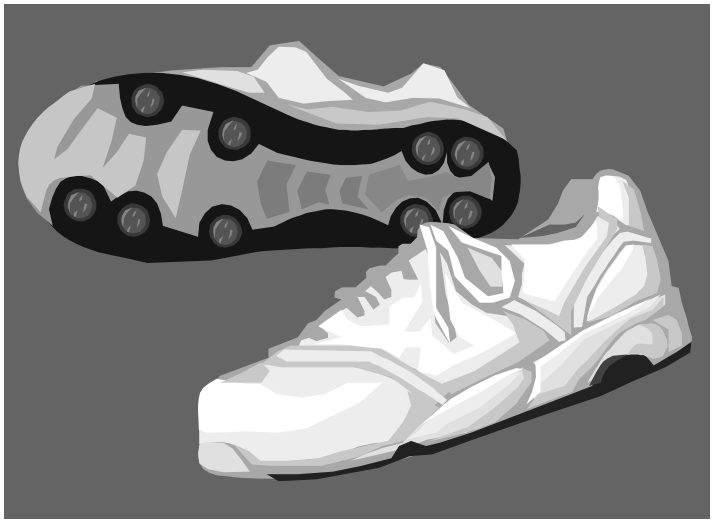
marissa@patas.com

Sole Searching

FS is pleased to announce another effort to benefit the homeless community. Donate your gently worn shoes at an FS event or at a monthly meeting. All donations will be acknowledged with a "thank you" and receipt that can be used for tax deduction purposes.

Large boxes filled with shoes will be delivered to a homeless shelter in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Please note that shoes with high heels are not appropriate for donation. The more sturdy the shoe, the better! Boots, work and sport shoes are best. Please do not donate over-used and/or dirty shoes.

Thanks in advance for looking through your closet and locating shoes that you no longer enjoy wearing. Consider yourself sole-searching. There is no such thing as an out-of-style shoe in the homeless community. All flat-style shoes can be of use.



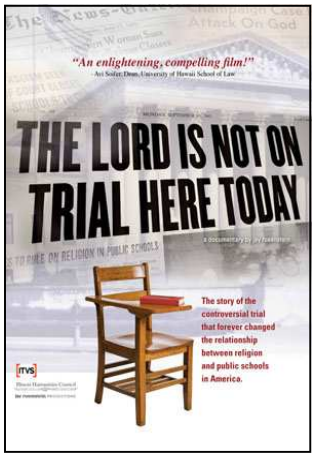
The Freethought Society's (FS) 2011 Five-Month Activities Calendar

June 2

FS proudly presents **Robert Kurzban** PhD as the **Thursday**, **June 2, 2011** speaker at the **Free Library of Philadelphia**. The meeting will begin promptly at **7:00 PM** in the **Skyline Room**. The address of the library is **1901 Vine Street**, **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**.

Kurzban's free and open-to-the-public speech, "Why Everyone (Else) is a Hypocrite: Evolution and the Modular Mind," will explore human inconsistency, including hypocrisy from an evolutionary perspective. Emphasizing how modularity helps to explain various features of human behavior, Kurzban will cover "self deception," "self control," "self esteem" and many other aspects of social behavior. This speech is based on Kurzban's book of the same title.

July 20



It's "Dinner and a Movie" night on Wednesday, July 20, 2011, at the **Norristown Public Library** (**1001 Powell Street, Norristown, Pennsylvania**).

Please arrive at the library Community Room around **5:30 PM** with your own dinner to chat with friends before the screening of *The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today*.

This 55-minute documentary tells the compelling story of the landmark 1945 First Amendment case that established the separation of religion and government in public schools. *The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today* is written, produced, directed and photographed by Jay Rosenstein. This film has won a Peabody Award. It was named "Best Historical Documentary in the Mid-America Region" and won an Emmy Award for "Best Writing in the Mid-America Region."

Sixty years after the original decision in *McCollum vs. Board of Education*, this film recounts what **Vasti McCollum** later described as "three years of headlines, headaches and hatred." Her struggles led to a decision that still resonates in separation of religion and government today. McCollum was a long-time supporter of FS, and most members of her family continue to receive the FS newsletter via email.

FS will supply bottled water, cups, napkins, plates and a cookie dessert. Please note that new audio equipment was purchased so that the film can be heard well by all. A special door prize will be given at the end of the evening.

This is a free and open-to-the-public event. Donations are greatly appreciated to offset related expenses.

July 31

The Philadelphia Coalition of Reason (PhillyCoR) is pleased to announce plans for the 2011 PhillyCoR "Unity Picnic." Please plan to attend the 5th annual picnic being held on **Sunday**, **July 31**, **2011** at the **Fort Washington State Park** (**6199 West Mill Road, Flourtown, Pennsylvania 19031**).The picnic will start at **1:00 PM** and end at **5:00 PM**. The "Flourtown Pavilion" has been reserved so this picnic will take place rain or shine. Please look for directional signs.

The suggested minimum donation of $10 per adult will help to cover the cost of beverages, hamburger fixings, hot dogs, and vegetarian alternatives for the grill. For more details, please see the full page advertisement for this event on page 8 of this newsletter.

Games and activities for children will be provided. Please RSVP **Joe Fox at:** admin@hagp.org so that food and beverage needs can be calculated accurately.

August 6

FS is trying a new meeting approach this month. For the first time in many years, FS will host a Saturday afternoon speaker. The use of a weekend date is a test. If the meeting attendance is good, FS will continue to use a Saturday afternoon date when possible.

At **3:00 PM**, on **Saturday**, **August 6, 2011**, FS is happy to host **Mike Reid** as a presenter. Reid is the newly-elected president of the Washington Area Secular Humanists.

The presentation "Foundations of Evolution" will take place in the **Montgomery Auditorium** (large basement room) at the **Free Library of Philadelphia** (**1901 Vine Street**, **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**).

Reid's free and open-to-the-public presentation will highlight the historical precursors that made **Charles Darwin**'s Theory of Evolution possible.

September 29

On **Thursday**, **September 29**, **2011** please attend a **7:00 PM** free and open-to-the-public presentation by Dr. Alan Mann.

The presentation entitled, "What does it mean to be human, and how did we evolve this unique capability?" will take place in the **Skyline Room** which is located on the second floor of the **Free Library of Philadelphia** (**1901 Vine Street**, **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**).

Freethought Society
Welcomes Newly Elected Officers and Board Members

The 2011 election of Freethought Society (FS) officers and board members was a unanimous victory for all candidates. Congratulations to all!

One of the responsibilities of being an officer and/or a board member is "availability." Printed below is contact information for each officer and board member. This will enable sponsors to have their voices heard. Officers and board members have declared their willingness to address the concerns of FS's sponsors.

The board of directors are representatives for all FS sponsors. They will be voting on major decisions and that vote must reflect what they perceive as a general consensus. If you are a supporter of FS, please keep this page in a convenient location so that you can contact your FS representatives at any given time. Your voice will be heard; you will be fully represented, and you will have the power to adjust, change, and influence the direction of FS.

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Dan Hoffman, *Treasurer*
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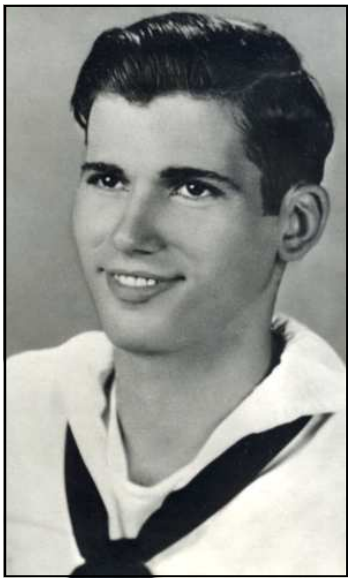
Freethought Society Committee Reports

Helping Hands Committee (HHC)



George Hetzel, the long-time recipient of HHC died on Thursday, May 19, 2011. HHC members assisted Hetzel with his needs for almost eight years. He died in his sleep at Virtua Hospital in Mt. Holly, New Jersey. Pictured right is Hetzel as a young man. The photo was taken during his service in the United States Navy. Hetzel was an atheist in a foxhole. He was also an accomplished electrician, engineer and refrigeration expert.

Hetzel left his household goods to the Freethought Society (FS) and asked that the items be sold with the intent that all proceeds benefit FS. While this is a generous offer, it requires a lot of work. HHC does not have enough volunteers to conduct a yard sale. Instead a few HHC volunteers will clean the items and host an effort entitled, "Take what you want. Donate what you can." Anything left over will be donated. Please call or write to FS to volunteer your time or to make an appointment to participate in the "Take what you want. Donate what you can" effort. The miscellaneous household items are located in Burlington Township, New Jersey. FS contact information:

Email: volunteers@FtSociety.org * Office Phone: (610) 793-2737 * Cell: (610) 357-9432

The Freethought Society (FS) is a chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and a member organization of the Atheist Alliance International (AAI). FS strives to improve society by promoting freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom from religious intrusion in public affairs, and also advocates for separation of religion and government. FS activities and services depend on the financial contributions of supporters. Please donate generously. Funds may be sent using this form or via the FS website (**www.ftSociety.org**). All contributions to FS are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Yes, I want to:

( ) become a supporter of FS (includes email PDF newsletter): **$30** individual supporter, **$35** family supporter, **$20** student. Please enclose checks payable to **The Freethought Society**.

( ) become an **FS Star**! by setting up an automatic monthly donation to FS from my bank or through PayPal in the amount of: (circle one) **$5** **$10** **$15** **$20** $____ (other) per month.

( ) join FFRF: **$40** individual membership or **$50** family membership. Please enclose checks payable to the **Freedom From Religion Foundation**.

( ) earmark a donation to (insert project, event or committee name)_____

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( ) Check here if you want your sponsorship to be anonymous.

FS will send a complimentary sample newsletter to potential supporters. Please provide contact information for anyone who might be interested in receiving an FS newsletter.

Name _____

Email Address_____

Clip and mail to: Freethought Society, P.O. Box 242, Pocopson, PA 19366-0242