



The Freethought Society News

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The Freethought News is an ezine newsletter only and is complimentary to supporters, donors and like-minded individuals.

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A limited number of hard copies are produced for meetings and special events.

The newsletter is published by the Freethought Society (FS) 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.

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

newsletter@FtSociety.org

Donation and financial support information is located on the last page of this newsletter.

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BSA Recruitment vs. Equal Access

by Margaret Downey

The second page of the [September/October 2012 Freethought News](#) highlighted a project to stop the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) from recruiting for membership in public schools. There is no doubt that the public school setting is not the place to subject innocent children to a possible membership rejection and discrimination at the hands of the world's largest youth group. Several people participated in the project using the form letter provided.

Judging from the response received from school district superintendents, there appears to be confusion about BSA having access to public school students. One school superintendent wrote:

In response to your letter regarding the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and their access to public schools or school sponsored functions in the Lower Merion School District. While I am personally in full support of your position, we are bound by Federal law to allow BSA access.

The "Federal law" that was mentioned by the superintendent in the letter above is known as the *Boy Scouts Equal Access Act of 2001*. The actual wording of the Act can be confusing. The opening paragraph of the Freethought Society (FS) letter requesting that BSA not be allowed to recruit stated that BSA "will likely request your permission for access to children who attend elementary schools in our district. BSA may request (and expect) your cooperation and assistance in distributing their literature, gaining access to classrooms, and/or permission to staff recruitment tables in order to promote their program for youths and to recruit membership."

There is a difference between "recruitment" and the "equal use of school facilities." Some school superintendents are interpreting the Act to mean that BSA can use teachers and the classroom setting for recruitment purposes. The following letter was sent as a response to the superintendents who may not be aware of the difference between "equal access" and "recruitment assistance:"

Dear Superintendent,

I appreciate your reply to my letter Aug. 25, 2012 regarding access for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to the public schools of our district. I especially appreciate hearing of your personal position on the matter.

This reply is intended to offer clarification regarding the limits of the specific legal obligations of public schools to be in compliance with the Boy Scouts Equal Access act of 2001.

Under this act, public schools must allow BSA equal access to rent school premises as is given to other outside youth or community groups – nothing more. The law does not require public schools to allow BSA to recruit membership, nor to distribute their literature or promote their organization.

Structured as a "private" organization, BSA is free from compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. In fact, BSA no longer requires troops and campsites to accept and accommodate people with disabilities. Because of their

blatant discrimination against gays, nontheists, and the disabled, allowing BSA to use teachers and school officials to help promote the organization to students would be a violation of the Lower Merion school district's anti-discrimination policy.

I bring this to your attention because some school district officials are not aware that there is a difference between renting space equally and using the school to recruit membership.

*It is my hope that, in light of BSA's policies of exclusion, the public school district extends to this organization **no** support, assistance, or promotion beyond that required by current legislation.*

I am happy to provide further information from legal sources related to this matter, should that be of assistance.

Thank you again for your consideration.

FS is deeply concerned about the promotion of a membership policy that discriminates against the nontheist and gay community. New BSA documents reveal that their national office policies have changed regarding accommodations for the disabled.

The following excerpts can be found in the August 2008 *BSA Risk Management Notebook* (Non-Scout use of Scout Facilities):

"...Scouting is a private club exempt from the Americans with Disabilities Act, and that the outside group using Scout property is responsible for complying with the Act and accommodating the needs of its participant.

"...because Scouting is a private club, and therefore Scouting facilities are not subject to the requirements of the ADA.

"...it may be clear that the outside group, e.g. a public school class, is open to the public. Councils must be sure that the burden of complying with the ADA is shifted to the outside group leasing Council property."

The following are from the 2007 and 2008 BSA National Camp Standards for Cub Scout and Boy Scout Resident Camps literature:

"Make certain your camps are in compliance with all OSHA, EPA and ADA standards..."

M-12: (Mandatory Camp Standard):

"Sleeping areas and dining, toilet, bathing and program facilities for persons with disabilities must be available."

Pre-Camp/Post-Camp Inspection Checklist:

"Your facilities must be in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990."

Beginning in 2009, the same literature removed any and all mention of ADA compliance, and the Mandatory Camp Standard (M-12) wording was changed to add two new words at the beginning of the sentence (bolded for emphasis in this publication):

"When possible, sleeping areas, dining areas, toilets, bathrooms and program facilities are available to Scouts

and leaders with disabilities."

The same two words, "when possible" were also added to BSA National Standards for Cub Scout and Webelos Scout Day Camp literature beginning in 2009. Prior to that, the literature specified that it was mandatory for the BSA camps to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The same wording change appeared in the BSA National Standards for Council Organized Family Camps beginning in 2009 and any mention of an ADA requirement was removed.

In 2005, the mandatory standards for the BSA Pack Overnighter Site Approval Form stated that:

"All facilities are available to people with disabilities."

In 2008, the same form was revised and the new wording makes no mention of what is to be done to assist and accommodate people with disabilities.

The many changes in the wording of official BSA literature are shocking and have gone virtually unnoticed by the public, the media and even members of BSA. This article shines a light on the way BSA's "private organization" is harmful to society as a whole. FS is coordinating with other activists to create public awareness and a copy of this article will be sent to superintendents of public school districts.

Even as BSA changes its camp site requirements to avoid accommodating people with disabilities, they ask camp staff to sign a "Staff Statement of Understanding and Code of Conduct." The wording of that document reflects the hypocrisy of BSA when the staff is instructed to:

"...obey all U.S. federal laws, as well as local and state laws."

"I will respect diversity — whether the differences be in physical characteristics or in perspectives."

"I have the responsibility not to engage in behavior that constitutes discrimination or harassment in any way, including race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or citizenship of an individual. This applies to everyone, including fellow staff members, campers, adult leaders, parents, and outside vendors."

"I have the responsibility to report instances of discrimination or harassment (directed at me or at others) to the camp director or the Scout executive."

How can a member of the BSA staff, in good conscience, sign the Code of Conduct knowing that national office literature has been changed to allow BSA to avoid ADA compliance? The time has come to demand that the BSA national office executives sign a Code of Conduct Form agreeing to obey all U.S. federal laws, as well as local and state laws. Perhaps BSA executives should agree in writing that they will respect diversity and not engage in behavior that constitutes discrimination.

Since BSA is a private organization, changes must come from the executives. Scouts, troop leaders and the public can take a stand by refusing to comply. FS supporters can and will continue to shed light on this issue. ▣

Challenging BSA and Public School Endorsement

by Margaret Downey

As a watchdog organization, the Freethought Society (FS) will act upon any reported or observed violation of separation of religion and government. High on the list of violations to watch are situations involving entanglements between the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and the public school system. FS relies upon supporters to make sure that BSA does not impose upon teachers and/or administrators in order to promote their youth programs. Parents with children in public schools can easily watch for BSA recruitment materials, endorsement statements and onsite gratuities that benefit BSA; others need to be observant.

FS strongly recommends that activists and concerned taxpayers attend school board meetings on a regular basis, but simply driving by your neighborhood schools can be all that is needed to spot an entanglement.

FS board member **Sally Flynn** and I make regular sweeps of the schools in our area. We live within 5 miles of each other. Over the years we have demanded the removal of a high school marquee stating “In God We Trust” and we have had BSA recruitment signs taken off the lawn of two elementary schools. We always recommend that activists take photos before a complaint is filed. Dates, times, names and written information is a must if any formal complaint is registered. Flynn and I go as a team, as we have learned the importance of having a witness to any encounter.

When we noticed a BSA recruitment sign in front of the Unionville Elementary School on Saturday, October 8, 2012, we immediately went into action. The photo you see in this article was taken on the morning of Monday, October 10, 2012 just before Flynn and I went into the school’s office to speak to the principal. We did not have an appointment. We stated that we had noticed the sign, and as concerned citizens, wanted to file a complaint.

The receptionist was rude and dismissive. When we tried to give her a letter we had written over the weekend, she handed it back to us saying that the principal was already aware because some people had already written. “Besides,” she said, “there is nothing wrong with the BSA sign.”

We explained that the letter was not the same as the one she recalled and that the issue was far from being resolved.

Another office assistant who observed the stand-off approached and asked if she could help. We explained, once again, why we were there, and asked if the lawn area was part of the school property. The helpful assistant said that the BSA sign was situated on land that is maintained by the school district. She gave us the name of the

Unionville-Chadds Ford School District’s groundskeeper. She also told us where his office was located, and smiled as we thanked her for being so helpful.

As we left the office, we made sure to take note of all posters and flyers hanging on the bulletin boards in the office and the foyer of the school. We saw no BSA literature.

Before Flynn and I made our way to the district office, we drove by each school to check for BSA recruitment signs. BSA’s recruitment efforts always take place within the first month of the start of the school year (late September or early October). Finding no BSA signs in front of any other Unionville-Chadds Ford schools, we arrived at the district office prepared to meet with the supervisor of buildings and grounds services, **Rick Hostetler**.

Hostetler was not in his office, but his assistant met with us in the waiting area. She was pleasant and attentive. She was genuinely concerned when we explained that we have evidence that BSA discriminates against gays, nontheists, and the disabled. Her facial expressions led us to believe that she was sympathetic to our request that the BSA sign be removed. We gave her papers and asked that Hostetler disallow BSA signs from being displayed on school grounds.

That same night, I received a call from the Unionville-Chadds Ford school superintendent, **John C. Sanville**. Sanville treated my concerns with great sincerity. I requested that the sign be removed and asked whether BSA troops that meet in the school district pay rent. Sanville told me that the rental information can be provided if I would submit a “Right to Know” request. I immediately wrote the request and sent it to him via email.

The next day, Flynn drove by the elementary school and the sign was gone! We never heard back from Hostetler. Within a few day, however, Sanville acknowledge my email asking for BSA rental information. His letter of October 12th stated that my request for BSA rental records was being

reviewed. I was also promised a response to my inquiry no later than November 15th. Readers will be updated in the next publication of the *Freethought News* (planned for the January/February 2013 issue).

I am concerned that I will be charged “applicable fees” to process my Right to Know request. I asked for records dating back to the year 2000 when BSA officially declared itself a “private” youth organization.

Donations earmarked for this project would be greatly appreciated. Funding of this research and activism is tax-deductible. Please donate to FS today. Please see the last page of this newsletter for donation details. □



September 2012: A Busy Month for FS President!

by Margaret Downey

I love representing the Freethought Society (FS) in as many venues as possible. Now that FS is a national nonprofit organization, it is important to outreach around the nation, explain FS goals and provide literature to interested future supporters. This is why I try to accept all speaking opportunities that come my way. Over the last few years, my speaking schedule has kept me so busy that I did not have time to report them in the pages of this newsletter. I have represented FS in the following areas:

Boston, Massachusetts
Sacramento and Los Angeles, California
Arlington, Virginia
Washington, D.C.
New Orleans, Louisiana
Houston, Texas
Philadelphia and Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

All of my appearances have been rewarding, but not altogether stress free. I take a lot of time to write a speech, develop a PowerPoint slide show and design appropriate literature to give to attendees. The investment of time always pays off in that many people sign up to receive the FS newsletter and needed donations come our way.

Presentation topics have included secular holidays and life celebrations, death, altruism, superstitions, discrimination at the hands of the Boy Scouts of America, and the benefits of sharing journey stories.

My September 2012 speaking engagements were particularly interesting subject matters and venues, so I am highlighting them in this report to supporters of FS.

Every Labor Day Weekend for the last four years, I have been an invited guest/speaker at DragonCon. DragonCon is the world's largest science fiction/fantasy convention held in the United States. The event draws over 50,000 attendees into the downtown area of Atlanta, Georgia.

In 2011, I began planning the very first Skeptic DragonCon parade entry. Working closely with Atlanta resident and skeptic podcaster **Derek Colanduno** we set up a Facebook page and Yahoo Chat Group designed specifically to develop interest within the Skeptic community to participate in the parade. The parade is viewed by over 40,000 people and is covered by local and national media. About 3,500 people march in the parade. Please use the following links below to join the groups mentioned above and to view photos:

Skeptic DragonCon Parade Entry Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/291214834227560/>

Skeptic DragonCon Parade Entry Yahoo Chat Group:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/skeptrack_parade/

It was decided that Skeptics would best represent "investigation" of claims of the paranormal by asking that each parade participant carry a magnifying glass. A dragon holding a magnifying glass is the official logo for the DragonCon Skeptic track (a series of lectures and events that take place in one particular location throughout the weekend). Because I am an invited guest and volunteer assistant to Colanduno, I am able to place complimentary FS literature on a table in the Skeptic track room. Many people from the DragonCon venue have become FS supporters over the years.

Shortly after returning from DragonCon, I participated as a panelist in an event to highlight to work and life of **Paul Kurtz**. The event entitled "What Would Paul Kurtz Say?" was sponsored by the Washington Area Secular Humanist Maryland chapter. It was held on Saturday, September 8th at the Wheaton Regional Public Library.

Sadly, Kurtz died on October 20, 2012 at the age of 86. Kurtz is pictured at right.

Kurtz was the founder of the Center For Inquiry, the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, and the Council for Secular Humanism. As a philosopher, activist, and author, Kurtz always had much to say.



I opened my portion of the panel saying that I was "not comfortable trying to speculate what Kurtz would say." Instead I had carefully researched and printed Kurtz quotations to have on hand as I participated in the panel. I organized the quotations into subjects that I thought would most likely be discussed that day. The panel was comprised of **Edd Doerr, Nathan Bupp, Stuart Jordan** and **Gary Berg-Cross**. The entire session was filmed and it will be available for viewing soon.

In 1999, Kurtz trained me to become a certified Secular Officiant. I credit him for encouraging me to create my business *Secular Celebrations* in 2001. His work was an inspiration to many.

Kurtz created the skeptics' magazine *Skeptical Inquirer*, and the secular humanist magazine *Free Inquiry*. He also founded the publishing company Prometheus Books. In 2007, Kurtz instructed Prometheus Books to send FS color copies of all of his books in order to support the very first *Tree of Knowledge*. Each year that *The Tree of Knowledge* was on display, Kurtz sent a monetary donation showing his endorsement of this secular winter holiday symbol. There would not

have been a *Tree of Knowledge* without the help of Kurtz.

A few years ago, Kurtz invited me to participate in the first board meeting of the Institute for Science and Human Values (ISHV), and I supported his new endeavor. ISHV is now fully operating as a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational organization. FS will include the hosting of representatives from ISHV as featured speakers soon.

On September 15, I was pleased to be an invited guest to the 134th birthday celebration of **Periyar Erode Venkata Ramaswami** in Maryland. He was a politician, businessman, social activist, and atheist leader in India. Periyar said:

*There is no God. There is no God.
There is no God at all.
He who invented God is a fool.
He who propagates God is a scoundrel.
He who worships God is a barbarian.*

During the celebration, some speakers compared Periyar to **Robert Green Ingersoll**; others think his form of atheist activism was more like the educational tactics used by **Madalyn Murray O’Hair**. The question is not settled.

At the end of the celebration, I left with many new friends, developed an appreciation of the Periyar legacy, and had a tummy full of wonderful Indian food. I hope that the atheist community from India will work closely with FS as the goals of each group are very similar. We strive to enlighten, educate and inspire. Plans are being made for co-events that will highlight our mutual goals of ending unfounded discrimination.

September activities concluded with a collaboration between FS and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia (EHSP) to co-host **Herb Silverman** as a speaker on September 28th.

Silverman delivered a passionate yet humorous speech, and his book, *Candidate Without a Prayer*, was sold at a discounted price. Not only did Silverman autograph his book, he also placed his official Notary Public stamp above his signature. The right to use such a stamp was a hard fought battle for Silverman. The hard cover book sells for \$22.95. The Kindle edition sells for \$9.99 through Amazon.com.

EHSP and FS are planning many more cooperative endeavors for 2013 beginning with a January 28, 2013 event at 7:00 PM highlighted on the 2012/2013 events page of this newsletter. □

A Few September 2012 Event Photos



Above is a photo of the Skeptic DragonCon parade entry including the banner that was carried by “skeptic lab technicians.” We were proud to also host “The Amazing Randi” as a special guest. **James Randi** (above right photo) rode in a convertible sports car just behind the banner.

The photo at right was taken at the conclusion of the Periyar birthday celebration.



The 2013 “Essence of Carl Sagan” Essay Presentation



Nick Sagan (son) and Ann Druyan (widow) cordially invite you to participate in a 2013 “Essence of Carl Sagan” essay presentation to be held during the 2013 DragonCon Skeptrack (Labor Day Weekend in Atlanta, Georgia).



Write your own Sagan-like essay or deliver a Sagan classic at this very special event. All participants will receive a “Certificate of Participation” and prizes will be given to outstanding performances. Enter and participate in the fun. You pick your favorite Sagan topic. Need some inspiration? Below are a few example ideas:

1. The Humorous Sagan
2. Sagan the Skeptic
3. Sagan’s Space
4. If Sagan Were a Woman
5. Sagan as a Steam Punker
6. Sagan the Educator
7. Sagan Star Power
8. Sagan the Citizen
9. Sagan the Activist
10. The Carl Sagan Legacy
11. A 22nd Century View of Sagan
12. My Own Expression of Sagan

Participants are encouraged to appear in costume.

Bring your own props, PowerPoint slides and/or music. The entire stage will be yours for a full 5 minutes.

All participants must be a paid DragonCon member. Register to attend the 2013 DragonCon at:

Dragoncon.org/members.php

To register as a participant for the Sagan event and to receive regular updates regarding this exciting 2013 event, send email and other contact information to the Event Coordinator:

Margaret Downey
Margaret@FtSociety.org

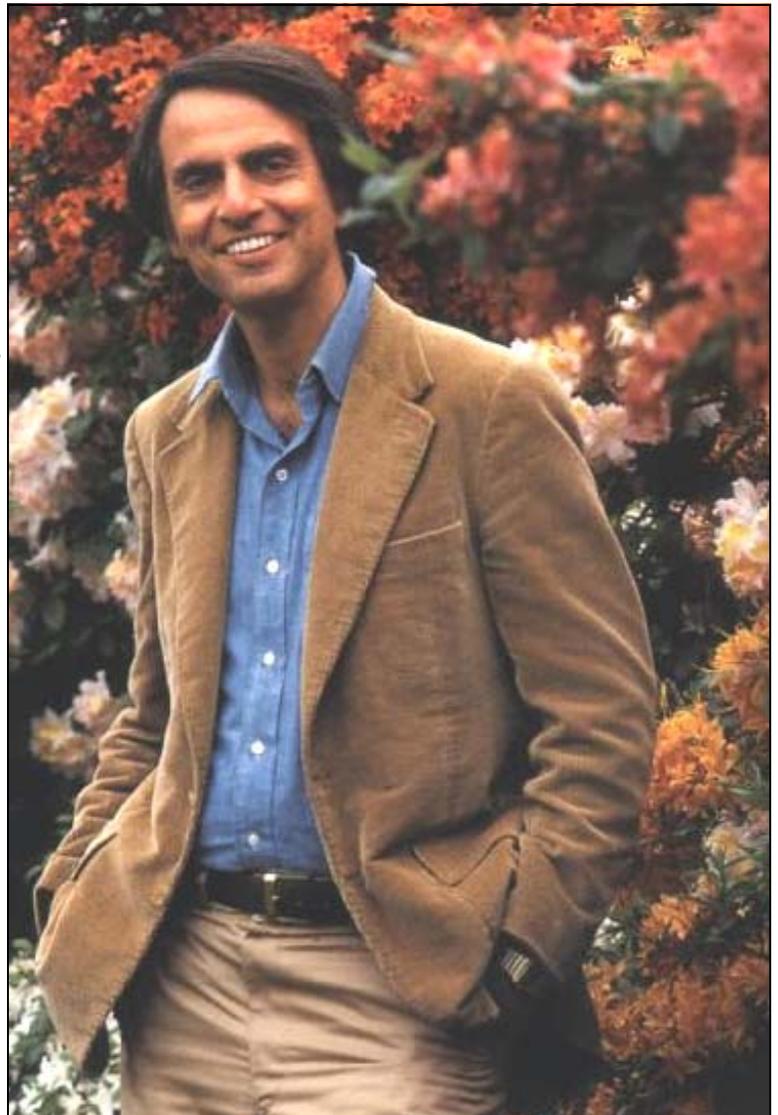
Please see the many video links that can be found on the Internet to learn more about the Carl Sagan way of communicating.

Questions? Call Downey at:

(610) 793-2737 or (610) 357-9432

Visit, like and join “The Essence of Carl Sagan Essay Contest” Facebook page:

<http://www.Facebook.com/groups/162516907165415/>



We want The Tree of Knowledge on display!

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012 four supporters of the Freethought Society (FS) attended the Chester County Commissioners' Sunshine Meeting. There are 3 Commissioners: **Ryan Costello** (R), **Kathy Cozzone** (D), and **Terence Farrell** (R) who have control over the Chester County Courthouse lawn during the winter holidays. FS supporters made an appeal to change the Commissioners' decision to exclude a nontheist symbol from the public display area. A video of the presentations can be seen at the following link: <http://www.chesco.org/chesco/cwp/view.asp?a=1511&q=604985>

At the above link, click on the date of October 9, 2012, press the camera symbol and see the public comment segment. FS spokespersons appear at the 1 hour, 55 minutes and 30 seconds mark in the video.

Reprinted below are the presentations of **Margaret Downey**, **Dr. Sam Ilangovan** and **Dr. Glen Loev**.

Margaret Downey's Presentation:

Good morning Commissioners and fellow citizens. My name is Margaret Downey. I am here to represent the non-theist community as the president of the Freethought Society.

Last year, I provided you, the Commissioners, with documentation demonstrating that *The Tree of Knowledge* had become a widely anticipated and valued local tradition.

In 2011, as well as in 2010, I asked that nontheists be allowed to participate in the celebration of the winter season by displaying our own symbol, *The Tree of Knowledge*. *The Tree of Knowledge* is a widely-recognized secular symbol celebrating education and the written word. It exemplifies our vision of promoting education, reading and understanding.

In 2007, 2008 and 2009, *The Tree of Knowledge* drew visitors from around the world to West Chester, Pennsylvania. In 2010 and 2011, Chester County Commissioners denied nontheists a place on the grounds of the Chester County Courthouse, saying that as government officials only they could determine which display was appropriate and which display was not. The Freethought Society's request to display *The Tree of Knowledge* was dismissed as if the nontheist community did not matter. We were treated like second-class citizens. Our freedom of expression was denied in 2010 and 2011 and the exclusion decision gave a nod of approval to those who discriminate against us.

Hatred against the nontheist community comes from disrespect and misunderstanding. We, therefore, once again, ask to be included in the winter holiday community tradition of displaying symbols on the lawn of the Chester County Courthouse.

We ask to be treated equally with the religious community and we request that you allow nontheists to use a portion of the Chester County Courthouse grounds so that this community moves toward acceptance and understanding. The grounds, after all, are intended to represent "We the people," not just you the Commissioners.

Freethought Society supporters will happily donate time and resources to deliver, install, decorate and maintain *The Tree of Knowledge* during the 2012 holiday season. As our elected officials, please encourage minority participation and recognize the diversity of the community by accepting *The Tree of Knowledge* during the 2012 holiday season and for years to come.

Chester County Commissioners have a unique opportunity to be leaders of tolerance and acceptance. You can set a great example to local citizenry and other townships by welcoming

a symbol of nontheism on the grounds of the Chester County Courthouse.

Nontheists want and need a place to unite and celebrate with their fellow citizens. We want our children to know what we stand for, to hear our stories, to learn about our heroes and to know that they are a part of a progressive and accepting community.

In 2011, I provided a list of supporters who signed a petition requesting that the nontheist symbol be included with other winter holiday displays. This year, a few supporters of *The Tree of Knowledge* are here to address this issue in person. Dr. Glen Loev is here to represent the secular Jewish community and Dr. Sam Ilangovan is here to represent the Indian nontheist community, all of whom are citizens of this great country.

Dr. Sam Ilangovan's Presentation:

Good morning Commissioners and fellow citizens. I am Sam Ilangovan, a medical doctor. In my field, knowledge is the most important thing.

Scientific knowledge is the backbone of modern medicine and its miracles. Several scientists devote their entire life so a step forward will come to modern medicine. Just two days ago, the Nobel Prize was awarded to two scientists who worked on stem cell research.

We all know that life, all life, including human life, starts with a single cell. They worked on a single cell to clone a frog and then a sheep. Some of you may not agree with this type of science. When this type of research leads to having kidneys, a liver and a heart available for transplantation, however, people in need are grateful.

What many people do not understand is that there are scientists, doctors and Nobel Laureates who are agnostics or atheists. If you Google the subject of famous agnostics and atheists, you will be amazed. You will see Mark Twain, George Bernard Shaw, R. L. Stevenson, Ernest Hemingway, Albert Einstein, Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, amongst many others.

I come from India, which you all know is a very religious country. In fact, there are several Gods, altogether 33 million of them. Some Gods are big, some are small. But there are also a lot of atheists in India. In fact, atheist governments rule two or three States in India. A great humanist, Periyar E. V. Ramaswami, was an ardent atheist and his statues are displayed in many towns in India. He fought for self-respect, women's rights and against the caste system until he was 95

years old. A postage stamp has been printed honoring him. In India, we respect brilliant atheists such as he.

We are humanists working for the well-being and happiness of every one through the application of knowledge. Knowledge has brought us improvements in all walks of life. Look at this iPhone. This invention has brought so much information to the palm of our hand.

Please do not block *The Tree of Knowledge* during the 2012 winter holiday season. Let it show our point of view. We want people to form their own opinions.

Thank you for your time and patience.

Dr. Glen Loev's Presentation:

My name is Dr. Glen Loev. I am here as a member of the Board of Directors of Shir Shalom, one of 6 major secular Jewish organizations in the Delaware Valley. I would like to express our agreement with, and support for, the inclusion of *The Tree of Knowledge* in winter holiday displays on the grounds of the Chester County courthouse in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Over the years, winter holiday displays on the courthouse grounds have included a menorah, a crèche, signs wishing passers-by "Merry Christmas" and a Christmas tree decorated with lights and brightly-colored ornaments. We are fine with all of these winter holiday displays on public property. Actually, we would like to see them expanded, with *more* diversity and inclusion. Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim religious communities all have winter holidays, as do many in the African American community with their secular celebration of Kwanzaa. In keeping with the important principle of freedom of expression, we contend that these groups *and* nontheists should, space permitting, also be permitted equal access to place a symbol of *their choosing* in the Free Speech Zones of public property.

As per the 1984 Supreme Court decision *Lynch vs. Donnelly*, religious displays on public grounds are permitted as long as they are balanced by the inclusion of a secular display. For 3 years — 2007, 2008, and 2009 local secular residents were permitted to place *The Tree of Knowledge* on the lawn of the Chester County Courthouse in the area designated for other winter holiday displays.

The Tree of Knowledge is a beautiful symbol developed by the nontheist community, and is used in towns, cities, and in private homes nationwide. The tree is simply an evergreen decorated with laminated book covers representing a wide range of subjects, including science, history, humor, philosophy, critical thinking, religion, skepticism, and much more.

In 2010 and 2011, however, per-

mission to place a *Tree of Knowledge* among the winter holiday displays was denied. Instead, the secular inclusion requirement was fulfilled with a plastic Santa Claus, a wire-lit choo-choo train, and plastic candy canes. While this collection is apparently sufficient to satisfy *minimal legal* obligations of *Lynch vs. Donnelly*, it does not at all satisfy the secular community; I hope you can appreciate why we would consider such a childish display an unsatisfactory symbol for nontheists.

Jews, secular *and* religious, are particularly sensitive to the depth and magnitude of hurt that bigotry and irrational discrimination can bring — be it on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or nationality. The secular Jewish community stands together with other nontheist and free-thought individuals and groups in this petition for inclusion.

There is ample space on the grounds of the Chester County Courthouse for *The Tree of Knowledge*. Since it takes up much less room than the Santa, choo-choo train, and candy canes, we see no good reason for *The Tree of Knowledge* to be banned from the area and replaced with those cute but meaningless displays.

Commissioners, perhaps you can help us. We have been trying to come up with the answer to a question, without success. If you can answer it, we will be very appreciative: Why, after 3 years of successful, peaceful *Tree of Knowledge* displays, was permission revoked?

My presumption is that the decision was taken in response to complaints of some residents and/or members of the clergy. But why would they object? Could it be concern that adherents of religious doctrine might be seduced away from their faith by the siren song of a rational worldview? If so, this is an unfair reason to discriminate against the nontheist minority. We are, however, hard-pressed to come up with any other explanation and will appreciate your response.

Religious communities are permitted to select and install symbols of their choosing. The secular community simply requests that same opportunity, nothing more.

Please note that *The Tree of Knowledge* is not a contradiction to, or in competition with religious sensitivities. It is a symbol that simply promotes knowledge, education, reading, and exposure to a wide range of ideas. Does anyone here oppose learning and expanding one's horizons? Does anyone here oppose reading? I would love it if my kids read more!

In conclusion, I request that you consider our petition from a standpoint of fairness and inclusivity, and allow *The Tree of Knowledge* to join other holiday symbols on the West Chester courthouse grounds this coming winter holiday season. □

Pictured below (left to right) are **Glen Loev, Margaret Downey, Sam Ilangovan** and **Sally Flynn**. The group enjoyed a pleasant lunch after speaking at the Chester County Commissioners' Sunshine Meeting on behalf of the Freethought Society's *The Tree of Knowledge* display. Loev, Downey and Ilangovan spoke during the public comment section. Flynn did not speak, but attended the meeting to show her support.



Freethinkers Prepared to Help Others

by Margaret Downey

As soon as Hurricane Sandy became news, **Paul Cooper**, a resident of Houston, Texas began planning a storm relief effort. Cooper wanted to assist those hardest hit by the storm. He remembered meeting me when I delivered a presentation about altruism at the 2011 Texas Freethought Convention. He called me and asked if the Freethought Society's (FS) Helping Hands Committee could help him conduct a donation drive. During that telephone conversation we decided that it would be best to combine efforts of several freethought organizations. Within a few days we teamed with [The United Coalition of Reason](#) (UnitedCoR) through **Fred Edwords** and [Volunteers Beyond Belief](#) (VBB) through **Noelle George**.

As part of this effort, FS vice-president, **Carol Everhart Roper** set up a donations page at the FS website. There are three ways to designate how a donation can be used. A donor can designate funding for Haiti, the United States or for either area (general fund). Please see:

www.FtSociety.org/2012/10/30/hurricane-sandy-emergency-relief-fund/

Cooper immediately created a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/hurricanesandyemergencyrelieffund>) and filmed a plea for funds. See:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps4istXR1OY>

Below is a transcript of Cooper's video message:

Hello Freethinkers! My name is Paul Cooper, and I am a member of the Texas Freethought Convention.

As you know, Hurricane Sandy has ravaged the east coast of the United States and islands in the Caribbean. Millions of people are without power, and many have lost everything they own. The effects of this storm present our secular community with the opportunity to come together to help those affected by this natural disaster.

That's where you come in. As freethinkers, we don't pray and hope that some supernatural power will intervene and help those in need. After all, what kind of supernatural power would cause this kind of devastation then turn around and help those whom it had just hurt? Instead of praying, we act.

A group of nontheist organizations are putting together a relief fund to help those in our communities who have been displaced, hurt or otherwise adversely impacted by the storm.

The Texas Freethought Convention is working with the Freethought Society led by Margaret Downey to collect donations for this relief fund. The Freethought Society is a registered charitable organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Freethought Society registration certificate is available for your viewing at the TFC website.

Other organizations supporting this effort are the United Coalition of Reason led by Fred Edwords and American



Atheists led by David Silverman.

It would be great if all Freethought groups came together to help out.

Also affected by the storm are the Freethinkers of Haiti — the small struggling group of Haitian freethinkers who have managed to receive official recognition from the government of Haiti. They are in need of our help as well, because the island of Hispaniola was also ravaged by Hurricane Sandy on its way to the United States.

To donate, please visit the Texas Freethought Convention website at:

www.texasfreethoughtconvention.com

We will have links to donation sites posted at the Texas Freethought Convention Facebook page. See:

<http://www.facebook.com/HurricaneSandyEmergencyReliefFund>

We understand this message is not getting to the millions who are without power and access to the internet. If you are aware of anyone who needs help, please let us know at our Facebook site, or email us at:

texasfreethoughtconvention@gmail.com

Is an important time for our secular community to pull together to offer compassion, caring and assistance. I ask that you open your wallets and give to those in our communities who need it most as a result of the storm. You can donate any amount you want. Even a dollar can go a long way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Since 2001, FS has been recognized as a "charitable organization." This classification guarantees that all FS donations earmarked for charitable projects are recognized as tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

As with all charitable project in which FS is involved, 100% of donations for specific drives will be used to benefit those in need.

Those seeking aid are asked to complete an application at the following link and the same application can be used to nominate an individual or family who needs financial assistance:

www.texasfreethoughtconvention.com

A five member grant committee is set up to review each application. The situation was so dire in Haiti that the committee immediately sent \$1,000 to be distributed to the needy through *The Youth Movement for Freethought in Haiti* (aka *Mouvement de la Jeunesse pour la Liberté* or *MOJELIPH*). A report on their storm recovery endeavors will appear in upcoming editions of *The Freethought News*. □

Sharing My Free Thoughts With Others

by Roger Daniel Rizzo

I found the name of your organization in the rear section of the book entitled *The God Delusion* by **Richard Dawkins**. I was very moved by the book.

After investigating the Freethought Society in depth, I want to share with you my thoughts on some fundamental religious beliefs found in societies all over the world. As you read the following, I hope it will become obvious to you why I want to share these thoughts. Where I live, I am dismissed as an unacceptable radical.

My first thoughts relate to the supposedly “Holy Bible.” I have read the Bible through twice. The second time that I read it, I took notes. From my readings, I developed the following conclusions, ideas and questions.

1) That the vast, vast majority of Christians and anyone else who claims the Bible is completely accurate, has never read the Bible. At church services, they hear carefully chosen excerpts of the Bible from priests, pastors, ministers, etc. Not referred to in those services are all the supposedly true statements in the Bible that God *murdered* many people, sometimes tens of thousands of them at a time, for not respecting their father and mother, for not keeping holy the Sabbath day (whichever day that is supposed to be), using the lord’s name in vain, etc. How can God have acted this way in *direct contraction* to the dozens of versions of the Ten (or who knows how many) Commandments?

2) In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus supposedly said that faithful believers must *hate* their mothers and fathers, their children, and their friends so they can focus on loving the one true God. How can this be accurate?

3) Christians maintain that God is *all loving and all forgiving*, yet in the Bible God murdered many people for practices that have been done by people — some of which are not even prohibited in many of the societies in which they lived.

4) An even more nonsensical belief that Christians have is that *God created Hell* and sentences people who commit sins to burn in Hell forever. An all-loving, all-forgiving God supposedly has sentenced the overwhelming majority of persons who have ever lived on this Earth to be tortured forever in the burning flames of Hell. That does not sound all loving and all forgiving to me!

5) Organized religions supposedly maintain that only a very limited number of religious “holy persons” (almost exclusively white men) truly *understand the Bible*. That appears to make absolutely no sense. Organized religions teach that the Bible instructs humanity how God supposedly wants them to live. If that is true, then why is the Bible not understandable by *all* people, no matter what their age, gender, race, nationality, and on and on? Why is it that only a few individuals, specially selected by organized religions,

understand the Bible, which is and was supposed to apply to all people in the world over the history of humanity?

6) Are all people who lived on Earth *before* Jesus’ life or the publication and circulation of the Bible in Hell, suffering forever? Many Christians believe that, indirectly. How can that make any sense?

7) Why is it that the Bible never says in *clear, understandable language* that Jesus is God?

8) The New Testament was not even written until many decades after Jesus’ death. So even if the Bible is accurate (which I do not believe), what did Jesus do on Earth that makes him so incredibly unique and “*all powerful*” to be considered by humanity to be God.

9) How can the Bible be absolutely correct if there are thousands of different *versions* of the Bible? Which *version* is absolutely correct?

The list of problems I have with the Bible goes on almost endlessly.

My next thoughts have to do with *organized religions*. These are based upon my education, my understanding of human history, my observations during my travels around the world, and my common sense. The following seem apparent to me:

1) That organized religions are primarily responsible for causing most of the *wars* on this planet;

2) That organized religions have manipulated mankind into donating to them, for no *legitimate reasons*, an overwhelming amount of the riches of the world since the beginning of these religions.

3) That organized religions attempt to cause their believers to act in certain ways or risk not going to *Heaven* (which I also do not believe in).

4) Since their very inception, organized religions have habitually tried to control mankind’s actions by ominously emphasizing that if their teachings are not followed persons will be *tortured* in blazing flames forever, or, alternatively, if persons do act accordingly with religious teachings then they will be awarded with eternal *ecstasy*. I am shocked that people believe these threats, but huge numbers of individuals do.

I could continue, but I do not want to overwhelm readers. It is just nice to be able to share my thoughts and not to be branded a *heretic*.

(More about the author on the next page.)

OVERCOMING ALL CHALLENGES



AN
ALMOST



FATAL
MIRACLE

ROGER DANIEL RIZZO

About the author:

Roger Daniel Rizzo wrote his autobiography entitled *Overcoming All Challenges* in 2008. It was published on the Internet in September 2012. The book is almost 300 pages long. The cost is only \$1.95. To order go to:

<https://secure.mybookorders.com/order/roger-rizzo>

Rizzo wrote the book to inspire readers to overcome the challenges that they face in their own lives. It costs so little because he wanted to inspire a very large number of people — whether they have religious beliefs or not. That is immaterial to the theme of his book.

In the book, Rizzo enumerates the very serious challenges he has overcome in his life, including: obtaining three different college degrees; traveling to approximately ninety different countries in the world; recovering from a horrible, almost fatal accident; having a multitude of injuries from the accident, including sustaining severe, traumatic brain injury; being in a coma for six weeks and a human vegetable for 5 1/2 months; and performing over 20,000 hours of volunteer work over the last decade; and more. Rizzo's story of overcoming major challenges, can inspire readers to overcome their own challenges — if they have the determination to do so.

From 2001 to 2006, Rizzo lived in Hawaii. He did volunteer work there for seventeen different organizations. The Governor of Hawaii heard about all his volunteer work and appointed Rizzo to be a Hawaii Civil Rights Commissioner. Rizzo was also a Federal judge in Hawaii. □

The Delaware Valley Chapter
of
Americans United
for Separation of Church & State
Board of Directors
Invite You To a
GALA WINTER CONCERT
Featuring Classical Pianist
LAURENT LEVY



Saturday, December 1, 2012 **7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**
The Philadelphia Ethical Society Building
1906 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia 19103
Wine and cheese will be served following the performance.

Admission \$20

Discounted parking at two locations:

Parkway Garage (1845 Walnut Street) or E-Z Park (2101 Chestnut Street)

For details, visit the Delaware Valley Americans United's (DVAU) site at www.dvau.org

Proceeds benefit DVCAU.

Tickets may be purchased at the door. Email info@dvau.org for details.

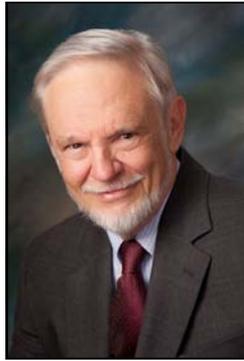
The Freethought Society's (FS)

2012 and 2013 Four-Month Activities Calendar

November 11

On Sunday, **November 11, 2012** FS welcomes **Stuart Jordan** at the Free Library of Philadelphia (**1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**). His speech, "Toward a Better Human Future," will assess how well enlightenment goals have been realized today in the United States and globally. Jordan will welcome dialogue with the audience, and the room being used is conducive for such interaction. Please meet at **2:00 PM** in the **Skyline Room** located on the fourth floor of the library.

Jordan is a retired senior staff scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and is currently president and board member of the Institute for Science and Human Values (ISHV). He holds a Doctorate in physics and astrophysics and is a Rhodes scholar. His book, *The Enlightenment Vision — Science, Reason, and the Promise of a Better Future* is due to be published at end of this year.



December 1

FS continues to demand the right to display a *Tree of Knowledge* on the grounds of the Chester County Courthouse.

A 2012 display request will likely be denied, therefore supporters must be prepared to conduct a "Human *Tree of Knowledge*" event/protest rally. The event/protest rally schedule will include the distribution of ornaments and participants will be invited to say a few words about how much certain books mean to them. Please plan to participate on **Saturday, December 1, 2012** at the Chester County Courthouse located at the corner of High and Market Streets (**2 North High Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania**). The event will start at **3:00 PM** and will include speeches, singing, photo opportunities and a press conference.

Please email FS to volunteer (volunteers@FtSociety.org) for one of many jobs that need to be done ahead of time (new ornaments, press releases, media training, etc.).

Should the FS petition to include *The Tree of Knowledge* in the 2012 display be approved, an actual tree will be decorated. FS supporters will be notified by email, and/or a notice will be posted on the Freethought Society listserv and website.

At 5:30 PM, a post-event dinner (Dutch Treat) will take place at **Kildare's Irish Pub**, located at 18 West Gay Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 19380. The restaurant is located just one block from the Chester County Courthouse. For directions to the restaurant call, (610) 431-0770.

To reserve dinner seats, please call the FS office at (610) 793-2737 by November 28, 2012.

December 2

Please attend a *Tree of Knowledge* decorating holiday event scheduled to take place on **Sunday, December 2, 2012** at the [Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia](#) (EHSP), located at **1906 South Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**.



The event will begin with an **11:00 AM** Sunday platform speech entitled, "The Wall for All: Protecting the Integrity of Both State and Religion," by **Hugh Taft-Morales**.

Taft-Morales is the leader of EHSP. He notes that "Everyone should support a high wall of separation between government and religion. As Thomas Jefferson said, this wall is 'essential in a free society.' It protects the rights of citizens of religious and nontheist perspectives. As zealots try to deconstruct this wall brick by brick, we must speak out more forcefully against those who distort its real purpose: To maintain the secular nature of the state so it better serves believers and nonbelievers alike."

Please attend the Taft-Morales presentation to learn more about what you can do to uphold the Jeffersonian Wall of Separation between religion and government.

After the presentation, a 10' tall *Tree of Knowledge* will be decorated and placed on display in the foyer of the Ethical Society Building. Refreshments will be served.

January 28

FS and EHSP continue a commitment to co-host quality speakers. We are pleased to announce **Katherine Stewart** as the speaker for **Monday, January 28, 2013**.

Stewart's presentation is based on her popular book, *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children*.



The presentation will take place at **7:00 PM** at the [Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia](#) (**1906 South Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**). Stewart exposes a well-funded, highly coordinated effort by Christian Nationalists to use public schools to advance a fundamentalist agenda.

Stewart is an investigative journalist and author. She began her career working for the *Village Voice*, *Newsweek International*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Marie Claire*. Stewart has also written for *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Beast*, *Bloomberg View*, and *Religion Dispatches*.

A Musical Road to Maturity and Humanism

Roy V. Jackson

I am looking at humanism through the prism of history. To strip it of much of the confusion and ambiguity with which various intellectual movements have imbued it over time. Considering the vast cultural transformations that have swept our history from ancient Egypt to the European Union, a credible view of humanism should reflect something inherent in the potential of the human mind to learn and grow.

Looking back at my own history, I remember a continuing passion for learning as I lived through stages of my life in a growing, rich and comfortable society — one created by the efforts of its people to build on the past without any apparent evidence of supernatural interference. That was when I learned about **Abraham Maslow's** hierarchy of needs that drive the stages of those people's lives as well as mine — the need for basic survival in infancy, security in childhood, togetherness in adolescence and esteem in adulthood, as well as promising further growth in maturity.

But what explained the stages in the history of Western civilization that seemed to reflect the potential of rational thought and the human mind to learn and grow through similar stages? Ancient Egypt built a civilization out of tribal chaos. Greece and Rome gave their empires military security in a barbarian world. England and America brought their people together to replace authoritarian rule with self-government.

While I was building my career as an international patent attorney in the 1960s, I found the explanation went back almost two thousand years to **St. Augustine**, who defined history as the education of the human race in the same stages as human lives, a process with a strong flavor of humanism.

In the 60s, popular music seemed to be expressing change. Changes towards a new stage that rejected the materialistic values and proprieties of the times. It was hard to miss **Bob Dylan's** countercultural call in these lines:

*Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'*

The fact that the future was announced in music by the younger generation pointed to the same appeal that music itself has had for centuries in the growing human mind. Concern with the lessons of the past as a guide for the future led to an openness expressed in **Paul McCartney's** song, *Help*, which includes:



*I'm not so self-assured
Now I find I've changed my mind
and opened up the doors*

I also realized that there is a human impulse to make a sad song better. McCartney expressed it best in his song *Hey Jude*. It was the driving force in the monumental movement, one step at a time, from the gods on Olympus to our democratic civilization.

For me, those songs were a wake-up call for a social transformation to a new stage that would be next in Maslow's hierarchy — his life-enhancing need for a self-actualizing maturity stage to replace the obsolete need for esteem by more and more wealth creation. The transformation that exploded in the counterculture also opened my mind to a

new, more mature world, which seemed to be a humanistic move to value relationships with people instead of their acquisition of things.

The Beatles came to Greenwich Village before I had even heard of humanism, but what I would like to call humanism was beautifully expressed by the Beatles in *Baby You're a Rich Man*. The following lyrics speak beautifully of humanism:

*How does it feel to be one of the beautiful people?
Now that you know who you are,
what do you want to be?*

For me, the answer is: A humanist, rich or not.

About the author:

Roy V. Jackson is 94 years old. He was reared in the mountains of British Columbia. Jackson obtained degrees in chemistry and civil law from universities of British Columbia and McGill. Jackson has been a researcher, an infantry instructor, and worked for DuPont, Johnson & Johnson and Hercules.

While living in Greenwich Village, during the 60s and 70s, he worked with the Council of Episcopal Diocese of New York, the inter-parish Council of Midtown in Manhattan, and the World Future Society.

Jackson retired in 1994 and became an instructor teaching courses in Academy of Lifelong Learning at the University of Delaware. His book, *Growing up in History: A Memoir of Western Civilization* (ISBN: 9781432749149) is available through Amazon and at Barnes and Noble bookstore locations.

General Supporter Donations

| | |
|---|-------|
| Charles H. Berry and Elizabeth W. Berry | \$68 |
| Carol Blanchard | \$40 |
| Patricia Butcheck | \$50 |
| Thomas Carol | \$30 |
| Loren Corley | \$60 |
| Betty Curzon | \$20 |
| Margaret Downey | \$500 |
| Jonathan Heddleston | \$50 |
| Sheryl Jordan | \$50 |
| Glen Loev | \$60 |
| Marshall Martin | \$575 |
| Angela F. Mattke | \$500 |

Jump into the Jean Pool

The Freethought Society (FS) is proud to continue the “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 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 your family, friends and neighbors to donate to this effort. The next opportunity for a jean donation is the November 11th FS meeting at the Philadelphia Free Library.

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

Sole Searching

FS is pleased to continue another project 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 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 and will be greatly appreciated.



Helping Hands Committee 2012 Winter Project

by Margaret Downey

The Freethought Society’s (FS) Helping Hands Committee 2012 Winter project will be to provide needed items to Safe Harbor, a shelter in Chester County.

Safe Harbor is located at 20 North Matlack Street in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The facility has been open for fifteen years. During my frequent visits to the facility, I have never noticed religious literature or symbols. I had also specifically asked if the facility was secular or religious. I was pleased with the answer that not only was there no religious testing for services, the facility does not promote, endorse or support any particular religious belief. All visitors are welcome. Safe Harbor is a secular facility.

There are many jobs to do at Safe Harbor. Volunteers are needed for laundry duty, health advocacy (scheduling doctor appointments, providing transportation to doctors and hospitals, etc.), cleaning, and maintenance of the facility. Please visit www.safeharborofgwc.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities. Plans are in the making for an FS volunteer day at Safe Harbor. Please watch the newsletter for details.

By December 20, 2012, FS would like to provide some of the following items needed at Safe Harbor:

Cleaning Supplies

(Windex, bleach, toilet bowl cleaner, Clorox wipes, all-purpose spray cleaner, dish detergent, Brillo pads, Magic Erasers, cleaning rags)

Women’s Needs

(panties, sports bras, socks, slippers, feminine hygiene products, pajama pants)

Personal Care Items

(deodorant, razors, shaving cream, Tylenol/Advil, cold medicine, cough drops/lozenges)

Food Items

(individual snack packs, coffee, creamer, cups, sugar/sugar substitute packets, powdered juice mix, iced tea mix)

Men’s Needs

(boxers, undershirts, socks, hooded sweatshirts, sweat pants, pajama pants)

Miscellaneous

(bus tokens, paper towels and napkins, tote bags, duffle bags, backpacks, hats, scarves, gloves)

Donations can be given to FS supporters **Sally Flynn**, **Carol Everhart Roper**, **Tracy McPherson** and/or me at any FS meeting. The items will be delivered to Safe Harbor in time to be a specific Winter Solstice gift. A tax-deduction receipt will be provided to donors requesting one.

Spend Seven Blissful Days in Paradise

Relax in Caribbean luxury on the gorgeous island of St Croix
and support the Freethought Society by having fun!



Available once a year for
the 11th week of the year,
the second week in March.



1 bedroom condo
all amenities
100 feet to the beach
10 feet to the pool

Snorkeling, swimming, scuba, minutes to golf

Questions? Email StCroix@ftsociety.org

The Freethought Society (FS) promotes freedom of thought, expression and choice. FS also advocates separation of religion and government. FS publishes a newsletter every other month, *The Freethought Society News*. The newsletter 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 many locations across the nation, with emphasis in the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey. FS activities and services depend on the financial contributions of supporters. 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 (EIN Number: 23-2738574). Please donate generously.

Yes! I want to:

- become a supporter of FS (Please enclose checks payable to the Freethought Society):
\$30 Individual Supporter **\$35** 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** \$____ (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 email a complimentary newsletter to potential supporters. Please provide contact information for anyone who might be interested in receiving an FS newsletter.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Use this same form to bid on the use of FS's St. Croix Cottage

FS's cottage in St. Croix is available for use the 11th week of each year. In 2013, the week offered will be March 16-23 (Saturday-Saturday). The yearly maintenance fee for the beachside cottage at Chenay Bay Beach Resort is \$900. The lowest bid FS can accept must meet that cost.

If you are interested in placing a bid on the use of this property, please return this form to the address below or bid via email at:

StCroix@FtSociety.org

The bid is for a one-week stay in cottage number 6 and does not include travel, rental car or food expenses. For additional information see:

www.FtSociety.org

Mail this form to:

Freethought Society, P.O. Box 242, Pocopson, PA 19366-0242 or email a bid to: StCroix@Ftsociety.org

