The Freethought Society News

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The Freethought Society News Ezine is published by The Freethought Society (FS) for the nontheist community.

Free subscriptions are available for supporters, donors and like-minded individuals upon request.

Contact FS at: Ezine@FtSociety.org

Articles on topics of interest to freethinkers are welcomed and will be considered for publication.

Submit articles (5,000 word count max.) for review by the FS editorial board.

Please submit articles with a bio and photo, a suggested title, and relevant photos/clip art to:

Ezine@FtSociety.org

FS is an educational 501(c)3 organization

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Articles herein do not necessarily represent official positions of the Freethought Society.

The 2021 National Day of Reason Mayday for Humanity Event a Huge Success!

The COVID-19 pandemic caused all of the Freethought Society (FS) 2020 Secular Week of Action plans to be cancelled, including partnering with members of the East Brandywine Church to work at the Philabundance Hunger Relief Center and serving meals at the Hub of Hope in conjunction with Muslims Serve. Pandemic-related challenges continued into 2021 and in-person volunteer work was deemed too dangerous to pursue. Instead, **Margaret Downey**, president of FS, organized an online fundraising event to take place on Thursday, May 6, 2021.

The first Thursday of May is sanctioned by the Federal government as the National Day of Prayer. The National Day of Reason was created by the American Humanist Association and the Washington Area Secular Humanists in 2003 to serve as a celebratory holiday for secularists, and to counter the perceived constitutionality of the National Day of Prayer.

Downey worked with five national nontheist organizations for four months, planning a very special National Day of Reason event entitled *Mayday for Humanity*. Joining with FS were the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), Recovering from Religion (RfR), the Secular Student Alliance (SSA), and the Secular Coalition for America (SCA).

As those who participated in the National Day of Prayer bowed their heads, clasped their hands, and fell on their knees looking to the heavens for help, over one thousand nontheists attended a free, 3-hour fundraising entertainment extravaganza.

Celebrities, comedians, musicians, and poets provided extraordinary performances, all hosted by comedians **Ian Harris** and **Leighann Lord**. Listed below are the names of the performers and spokespersons:

Debbie Allen	**Ann Druyan**	**Hemant Mehta**
Dan Barker	**Annie Laurie Gaylor**	**Shelley Segal**
Ty Barnett	**Victor Harris**	**Gary Stockdale**
Sandra Booker	**Jon Huertas**	**Penn & Teller**
Baba Brinkman	**Keith Lowell Jensen**	**Jill Sobule**
John Davidson	**Gayle Jordan**	**Julia Sweeney**
John de Lancie	**Abraham Steve Mackey**	**Voices of Reason**

Downey conducted an online auction, which included art, household goods and a stamp collection. The generous auction donors are listed below:

Curt Anderson	**Humanist Society of Santa Barbara**
Charlotte Carney	**Glen Loev**
Lorne Corley	**Ann Druyan**
John de Lancie	**Zenos Frudakis**
The Freedom From Religion Foundation	**Rob Porter**

We are pleased to announce that the donations and auction bids raised a total of $25,000! Donations of $5,000 each were delivered to five homeless shelters and food banks selected by the co-sponsors. They are The Foothill Unity Center in California, Second Harvest in Wisconsin, Safe Harbor of Chester County in Pennsylvania, Capital Food Bank in Washington, D.C. and reStart in Missouri. See page 6 of this ezine for further details.

The event was recorded and can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/pQ34FTo2L-o

Thank you to all who donated, proving that nontheists can be kind and generous. □

National Day of Reason Mayday for Humanity Photos

Pictured left is **Kevin Bolling**, the Executive Director of the Secular Student Alliance (SSA). SSA was one of five co-sponsors of the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event. This photo was taken just before the event began on the evening of May 6, 2021.

Bolling was the behind-the-scenes technical expert who kept the event program on track. He spent a great deal of time in the months previous to the presentation setting up the webinar, creating donation websites, designing social media memes, and corresponding with *Mayday for Humanity* team members. He also did all the editing and rendering of the video submissions,

To learn more about SSA and to support their efforts, visit the following website:

https://secularstudents.org

Pictured right is **Margaret Downey** representing the Freethought Society (FS) during the May 6th event. FS was one of five co-sponsors of the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event.

Downey was the event founder and coordinator. She worked closely with Bolling (pictured above) for months prior to the event. She arranged for all the performances, speakers, and hosts.

Downey was also the *Mayday for Humanity* Auction creator and director. Working with BiddingOwl.com, she was able to raise $3,111 thanks to the donations of **Curt Anderson**, **Charlotte Carney**, **John de Lancie**, **Ann Druyan**, **Glen Loev**, the **Freedom From Religion Foundation**, **Zenos Frudakis**, and the **Humanist Society of Santa Barbara.**

Pictured above are the *Mayday for Humanity* comedian co-hosts **Leighann Lord** and **Ian Harris**. While the 3-hour event looked flawless, hours of preparatory work were involved. The basic script was provided to Lord and Harris, but they added funny lines and personality plus when they introduced each speaker and entertainer. Their professionalism was evident and the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* team is very grateful. See the entire show at the following Freethought Society YouTube link: https://youtu.be/pQ34FTo2L-o

Mayday for Humanity Co-Sponsor Photos

Pictured above are Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) co-presidents **Annie Laurie Gaylor** and **Dan Barker**. They are pictured delivering a welcome address and emphasizing why a National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event is of great importance. They said, in part, "Food insecurity across the country has risen significantly since the pandemic sidelined 14 million workers in the United States, according to the Pew Research Center. Let's help the nonprofits working so hard to help those in need." Thanks to *Mayday for Humanity* FFRF was able to donate $5,000 to their benefiting organization Second Harvest.

Pictured above is **Debbie Allen,** the Executive Director of the Secular Coalition for America. Allen helped raise grant money needed to fund the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event. Event grants were given by **Susan Rade** and **Steve Rade**, the **Stiefel Freethought Foundation**, an anonymous donor, and buy-ins from five co-sponsors.

Pictured right is **Gayle Jordan**. She represented Recovering from Religion as one of the five *Mayday for Humanity* co-sponsors. Thanks to the success of the event, Jordan was able to donate $5,000 to reStart (a homeless shelter) located in Kansas City, Missouri, where Recovering from Religion is incorporated as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt secular organization.

Mayday for Humanity Celebrity and Performer Photos

Pictured below are the wonderful comedians, singers, poets and speakers who appeared in the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event. Each appearance was unique and showed support for the fundraising effort. Website and contact information is provided to promote their careers. Please consider bookings for future secular events. Each of these folks comes highly recommended by the co-sponsors of *Mayday for Humanity*. See their performances at: https://youtu.be/pQ34FTo2L-o

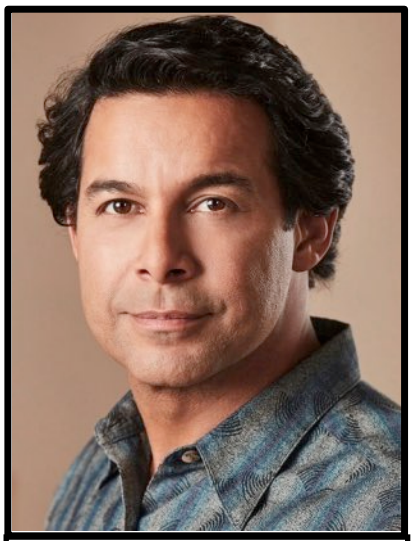
Ty Barnett
ComedianTyBarnett.com

John Davidson
JohnDavidson.com

Victor Harris
reuschelle@gmail.com

Sandra Booker
SandraBooker.com

John de Lancie
JohndeLancie.com



Jon Huertas
Jon Huertas Contact Info.

Baba Brinkman
BabaBrinkman.com

Ann Druyan
CarlSagan.com

Keith Lowell Jensen
standuprecords.com

Abraham Steve Mackey
abraham4880@gmail.com

Penn & Teller
PennandTeller.com

Gary Stockdale
GaryStockdale.com

Hemant Mehta
FriendlyAtheist.patheos.com

Shelley Segal
shelleysegal.com

Jill Sobule
JillSobule.com

Voices of Reason (https://www.voicesofreason.net/press/)
Top row left to right are: **Christina Magallanes-Jones**, **Katie Sharp**, **Erin Keith**, **Jennifer Horan**, and **Amanda MacLean.**

Bottom row left to right are: **Don Mogill**, **Samwise Aaron**, **Daniel Graves**, **Yari Schutzer**, and **Leonard Cachola**.

Julia Sweeney
JuliaSweeney.com

Mayday for Humanity Benefiting Organizations

Each of the five National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* co-sponsoring organizations selected a hometown-benefiting organization to receive money that was raised during the online entertainment extravaganza. We reached the goal of $25,000, allowing each organization described below to receive a $5,000 donation.

Capital Area Food Bank

The Capital Area Food Bank leads the Washington, D.C. region's efforts to provide good, healthy food to people struggling with hunger and food insecurity. Each year they source and distribute over 45 million meals.

The Secular Coalition for America (SCA) delivered $5,000 in person to the Capital Area Food Bank. The giant ceremonial check is being displayed at the facility in honor of the generosity of the nontheist community exemplified during the 2021 *Mayday for Humanity* event.

Pictured below (left to right) are **Debbie Allen** (SCA Executive Director), **Emily Laurer-Bader** (Capital Area Food Bank Director, Corporate Partnerships), and **Megan Curran** (Capital Area Food Bank's Events and Campaigns Specialist).

SCA volunteers, Allen, **Andrew Grossen**, **Hoa Anh Hoang**, **Jim Dougherty** and **Joe Shaw** worked at the Capital Area Food Bank during the 2021 Secular Week of Action (April 30-May 9). For three hours they packed over 300 bags of groceries for delivery to senior centers and residential locations.

Foothill Unity Center

The Secular Student Alliance (SSA) has volunteered at the Foothill Unity Center for several years. SSA was pleased to donate $5,000 to the Foothill Unity Center as their *Mayday for Humanity* benefiting organization.

The Foothill Unity Center helps individuals and families in need with programs that focus on food, health, crisis case management, job development, along with housing and homeless services. The Foothill Unity Center is supported by a volunteer program. They envision a community where all have their basic needs met, all get the necessary support to become self-sufficient, and all are treated with love and dignity.

reStart

reStart was the recipient of $5,000 as the selected benefiting organization of Recovering from Religion — one of the five co-sponsors of the 2021 National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event.

reStart empowers individuals and families to prevent, navigate, or end homelessness. As of January 2019, Missouri and Kansas have 8,560 homeless individuals and families. Through strong community partnerships and effective, diverse programming, reStart works to service all who come to them. asking for help. They seek to empower all people facing or experiencing homelessness by providing housing and services that inspire hope. reStart is leading the way to prevent and end homelessness in Kansas City.

Safe Harbor of Chester County

The Freethought Society (FS) has been working with Safe Harbor of Chester County (SHCC) for over ten years. They have been the recipient of clothing and shoes obtained through FS's "Jump into the Jean Pool" (collecting jeans) and "Sole Searching" (collecting athletic shoes) projects.

SHCC is a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to provide housing, food, and access to support services in a structured environment for homeless single men and women in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

SHCC's goal reaches beyond just feeding the homeless and providing housing. SHCC seeks to understand each person's background and define short-term action plans designed to address challenges and needs, as well as monitor progress. Their goal is to help rebuild lives and life skills, reestablish self-esteem, and help people overcome the issues that prevent them from leading independent, productive lives.

Pictured below (left to right) are **Glen Loev** (FS Vice-President), **Alan Gold** (FS Treasurer). **Margaret Downey** (FS President), **Judy Jeffords-Homitz** (SHCC Chief Executive Officer), and **David James** (SHCC Development Director).

Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin

The Freedom From Religion Foundation's benefiting organization was Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin. They were pleased to receive a $5,000 donation to help fulfill their mission. Each and every day, Second Harvest stores over a million pounds of food, picking up, sorting and inspecting it for safe distribution to individuals facing hunger. Second Harvest mobilizes volunteers and employees to distribute food and funds, giving time and voice to hunger-relief. ◘

An African Journey Story

by Amaka Oguguo

If you attended Saint John of God Secondary School Awka in Anambra, Nigeria between 2001 and 2007, you will likely remember me as just "Gertrude."

I am often asked by associates, friends, and family, "What happened Amaka? Why are you not religious like other Africans?"

According to some of the people who asked me those questions, I was "Queen of the Coast" sometime between 2004 and 2005. I remember well when this was supposed to have happened.

A new girl in our class shared her chewing gum on Valentine's Day. We all chewed it and passed it around. Afterwards a lot of us were told that we had just been initiated into some kind of "Marine Spirit" through the chewing gum. When I was approached with that theory, I scoffed at it. Debunking that absurd notion was the beginning of my life of resistance and questioning.

Pictured above is **Amaka Oguguo**. She has been a citizen of the United States since 2013. Oguguo works as a Social Insurance Specialist determining eligibility, disability, and retirement benefits.

For some reason, best known to the gossipers, the "spirit" news spread quickly. I was told that due to the gum initiation I had become the "Queen" — even though I denied it being true. I was only a teenager, and couldn't fully defend myself.

As a result, a lot of friends deserted me. No one wanted to be associated with me. Teachers refused to enter our classroom. People shouted, "Holy, ghost, fire" when I passed by. Adults and children literally feared me. Some said their pastors talked about me during and even after the services. Some said that they saw me in their dreams. Others said that I had the power to kill people. I even found out that when a rat entered the student hostel, they proclaimed "It's Gertrude."

I was told that the crucifix I wore around my neck was from "mamiwater." My "beauty and intelligence," they said, "came from the Marine World." So many strange and unbelievable stories were circulating about me, I could not keep track. Yes, there was a time when I wished I had the powers they claimed I had. I would have done things to these people for real and not just in their dreams!

At one point, priests and pastors were asked to visit the school to cast out the demons in me. They even thought I infected my friends. No "demon" left me. In other words, there was no demon at all — or maybe their prayers just didn't work.

When the entire school was supposed to fast, I purposely ate very well. The main reason I decided to eat rather than fast was so that I didn't fall over from hunger while everyone else prayed.

Eventually, I was given an indefinite suspension from school on the grounds that my presence was causing too much "chaos." I tried to enroll in the next best government school for girls in Awka. I was turned away based on the negative reports from Saint John.

What people didn't know then was that I almost committed suicide due to this unfair and hurtful stigmatization. I cried every day. It was all too much for me. I was just a teenager whose world had turned upside down for no good reason.

The stigma never ended for me, I finally settled in a private school, but the news of my tainted past soon got there too. Most students there also avoided me because they were so scared of me. I believed that the entire town had heard about me. The truth is that they didn't really know me at all.

It was almost amusing to be on a public bus one day when I overheard people talking about the "Queen of the Coast." "She was powerful," they said, "but she rejected her position in the Marine World." They were all unaware that it was I they were speaking about all the while, as I was sitting on the same bus as them.

Even when my marriage ended in 2014 with no child, my ex-husband (normally, a very intelligent professor) used those made-up stories just to get sympathy from people. He actually told people that I was a "long-term witch." He said that my being a witch was the reason that I had prevented him from having the honor of fathering a child.

While all this was going on, I continued going to church. I found myself getting deeper into religious belief and even joined a charismatic renewal. I always received holy communion. This I did to feel safe, know God, or just feel the spirit everyone was talking about. It (whatever "it" is) never revealed itself to me!

I have best friends and family who are religious, so this story is not anything against them personally. I love them dearly. For the most part, however, religious people are very judgmental and that's dangerous to society. Most religious people negatively judge those who don't share their delusions.

The question I always ask myself is, what if I really were the Queen of any Coast? As a Queen, I would not treat any human being the way I was treated!

I am not angry with any God or possible Devil because I don't believe in their existence at all. I do believe in the existence of good and bad people because of my experiences. Human behavior — good and bad — is real.

In retrospect, I do not blame those teenagers in my past. I blame religion. I blame the teachers. I blame the gullible priests. I blame clueless pastors. I blame the adults who indoctrinate their children to hate others of different beliefs, Lastly, I blame societies that allow religion to be considered acceptable, when it should instead be viewed as a mental illness.

This is my journey story and it's the reason I became a Humanist. □

Mormons or Christians — Who Are Better?

by Herb Silverman

The title of this article is a bit of a trick question, since Mormons consider themselves to be Christians, while most Christians don't consider Mormons to be Christians. It's also unfair to stereotype such large classes of people. And there are considerable differences between liberal and conservative Christians as well as between liberal and conservative Mormons.

Nevertheless, I'll make my case for Mormons. I certainly don't condone their anti-gay and anti-atheist positions. I also don't give any credibility to the *Book of Mormon*, which states that after Jesus died, but before he went to heaven, Jesus stopped in the United States — in Missouri. When Jesus returns, he will again go to Missouri. How do we know? Because this story was allegedly chiseled in Egyptian hieroglyphics on gold plates and buried in Palmyra, New York.

In 1827, the angel **Moroni** supposedly led **Joseph Smith** to the gold plates and also to a magic stone. When Joe put the magic stone into his hat and buried his face in it, he was able to translate the gold plates into English.

This story, of course, is silly — but how much sillier than the claim that Jesus rose from the dead, or that one can drink his blood and eat his body every Sunday, or that a talking snake tricked a first couple into eating a forbidden piece of fruit?

I can enjoy a chuckle over many such religious beliefs, as long as they don't intrude on the daily lives of those who don't believe such nonsense. When **Mitt Romney**, a Mormon, first ran for president in 2008, he was asked about his religion. Romney said, "The most unusual thing in my church is that we believe there was once a flood upon the Earth, and that a man took a boat and put two of each animal inside the boat, and saved humanity by doing that."

Romney essentially said that his holy book is no more ridiculous than the holy book of Christians. I think he has a point, and I would be surprised if Romney believes this story.

I generally prefer people who don't believe most of the doctrines of the faith in which they were raised. I've met Mormons who either did not know the preposterous angel Moroni story of the gold plates, or didn't believe it to be true. On the other hand, it appears that most Christians believe that God sent his Son, Jesus, to Earth to die on a cross and be resurrected. Further, people who accept this story will have an eternity of bliss and those who don't will face an eternity of torture.

I watched with some sympathy when Romney ran unsuccessfully for president in 2008. My sympathy was not for his political positions at the time, but because surveys showed the main thing atheist and Mormon political candidates had in common was that a significant number of Americans said they wouldn't vote for either — no matter how qualified the candidate. Perhaps that's why Mormon politicians tend to downplay their Mormonism. I wish more Christian politicians would downplay their Christianity!

While I want to know the political positions of candidates, I also like to know whether they base their political decisions more on evidence or religious faith. I could be comfortable with a candidate who says she would compartmentalize her (irrational) faith-based beliefs and govern rationally on evidence-based information. I gained some respect for Republican Senator Romney in 2020 when he voted to convict **Donald Trump** and remove him from office. Former Republican Senator **Jeff Flake**, also a Mormon, was another vocal critic of Trump.

I respected Romney's father, **George Romney** (Mormon and Republican), who, as governor of Michigan, strongly supported civil rights. In early 1960 he was on the Fair Campaign Practices Committee, which issued a report stating that "no candidate for elected office should be supported or opposed due to their religion and that no campaign for office should be seen as an opportunity to vote for one religion against another." This statement helped pave the way for Catholic **John F. Kennedy**'s famous speech later that year, when he said he believed in an America "where the separation of church and state is absolute." As president, Kennedy gave secular arguments for decisions he made on behalf of the country.

George Romney was initially a front-runner for the Republican nomination for president in 1968, but his honesty got him into trouble. After a tour of Vietnam, Romney acknowledged that he had been brainwashed and could no longer support the war, reversing his earlier position that the Vietnam War was "morally right and necessary." **Richard Nixon**, a war supporter, won the nomination and was elected.

Then there are the Mormon Udall politicians, all of whom seemed to be decent. **Mo Udall** succeeded his brother, Congressman **Stuart Udall**, after President Kennedy appointed Stuart Secretary of the Interior. Mo served in the House until 1991. I voted for Mo in the 1976 Democratic primary for president.

Mo gained national political notice in 1967, when he gave a speech to civic leaders who were mostly supporters of President **Lyndon B. Johnson**'s policy on the Vietnam War. Mo was the first major figure in the Democratic Party to openly oppose the Democratic President on the war. His speech drew media attention, and led to the Democratic Party's gradual split over the war.

Mo co-sponsored the Federal Election Act of 1971 and the 1974 Campaign Reform Act. He was known for his humor and irreverence. For instance, as a member of the House Post Office Committee, he said: "Let's turn inflation over to the Post Office. That'll slow it down." Because of his wit, columnist **James J. Kilpatrick** deemed him "too funny to be president," which later became the title of Mo's autobiography.

Mo commanded an all-Black squadron in Louisiana during World War II, supporting them in their fights over local discrimination. He stopped being an active member of the Mormon Church because of its policy of prohibiting Blacks from serving in the priesthood, and he eventually abandoned his Mormon faith. In 1978, Mormon President **Spencer W. Kimball** claimed that God had removed the curse on Blacks and that worthy Black men could now become priests. I rather like the Mormon idea that God sometimes changes his mind, unlike the Christian view of their inerrant holy book.

Mo's son, **Mark Udall**, was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1998, and to the U.S. Senate in Colorado in 2008. His

nephew, **Tom Udall**, was elected to the U.S. Senate in Arizona in 2008.

I prefer the Mormon imaginary afterlife to the Christian one. Mormons baptize dead people. Many Jews are upset that Mormons posthumously baptized Holocaust victims, including Anne Frank and Simon Wiesenthal's parents. Perhaps my relatives who died in the Holocaust were also baptized. That's fine with me. I think it's ridiculous, but it does no harm to my dead relatives or to me. In fact, this practice seems like an expression of good will, much like, "I'll pray for you." I believe in its sentiment, if not its efficacy.

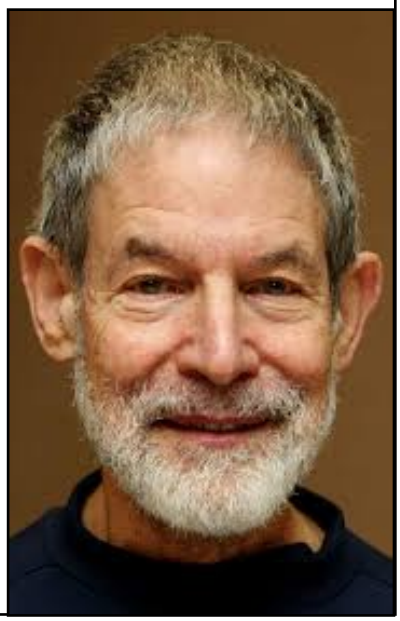
So, Mormons would give me a posthumous chance to convert. Christians, on the other hand, would simply have me burn in hell forever. I've always said I'd become a believer if presented with evidence. I think the probability of the Christian or Mormon afterlife is zero, but the Mormon one is more compassionate.

You should know that I've been using politically incorrect terminology. In 2018, Mormon President **Russel M. Nelson** said that Mormons should no longer be called Mormons. He said we should call them members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. So, I'm happy to acknowledge that I enjoy listening to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tabernacle Choir.

I prefer some other things Mormons do and believe over similar Christian issues. I'm fond of Mormon dietary guidelines, which include mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and with meat eaten sparingly. I like that Mormons abstain from tobacco, which I wish everybody did, but I would hate to give up my morning coffee or dinner glass of wine. ☐

Herb Silverman is a regular contributor to the Freethought Society's ezine *The Freethought Society News*. He is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the College of Charleston.

Silverman is the author of two books, *Candidate Without a Prayer* and *An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land*. Both books are available through amazon.com. Designating "The Freethought Society" as your AmazonSmile benefits recipient automatically increases the organization's funds.



Silverman ran for governor of South Carolina in the 1990s to challenge a state law that required religious belief to hold public office.

In 1990, a colleague pointed out that atheists were ineligible to hold public office in South Carolina. After an eight-year battle, Herb won a unanimous decision in the South Carolina Supreme Court, which struck down this religious test requirement.

Announcing the 2021 Freethought Society Secular Student Alliance Scholarship!

We are pleased to announce that a $1,000 scholarship will be given to one Secular Student Alliance member who is enrolled in any high school or college in the United States. The Secular Student Alliance empowers secular students to proudly express their identity, build welcoming communities, promote secular values, and set a course for lifelong activism. The Freethought Society scholarship is designed to support a student who, in addition to pursuing excellence in their academic studies, is also an activist for secular values on their campus and/or in their community. Visit the Secular Student Alliance website to learn more about the scholarship:

https://secularstudents.org/scholarships

Secular Scholarships Available Now

Apply by August 31 at secularstudents.org

secular student alliance

Freethought Society Three-Month Zoom Calendar

To participate in the online Zoom events listed below, you must be a member of the Freethought Society Meetup group.
Join the Freethought Society (FS) Meetup group: www.meetup.com/Freethought-Society-Meetup/
Each event will have a Zoom URL link listed in the description of the event at the Meetup page.
FS meetings will implement security features and will be recorded for replay on social media.
Those who join the meeting consent to be recorded and agree to abide by the FS Anti-Harassment and Code of Conduct Policy.

July 10

The Freethought Society is pleased to host Kate Forest, a Life Cycles Officiant for the Jewish Children's Folkshul and Adult Community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Saturday, July 10, 2021. The Zoom event will begin at 11:45 AM PDT/ 2:45 PM EDT.

Folkshul welcomes all who want to be part of our Jewish community including, but not limited to, folks who are culturally Jewish, agnostic, atheist, spiritual, self-identified Jewish, Jew-ish, Jew-curious, in an interfaith family, LGBTQ, leaving Judaism, returning to Judaism, freethinkers, humanists, grandparents, singles, couples, and parents-trying-to-give-their-kids-good-values-and-a-cultural-identity-in-a-nonreligious-setting. Everyone is welcome!

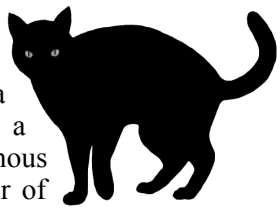
Forest's speech is entitled "Jewish without God: Living a meaningful Secular Jewish Life." She will describe the many branches of the Jewish tree. Most of these branches are theistic, but increasingly Jews are defining themselves as non-believers or atheists. Secular Humanistic Judaism allows Jews to retain a cultural Jewish identity without practicing a religion that is incompatible with their beliefs. Despite objections from some Jewish communities, Secular Jews provide an inclusive, relevant experience.

Please refer to the Meetup link information under the headline of this page to learn how to obtain the Zoom link to participate in this event.

August 13

Nowhere in the entire world has there been a Friday the Thirteenth online anti-superstition bash until now! Please join the Freethought Society and the Center for Inquiry (CFI) as we cure people of their superstitions during the virtual opening of the famous Friggatriskaidekaphobia Treatment Center on **Friday**, **August 13**, **2021** at **3:45 PM PDT/6:45 PM EDT**. During the Pre-Event Social, singer extraordinaire, **Rich DeSimone** will perform a mini-concert of Frank Sinatra songs, including *Luck be a Lady* and *Witchcraft*.

Friggatriskaidekaphobia doctors and nurses will provide long-distance treatments that will involve humorous and fun-loving interaction as superstitions are dispelled and cured. A "Clean Bill of Mental Health" will be awarded to participants who participate and follow the "doctor's orders." Don't miss your chance to take an "Anti-Horoscope Consulting Pledge" and participate in trashing your Zodiac sign. Join us by sitting under a ladder or umbrella. Prizes for the best online Zoom setting will be awarded, so be creative.



The 2021 Friggatriskaidekaphobia Treatment Center will be offering a continuing education session with famous skeptic and "Anti-Superstition Professor of Rational Thinking" **Benjamin Radford**. His presentation is entitled "The Curse of Magical Thinking."

Though magical thinking can seem wonderful, imbuing the world with meaning and magic, there is a darker side to it. From lucky rabbit's feet (not so lucky for the rabbit!) to gambler's fallacies, Radford will examine psychological, cultural, and folkloric aspects of superstition, curses, luck, and much more. Though some magical beliefs are harmless, others can have unexpectedly harmful and even deadly consequences. Learn about the history of these beliefs as well as how to replace magical beliefs with science and reason.

Radford has degrees in psychology and education, and is a Research Fellow with the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. He is the author of a dozen books on critical thinking, science education, and media literacy. Radford is Deputy Editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* science magazine and co-host of the podcast *Squaring the Strange*.

To poke fun at fortunetelling, **Christina Magallanes-Jones** will be attending as the Friggatriskaidekaphobia Treatment Center's Miss Fortune Teller. She will be using her special deck of "Tarot-Bull" cards to predict your future.

For past party photos visit:

http://www.friggatriskaidekaphobia.com

Please refer to the Meetup link information under the headline of this page to learn how to obtain the Zoom link to participate in this event.

September 3-5

For thirteen years running, Freethought Society president **Margaret Downey** served as the DragonCon Skeptic Parade Coordinator. The DragonCon parade takes place in Atlanta, Georgia during Labor Day weekend. Due to the COVID health crisis, Skeptics will not participate in 2021. True to the principles of skepticism, scientific data indicates that without herd immunity achieved, the parade would cause hazardous crowd conditions. Not participating in the parade is the wise and safe decision this year.

Skeptrack talks will happen over Zoom, with a limited live audience at the DragonCon location. Downey will participate in the on-site Skeptrack session as a presenter and freethought representative. Also interviewing and introducing special Skeptrack guests are **Angie Mattke** and **Derek Colanduno**.

World-famous sculptor **Zenos Frudakis** will be a featured speaker. He will be interviewed long-distance as he talks about the 2022 "Skeptic of the Year" award he is creating at his Glenside, Pennsylvania studio. Viewers will also see samples of other awards, a 7-foot statue of Thomas Paine in the making, and many more sculpting projects of interest to skeptics and freethinkers.

The free Skeptrack live programs will be available here:

https://www.youtube.com/c/SkepticsTrack

SAVE THE DATE!

American **Humanist** Association

80th Annual Conference

JOIN US ONLINE: **July 24–25, 2021**

Visit **conference.americanhumanist.org**
for updates on speakers, awardees, and events

AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

GOOD WITHOUT A GOD

The Freethought Society (FS) promotes freedom of thought, expression, and choice. FS also advocates separation of religion and government. We assist nontheists, educate the public about nontheism, and provide social opportunities where like-minded individuals can meet, socialize and share ideas.

FS publishes *The Freethought Society News* every other month. The publication is delivered as an ezine via email and is complimentary to supporters, donors, like-minded individuals and those who are interested in learning more about freedom of thought.

Monthly events take place in locations across the United States via Zoom or in-person if possible. FS activities and services depend on financial contributions from supporters. Funds may be sent using this form or via the FS website (https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1554941). All contributions to FS are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law (Tax ID Number: 23-2738574). Please donate generously.

Yes! I would like to:

( ) become a supporter / renew support of FS (Please enclose checks payable to the Freethought Society):
$30 Individual Supporter $40 Family Supporter $20 Student $1,000 Supporter for a Lifetime

( ) become a "Freethought 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 $25 $30 $35 $40 $45 $50 $55 $_____other (per month)

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

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____Cell: _____

( ) Check here if you prefer your sponsorship to remain anonymous.

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

Name: _____Email: _____

Mail this form to: Freethought Society, P.O. Box 242, Pocopson, PA 19366 or scan and email this form to: Ezine@FtSociety.org

Volunteer Opportunities Through the Freethought Society

Supporters of FS often want to do more than just make a financial contribution. Listed below are committees designed to fulfill the mission, goals, and vision of FS. Volunteers are needed in all committees listed. Please contact FS to volunteer at: volunteers@FtSociety.org.

Anti-Discrimination Educational Committee
(nontheism explained in classroom settings)

Anti-Discrimination Support Network
(assist Secular Coalition for America gathering reports)

Community Outreach
(locate tabling opportunities)

Diversity Outreach Committee
(brainstorming about and developing programs to appeal to minorities)

Free Speech Zone Committee
(research and implement displays in public venues)

Helping Hands
(provides helpers to seniors in emergency situations)

Jump into the Jean Pool
(collection of jeans for donations)

Literature Placement for Prisoners
(providing literature to prison libraries)

Meetup Committee
(planning events)

Monthly Meeting Coordinators
(schedule, manage speakers and venues)

Secular Celebrations
(develop, organize, and implement new nontheist celebrations)

Speakers Bureau
(provide FS a resume, photo, and speech subjects/titles)

Special Events
(coordinate unique events of interest to nontheists)

Sole Searching
(collection of athletic shoes for donations)

Thomas Paine Memorial Committee
(work on themed events)

Tree of Knowledge/Winter Display Committee
(promote and support the concept nationwide)