The 2021 Thomas Paine Day Celebration

Since 1995, the Freethought Society (FS) has celebrated Thomas Paine Day on June 8th — the date of his death. Past celebrations have included a parade featuring students from the Thomas Paine Elementary School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; a walking tour of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with speakers and musical presentations; several luncheons and dinners at The City Tavern in Old Town Philadelphia; and a dinner in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The worldwide COVID pandemic prevented any in-person celebrations this year, so the 2021 Thomas Paine Day took place on June 8th through Zoom. A recording of the online festivities can be seen at the following link: https://youtu.be/iAo3ifwZza8.

The program was co-sponsored by FS, the Thomas Paine National Historical Association (TPNHA), the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), the Center for Inquiry (CFI), and the American Humanist Association (AHA). The Zoom coordinator and co-host was Melissa Myers.

The program began with a 15-minute Thomas Paine-themed concert by songwriter and recording artist James Klueh. Most of Klueh’s original music is based on Paine’s poetry. Klueh presented Thomas Paine’s Do Good Blues, Bachelor’s Hall, and Liberty Tree.

Maryland Congressman Jamie Raskin provided a brilliant opening statement emphasizing Paine’s importance to the founding of the United States of America. Raskin considers Paine a hero of rational thinking and democratic civil rights and eloquently expressed his appreciation of Paine’s legacy.

Co-sponsor organizations welcomed everyone to the event. Mandisa Thomas represented AHA; Robyn Blumner represented CFI; Annie Laurie Gaylor represented FFRF; Margaret Downey represented FS; and Gary Berton represented TPNHA. During the welcome, all representatives talked about the associations they represented and provided favorite Paine quotations as examples of why the work of Paine should be recognized and honored.

A summary of the life and work of Paine was presented in sections by co-sponsor representatives:

1737 Birth - Arrival to Philadelphia in 1774
Mandisa Thomas (AHA)

1775 Revolutionary Writings and Inventions - 1790
Tom Flynn (CFI)

1791 Publication of The Rights of Man - 1794 The Age of Reason
Andrew Seidel (FFRF)

1794 Imprisonment - 1802 Return to the United States
Margaret Downey (FS)

1802 - 1809 Death
Gary Berton (TPNHA)

Post-Death Information
Melissa Myers (CFI)

Sculptor Zenos Frudakis showed the progress of the Paine statue project by broadcasting from his Glenside, Pennsylvania studio. Frudakis was proud to present a 7-foot-high clay statue. He provided information about the design process which involves researching and the collection of images. Frudakis also researched physical descriptions of Paine and the clothing styles he would have worn. The statue is a work in progress, but the project is in stage two of a
A four-stage plan. Pictured below is Frudakis working on the Paine statue. The photo was taken during the 2021 Thomas Paine Day Zoom event.

Fundraising efforts for the Paine statue project are taking place with the help of the co-sponsors of the 2021 Thomas Paine Day, as mentioned above, and the newly formed Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA). All donations are tax-deductible. Online donations are welcome at the following link: ThomasPaineMemorial.org/donation

Donation checks can be sent to:

Thomas Paine Memorial Association
PO Box 448
Madison WI 53701

The question-and-answer portion of the event was lively and educational. Questions included inquiries about the statue materials, current educational opportunities, TPNHA’s collected works project, Deism, books written by and about what Paine’s opinions would have been on current events, and much more.

During this time, Downey provided trivia about Paine and his friends Nicolas Bonneville and Marguerite Brazier Bonneville. Downey has portrayed Madame Bonneville many times to tell the life story of Paine.

Downey encouraged audience members to help present a Thomas Paine-themed assembly at any elementary school in the United States or abroad. A sixth-grade audience is perfect for the story elements and history lesson. Thanks to a $250 allowance from an anonymous donor, a Paine assembly is provided at no charge to the school. Please give assembly information and application to teachers and/or public school administrators in your area. These items are available at the below link:


During the assembly, Downey gives every child a piece of colonial paper money (reproduction). The gift provides a teaching moment about the colonial economic system, taxes, and merchandising.

The next Thomas Paine event will take place in January or February 2022. In many older documents, Paine’s date of birth is listed as January 29, 1837. In more recent documents, Paine’s birthday is listed as February 9, 1837. The date conflict arose with the differences between Julian and Gregorian calendar.

The calendar change arose from the realization that the correct figure for the number of days in a year is not 365.25 (365 days 6 hours) as assumed by the Julian calendar, but slightly less (365.242 days): the Julian calendar has too many leap years. Countries that adopted the Gregorian calendar after 1699 needed to skip the additional day for each subsequent new century that the Julian calendar had added since then. When the British Empire did so in 1752, the gap had grown to eleven days; when Russia did so (as its civil calendar) in 1918, thirteen days needed to be skipped.

Please watch for either a January 29th or February 9th 2022 Thomas Paine Birthday Zoom, live, or hybrid celebration announcement through this publication, on the FS Meetup page, and on the FS website.

Secular groups may co-sponsor the 2022 event by contributing $100. A co-sponsorship will give the group a part on the program, advertising opportunities, media coverage and a chance to play an integral part of a history-making endeavor — a Thomas Paine Statue in Washington, DC.

Please also mark your calendars to participate in a June 18-19, 2022 Thomas Paine Festival taking place at various locations in New Rochelle, New York, including the Thomas Paine Cottage (20 Sicard Avenue).

FS will be involved in the festival on various levels. To entertain adults and children at the cottage grounds, FS will supply a Thomas Paine cornhole game and prizes.

At the cottage, Downey will portray Madame Bonneville and throughout the day she will give impromptu talks about her character’s friendship with Paine and family’s residency in New Rochelle. At the Bonneville tent, FS will also provide Colonial-styled hats for photo opportunities.

Volunteers for the Thomas Paine 2022 Festival are needed. Please contact FS if you are available to help. If you can’t volunteer, please consider making a donation to FS for this effort, as paid assistants may be necessary. Below is FS contact information for donations or volunteering:

The Freethought Society
P. O. Box 242
Pocopson, PA 19366

Email:
volunteers@FtSociety.org
and
https://www.ftssociety.org/donate/
Pictured above left to right are Andrew Seidel representing FFRF, Gary Berton representing the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and Congressman Jamie Raskin. Seidel and Berton provided details of Paine's life during the Zoom event. Myers told the interesting story of what happened ten years after Paine's death. To learn about that and to hear Paine's entire life story, please see the recording of Thomas Paine Day 2021 at this link: https://youtu.be/iAo3ifwZza8

Pictured above left to right are Mandisa Thomas representing the American Humanist Association, Tom Flynn representing CFI, and Margaret Downey representing the Freethought Society (FS) as well as TPMA. Thomas and Flynn told parts of Paine's life story during the Zoom event. Downey did a welcome on behalf of FS and also conveyed various stories about Paine's life between the years of 1794-1802.

Pictured above left to right are Robyn Blumner representing the Center for Inquiry (CFI), Annie Laurie Gaylor representing the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and Congressman Jamie Raskin. Blumner and Gaylor welcomed everyone to the event, talked about their organizations, and provided their favorite Thomas Paine quotations. They also introduced themselves as members of the Executive Board of the newly formed Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA). Raskin’s opening words were stirring and inspiring. He emphasized the important role Paine played in the founding of the United States of America. Raskin is a supporter of the Thomas Paine statue project and looks forward to the day a statue is unveiled.

Pictured above left to right are Andrew Seidel representing FFRF, Gary Berton representing the Thomas Paine National Historical Association and TPMA, and Melissa Myers representing CFI. Seidel and Berton provided details of Paine’s life during the Zoom event. Myers told the interesting story of what happened ten years after Paine’s death. To learn about that and to hear Paine’s entire life story, please see the recording of Thomas Paine Day 2021 at this link: https://youtu.be/iAo3ifwZza8
I think most people identify more with a religious denomination than with a theology. People reflective enough to recognize they can no longer adhere to beliefs they grew up accepting can often justify to themselves why, nonetheless, they should remain part of a religious community.

They find numerous reasons not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Many have friends and family whom they don’t wish to hurt. It might be too painful to break openly from a religion just for not believing any of its most sacred doctrines. Humans want to be part of a community. Traditions and rituals often provide much of this. Some wish to actively participate in the good deeds of a religious fellowship and then try to moderate the conservative views of their more fundamentalist members.

Those of us who have broken openly from religious traditions often criticize the insincerity of those who believe as we do and yet remain part of a religious community. I think we should be careful about indiscriminately casting stones. I try to understand and respect the motives of some who choose religious hypocrisy for the sake of being part of a community they like.

Then there are religious people who refer to themselves as “spiritual,” though not necessarily god believers. Many atheists also claim to be spiritual. Such “spiritualists” find connections and meanings greater than themselves that do not include anything supernatural. They might refer to the universe with awe and wonder, as do I, but I am an unspiritual atheist. I prefer leaving spirituality to those who believe in invisible spirits in the sky, the more common meaning.

Similarly, in South Carolina where I live, many residents consider the Confederate flag to be a positive symbol for heritage, not hate. To me, and most of the rest of the world, that flag represents support for slavery and white Christian nationalism. Though personally unspiritual, I think we should support spiritual people who build communities that promote the values, ethics, and morals that we share, whether they consider themselves humanists or not.

Many people distrust atheists because atheists don’t believe in a judging God who will reward or punish them in an afterlife, which supposedly makes atheists untrustworthy and more likely to commit any kind of atrocity they think they can get away with. While atheists easily dismiss this allegation as foolish and demeaning, it needs to be addressed. J. C. Watts, a former conservative member of Congress from Oklahoma, once said, “Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching.” By that definition, Christians can’t display good character, but atheists can. Many Christians believe that nobody naturally has good character, and people must be kept in line by a real or imagined authority figure.

I’ve been asked, “What keeps you, as an atheist, from committing rape or murder?” My response is, “With an attitude like that, I hope you continue to believe in a god.” I also say that I commit as many rapes and murders as I want to — none.

The message that needs to get out is that many non-athiests live like atheists, for all practical purposes, without belief in a god involved in the workings of the world, a god who does not judge actions in this life to decide what to do with us in an alleged afterlife. I think a number of politicians, if asked, would be willing to acknowledge publicly that the policies they promote have nothing to do with belief in an afterlife.

A lot of folks believe in a god who is beyond human understanding, which sounds more like a belief in a belief. Some define a god in a way that blurs any distinction between theism and atheism, saying “God is Nature,” or “God is the potential within us,” or “God is love.” However silly those notions of God sound, I take comfort in knowing that these characterizations are more upsetting to the religious right than to me. They are “nothing gods.”

Speaking of nothing gods, I am reminded of the story of the man who entered a small courtyard and saw an altar with a large zero in the middle and a banner that stated “NIL.” White-robed people were kneeling before the altar chanting hymns to The Great Nullity and The Blessed Emptiness. The man turned to a white-robed observer next to him and asked, “Is Nothing Sacred?”

Many who identify with a religion are also open atheists. A Pew survey showed that 27 percent of Jewish Americans don’t practice the Jewish religion. This rises to 40 percent for those under the age of thirty. These Jews call themselves atheists, agnostics, or nothings in particular. Many Hindus also identify as atheists. A colleague of mine in the Math Department at the College of Charleston is a priest at the Hindu Temple in Charleston. He is also an open atheist. He suggested I watch the wonderful 2014 Bollywood movie pk. It’s about an alien from another planet who comes to Earth to do research on humans.

PK lands in northern India and becomes fascinated by all the different religions and creation stories. PK always asks direct questions that some religious people find heretical, and others find thought provoking, such as:

“Why would an all-knowing god change his mind because of a prayer?”

“Why a god, who ignores the prayers from millions of starving children, would take a special interest in a football game?”

PK discovers that humans usually grow up with god beliefs implanted at birth by family and culture. This is why people from India are mainly Hindus, most Asians are Buddhists, Saudi Arabians are Muslims, Israelis are mostly Jews, and the majority in the United States are Christian. To PK, religious belief seems to be based more on geography than theology.

Then there’s the question of an afterlife, which confuses PK because he hears so many different and conflicting views from humans who claim to know the one true way to that afterlife. PK recognizes that the conflicting faith beliefs can’t all be right, but they can all be wrong.

PK says whatever is on his mind because people from his alien planet do not know how to lie. This behavior seems so strange to humans that they think he must be drunk. That’s why they named him Peekay (PK for short), which in Hindi means “tipsy.”

PK reminded me of the 2009 movie The Invention of Lying, starring atheist Ricky Gervais, who also wrote the film. It’s about a culture in which nobody is able to lie until one person (a character named Mark) develops the ability.
With the best of intentions, Mark tries to comfort his dying mother by telling her that she will be going to a wonderful afterlife. Of course she and others believe him. Soon everyone wants information about this afterlife. Every word Mark makes up is taken as, well, gospel. In the biggest lie of all, he tells the world there is a “man in the sky” responsible for everything, and they can be happy up there with him after death. When asked if the man in the sky is also responsible for cancer, Mark has to grapple with theodicy, a problem in all monotheistic religions: Why is there evil in a world created by an all-powerful and benevolent deity? Incidentally, on the back of two pizza boxes (tablets?) Mark writes down the Ten Rules of Conduct from the man in the sky, guaranteeing a wonderful afterlife. These humanistic rules are a lot better than the biblical Ten Commandments. The movie’s message for me is that the “man in the sky” religion is possible only in a world where people can lie.

I hope more people will dare to be thoughtful and honest with themselves about what they really believe. If they wind up having the courage to tell others about those beliefs, it probably won’t lead to all the negative consequences they feared. I’ve heard from people who guardedly mentioned their atheism to friends and coworkers and were pleasantly surprised by a “me, too” response. This “coming out” worked well for me in my life. I not only made many new friends, I also found a wife — but that’s another true story.

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 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 an unanimous decision in the South Carolina Supreme Court, which struck down this religious test requirement.

Silverman is the author of two books, Candidate Without a Prayer and An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land. Both of these books are available through amazon.com.

Designating “The Freethought Society” as your chosen AmazonSmile benefits recipient automatically increases the organization’s funds.

The Secular Student Alliance (SSA) is the only national secular nonprofit specifically supporting atheist, humanist, and nonreligious students in middle schools, high schools, and colleges/universities across the county.

As it was for many people, the past year has been difficult for secular students. When schools closed in the Spring of 2020, many nonreligious students returned home to unsupportive religious families and communities. SSA was there with special programs and social opportunities for thousands of students. When SSA student members and individual students return to campus this autumn, the freethought community must support them! Thousands of SSA student members will restart chapters and reengage the campus community. Over 100 individual new students will begin the process of starting a chapter on their campus.

When you become a non-student member of the SSA, you enable the organization to provide free membership and a multitude of services to students in middle school, high school, and college/university. You also enable SSA to provide free promotional material to student chapters across the county and free educational material for students to distribute to help normalize atheism, humanism, and nontheism for young people.

The goal this Fall is to have one non-student member for every student member. When you join as a member today, you can sponsor one student or multiple students.

Diamond Level: for $1,200 or $100 a month you sponsor 50 students
Platinum Level: for $600 or $50 a month you sponsor 20 students
Gold Level: for $240 or $20 a month you sponsor 8 students
Silver Level: for $120 or $10 a month you sponsor 3 students
Bronze Level: for $60 or $5 a month you sponsor 1 student

Together, we can support thousands of nonreligious students in middle schools, high schools, and colleges/universities. Through your membership in the SSA, you give students membership into a welcoming secular community and give our secular youth the resources they need to educate and impact their campuses. After the past year, this is more important than ever.

Please become a member of the Secular Student Alliance today at bit.ly/SSAmember.
How does an atheist hospice nurse reconcile death? To answer that, let’s examine the life of a person who does just that:

Janenne Decker grew up in Orange County, California and as a youth considered herself a “city girl.” Her parents, however, wanted the rural lifestyle and soon moved to the high desert. The city girl soon found herself living on a ranch with no electricity or running water. She even had to learn how to bathe in a tub by a fireplace. Her family’s values extended to religious practices. The religious involvement was not intense, but enough to provide Decker with the motivation to question and search for the truth. She understood that religious beliefs varied and that they couldn’t all be right and couldn’t all be wrong. Decker soon found some religious absurdities to be completely undeniable. Contemplation of religious versus reason continued into adulthood, and eventually led her to let go of religion.

Decker was visited by tragedy as a young adult. She found herself twice widowed. One husband died by suicide, another of cancer. These difficult circumstances happened while Decker was also caring for her two children. With strength and resolve, Decker provided care and comfort to her husband during the ravages of his cancer. The practices of caregiving became her teacher and she honed her nursing skills with confidence. The experience with her husband made Decker aware of her capabilities as a nurse. She soon entered actual nursing school. By the time she graduated, she had decided that the best place for her would be in hospice care.

Decker’s expertise as a hospice nurse makes a significant difference for her patients and their families at a time of death. She can’t change the eventual outcome, but she can help the patient understand the dying process. Unlike nursing in the hospital environment, Decker does not have the responsibilities to care for multiple patients at the same time. She can provide her nursing skills in the calm and comfort of a home environment versus the barrenness of an institutional facility.

Caring for the patient’s family is an important responsibility of a hospice nurse. A hospice nurse must be able to comfort the family, especially people who may be overwhelmed with questions and regrets as life comes to an end. Decker has heard many people talk about “could haves,” “should haves,” and “would haves.” As an atheist, she looks at the death of her patients as each having had a life well-lived. She can reconcile the death by knowing that she served the patient and family during the dying process.

The patient and family may turn to prayer and religion. Decker will tell you that it is her responsibility to respect their beliefs. Hospice is not the time or place for her to expound about what she holds as her truth. She has become frustrated when dealing with chaplains who discriminate against patients because they don’t hold the same beliefs. No patient should receive less care due to a different philosophical lifestance. The beliefs of the patient are primary over that of the caregiver. “I’m there to take care of them, so my beliefs, and my feelings need to be left out of that,” says Decker.

Decker also graciously gives time to her community as a freethinker. She co-founded the Riverside Atheists and Free Thinkers (RAFT).

Riverside is part of the California Inland Empire that neighbors Los Angeles and stretches into the deserts of Southern California. The founders of RAFT saw a need for a community of like-minded people in an area of California that can be very conservative. For those who feel they must keep their nontheist values to themselves, RAFT provides a supportive community.

RAFT’s in-person meetings have been on hiatus due to the COVID health crisis. When meetings were held regularly, it would not be unusual to find people who drove from Los Angeles or some of the deeper regions of the desert in attendance. RAFT has held speaker meetings as well as outreach and social gatherings. The speaker meetings were very popular and attendance rivals or surpasses what is found in similar groups established in the greater Los Angeles area. Co-founders Den Jackson and Jenn Ramirez have arranged venues and speakers, while Decker has enjoyed leading social gatherings — whether they be picnics or parties. When the pandemic wanes and safety can be confidently practiced, meetings will resume. Information on RAFT is available at:

riversideatheists.org
facebook.com/groups/RiversideAtheistsAndFreeThinkers

Grief Beyond Belief
The aim of Grief Beyond Belief is to facilitate peer-to-peer grief support for atheists, humanists, and other freethinkers. Communications are free of religion, spiritualism, mysticism, and evangelism.

Grief Beyond Belief was founded by Rebecca Hensler in 2011. Following the death of her infant son, Hensler discovered that most online grief support groups are dominated by religion and spiritualism. Alienated by talk of angels, heaven and signs, she conceived an alternative free of mythology and mysticism.

Grief Beyond Belief is run with the support of volunteers, and more are needed. Find Grief Beyond Belief at the following link:

http://griefbeyondbelief.org
Freethought Society Three-Month Zoom Calendar

To get notified about online Zoom events, you must be a member of the Freethought Society Meetup group. Join the Freethought Society (FS) Meetup group at: 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.

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 the Labor Day holiday (September 3-6, 2021). 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 having been 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 onsite 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 by long distance as he talks about a “Skeptic of the Year Award” he is creating at his studio located in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Viewers will also see samples of other awards he has designed, 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 are available here:

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

October 9-11
Freethought Society president Margaret Downey is an invited speaker for the California Freethought Day being held on Sunday, October 10, 2021. The family-friendly event is held at the steps of the state Capitol building. California Freethought Day unites the state’s non-religious community to celebrate freedom of speech, freedom of thought, civic engagement, enthusiasm for science, social justice, and the separation of religion and government. The Sunday event is an outdoor festival with live entertainment, community group tables, family fun, a tour of the Capitol building, and a lineup of powerful speakers. The festival area opens at 11:30 AM.

Speakers include Leighann Lord, Yvette d’Entremont, Evan Clark, Ross Blocher, Carrie Poppy, Mynga Futrell (the founder of California Freethought Day) and Thomas Smith.

Entertainers include folk singer Abraham Steve Mackey, and comedians Ty Barnett and Ian Harris.

Each year, community leaders, volunteers and elected officials who align with freethought community core values are honored. This year Palm Desert City council member and Humanist, Karina Quintanilla will be recognized and lauded.

Exhibitors and co-sponsors include the Freethought Society, Secular Student Alliance, American Atheists, Atheists United, and the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

On this, the 20-year anniversary of California Freethought Day, the weekend will also include a Saturday, October 9, 2021, Freethought Day of the Dead program will include musical performances by Todd Taylor, Luis Estrada, Gypsy Rose, and Angela Smith. This bilingual event will start at 6:15 PM (PST). The Secular Day of the Dead program will include musical performances by Todd Taylor, Luis Estrada, Gypsy Rose, and Angela Smith. This bilingual event will start at 6:15 PM (PST)/6:45 PM (EST).

California’s 20th Annual Freethought Day

Online and Virtual Events

Free Admission & Register Online for Door Prizes
Self-Suggested Donation

Freethought Gallery - Outstanding Speakers - Live Music - Family Friendly - Awards
Authors and Podcaster Panel - Community Groups and Organizations - Door Prizes
Leadership and Advocacy for Social Justice, Secular Rights, Science, and More

Leighann Lord; Yvette d’Entremont; Ross Blocher and Carrie Poppy;
Evan Clark; Ian Harris; Margaret Downey; Mynga Futrell; Sarah Levin;
Abraham Mackey; Thomas Smith; Ty Barnett; and more!

Free Admission - Register Online for Door Prizes

Leadership and Advocacy for Social Justice, Secular Rights, Science, and More

California’s 20th Annual Freethought Day

Sunday, October 10, 2021
California State Capitol Building - Sacramento
North Steps and Lawn

November 2
The Freethought Society will once again co-sponsor a Secular Day of the Dead Zoom event on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. The bilingual event will start at 3:45 PM (PST)/6:45 PM (EST). Other sponsors are Hispanic American Freethinkers, American Atheists, Center for Inquiry, Freedom From Religion Foundation Secular Student Alliance, and Atheists United.

We are pleased to host host actor Jon Huertas as our Secular Day of the Dead speaker. He will talk about his journey to freedom of thought and will also honor a deceased loved one. Huertas has a starring role as Miguel on the acclaimed television series This Is Us.

The Secular Day of the Dead program will include musical performances by John Davidson, Dan Barker and Gary Stockdale. Attendees are encouraged to participate in the honoring ceremony. Prizes will be awarded to the best Zoom box decor, face painting, and hair/hat adornment.

See the above Meetup link for more details.
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 your 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)