

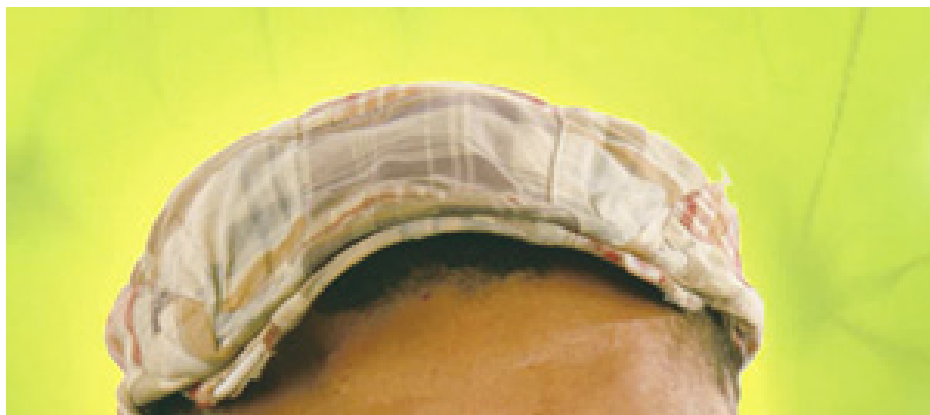
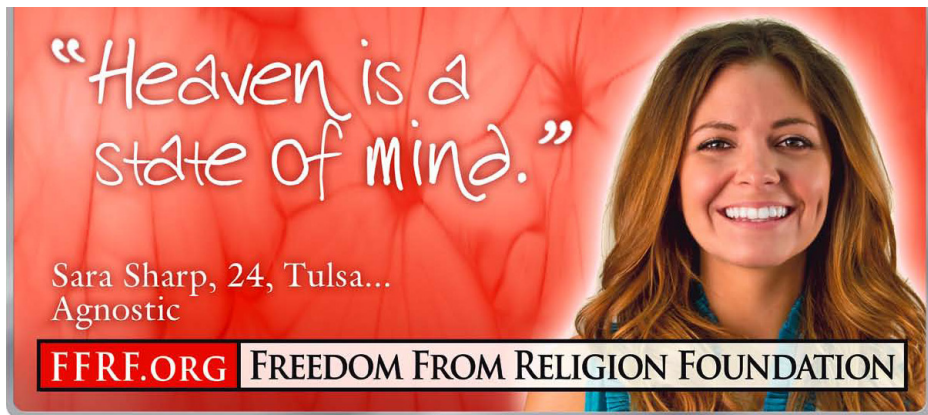
Freethought Today

Complimentary Copy
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Vol. 28 No. 5

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June/July 2011



Sara Sharp and Dylan Galos are two of the nontheists in FFRF's "Out of the Closet" billboard campaigns in Oklahoma and Ohio. See page 12 for more billboards.

Tulsa, Columbus exit nonreligious 'closet'

Tulsa, Okla., and Columbus, Ohio, are the third and fourth locations for FFRF's national "Out of the Closet" billboard campaign to introduce local nonbelievers to their neighbors. FFRF debuted the campaign last fall in Madison, Wis., and Raleigh, N.C., was the second stop in April.

Ten billboards featuring Tulsa-area nonbelievers and families went up for a month in May. "I can be moral without religion," said psychology student

Sabina Ewbank, of Muskogee.

"I don't need an eternal reward to be moral," was the statement offered by Ric Nourse of Tulsa, describing himself as "husband, dad, artist . . . atheist."

"Another atheist for peace and world harmony," said Venessa Hayes, a Tulsa mother of three.

"Reality is my god and my religion," asserted Melissa Robbins, of Tahlequah, "entrepreneur and atheist."

"People of logic don't belong in the minority," said freethinker Lamar Kernes, 22, a Tulsa student.

"Heaven is a state of mind," declared agnostic Sara Sharp, 24, of Tulsa.

A Tulsa student, Hilary, 25, explained the secular perspective of morality: "Humankind = Humans + kindness. No gods required."

Two nonbelievers chose to be photographed with their small children, including William Poire, 29, of Broken

Arrow, shown with his children, Jacob, 5, Aiden, 3, and baby Sophia. Poire described himself as "Atheist by default."

"I have a personal relationship with reality," said Paul Sanchez, of Glenpool, pictured with his daughter Adrianna. Paul is a "polyatheist" (rejects all deities).

Campaign coordinator Rhonda Dorle, Silver City, chose the statement "Born again skeptic."

"We're very proud of our Tulsa

Continued on page 12

Interns join staff

FFRF's legal team packs new punch

From June 1-23, FFRF's legal staff sent out a record 53 complaint letters and open records requests.

Stephanie Schmitt, our legal intern from 2009, has joined the office as a

temporary staff attorney, working with attorneys **Rebecca Markert** and **Patrick Elliott**.

Now it's time to meet FFRF's summer legal interns:

Arkansas native **Kristen Fox** started full time May 23. She has completed her first year of law school in the political science dual-degree program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Laura Steigerwald started part time May 25. She graduated with a major in business with a certificate in legal studies from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She plans to attend law school this fall.

Arash Khosrowshahi, who goes by Ash, started full time May 31. He has finished his first year of law school at the University of California-Berkeley. As an undergrad at UC-Davis, he was president of the Agnostic and Atheist Student Association.

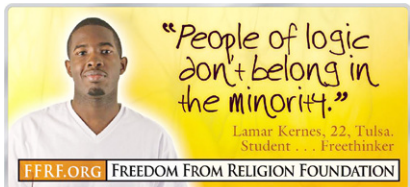
New York native **Taylor Myers** started part time June 7. She is majoring in philosophy and music at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.

All of our interns contacted FFRF on their own to inquire about a position, said Markert, senior staff attorney. "Taylor and Ash literally moved across the country to work on state-church separation. We're very excited to have such a motivated group of students working for us this summer."



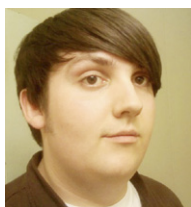
FFRF's legal team (front, left): Taylor Myers, Laura Steigerwald, Kristen Fox, (back) Patrick Elliott, Stephanie Schmitt, Rebecca Markert and Arash Khosrowshahi.

Inside This Issue



Friendly neighborhood
atheist advertising

Page 12



Damon
Fowler gets
activist award

Page 7

Meet a twice
baptized
member

Page 5



Meet a legal intern

Name: Kristen Fox.

When I was born: In 1982, after which I spent my early childhood in the tiny rural town of Marshall in the Ozark region of Arkansas before moving to the “suburbs,” the small central Arkansas city of Conway, aka to some as the buckle of the bible belt. The only reason you might have ever heard of it is because we spawned an NBA star Scottie Pippen and “American Idol” winner Kris Allen and are roundly mocked on late-night shows for our annual Toad Suck Daze festival the first weekend in May. (Long ago, steamboats traveled the Arkansas River when the water was at the right depth. When it wasn’t, crews tied up to wait and refreshed themselves at the local tavern to the dismay of residents, who said: “They suck on the bottle till they swell up like toads.”)

Family: I live with my calmer half, Rick (a law enforcement officer and fellow freethinking law student), and our three spoiled-beyond-rotten “kids” (two miniature pinschers and a Doberman pinscher). My mother, stepfather and three younger sisters still live in Conway, and I’m especially close to my oldest little sister, Mireya, who is a 17-year-old “mini-me” (which is the best revenge an adult child can exact on her parents!).

My grandmother also moved there a few years back after my grandfather passed away. He was the first atheist I ever knew, even though I didn’t find out until after he had passed away, sadly.

Education: I received my B.A. from the University of Central Arkansas with a double major in political science and philosophy and a double minor in German and honors interdisciplinary studies. I’m currently a dual-degree student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, working on a J.D. and a Ph.D. in political science, with emphases in American politics, the judiciary and constitutional law (particularly civil rights and civil liberties).

My religious upbringing was: A Christian potpourri. I (very) sporadically attended the Church of Christ, Pentecostal, and various nondenominational churches, but it was just what you did at the time. As an angry preteen, I was drawn to the hellfire and brimstone of the Anabaptist and Southern Baptist sects, which are never at a loss for recommendations of whom to hate.

Realizing quickly that I wasn’t a literalist and didn’t hate women or the

LGBT community, I tried to leave the church scene altogether, but instead I had to wage a weekly war against my parents’ insistence that I attend a Nazarene church full of nice people with completely incompatible beliefs from my own. After high school, I rapidly moved through the deconversion steps of vaguely Christian to “spiritual” to irreligious.

How I came to work as an FFRF legal intern: I’m equally drawn to a career in teaching or progressive interest group work, so when I realized that FFRF was located in Madison, I immediately planned to apply (having a significant other, dogs and a house makes it difficult to jaunt off to D.C. or other more overtly political locales, and besides, I adore Madison). I was a firm believer in the separation of state/church even when I was still moderately religious, and that only grew as I became more politically active in general.

What I do here: Shake my head and sigh — frequently — at the sorts of constitutional violations which occur on a daily basis all over the country. The head-shaking is followed by extensive research, collaboration with the staff attorneys and other interns and then drafting policy letters and letters of complaint.

What I like best about it: The office environment is incredibly friendly and laid-back. I cannot overstate how wonderful it is to work in an environment where the odds of being attacked for being irreligious are nonexistent. After 26 years in the South, it’s definitely a first.

Something funny that’s happened: It’s been funny realizing how much religious lingo filters into everyday phrases, even at an office of freethinkers (e.g., “oh my god” and the like). My favorite incident was witnessing a rather loud sneeze, an awkward silence, and then an equally loud and enthusiastic “Umm, baby Jesus bless you?!” Another substitute sneeze blessing here is “You are *so* good-looking” (from “Seinfeld”).

My legal interests are: My undergrad research focused primarily on LGBT rights and state-church separation issues (with significant overlap, of course). I’m also a bit of a Michel Foucault enthusiast, which (in addition to the writings of George Lakoff and George Orwell) definitely influences my approach to legal studies.

My legal heroes are: How could any good progressive not respect the pioneering Chief Justice Earl Warren? No one’s perfect, but those were fascinat-



Photo: Scott Colson

What Would Flying Spaghetti Monster Do? Kristen Fox says, “Eat noodles, drink beer, and be piratey. RAmen!”

ing years for civil rights. If only the modern era could have had, say, the Stevens court instead of the Burger, Rehnquist or Roberts courts, but I dream.

These three words sum me up: Sarcastic vegan socialist.

Things I like: My fiancé, Rick Spoentgen. Reading and writing, but not arithmetic. All things Henry Rollins. “Call of Duty,” “Mortal Kombat” and other time-sucking console-gaming pleasures. Nietzsche. Debating uncomfortable political and/or religious topics.

Things I smite: Bad drivers, particularly those who sit in the middle of the intersection before turning left on red lights, or anyone who drives in front of me while going under the speed limit. Descartes. Summer heat and humidity. Our two-party political system.



FFRF staff will miss Bonnie

Pictured on her last day of work in May is Bonnie Gutsch (center, olive green jacket). Bonnie is going back to school to become a physician. As an executive assistant, Bonnie wrote Action Alerts, worked with FFRF attorneys and members on many matters, and did website updates. She monitored Crank Mail, helped with Freethought Today, updated Facebook and Twitter, wrote many new entries for Freethought of the Day (ffrf.org/news/day/) — a compilation of famous freethinkers — and conjured up lots and lots of PR for FFRF actions.

Bonnie is pictured with (left, back) Office Manager Jackie Douglas, Attorney Stephanie Schmitt, Freethought Today Editor Bill Dunn, Bonnie, Office Assistant Melanie Knier, Webmaster Scott Colson, Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott, (front) Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor and Bookkeeper/Executive Assistant Katie Daniel. (FFRF Co-President Dan Barker took the photo. Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert was absent.) Our warmest thanks to Bonnie for two years of productive, dedicated work and for being a delight to work with.

A Note to Subscribers

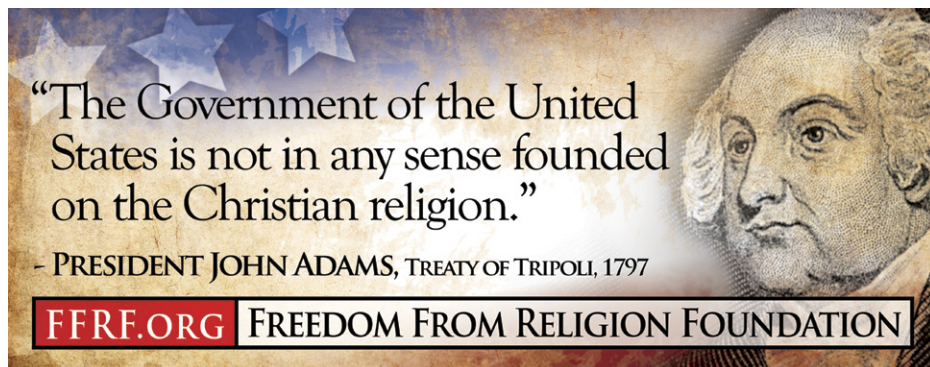
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June/July 2011
The only freethought newspaper in the United States



Not Big Sky God Country

FFRF member Kelly Thibault received a permit to hang an FFRF banner in a public park in Miles City, Mont., timed to be up during the city's 61st annual World Famous Bucking Horse Sale. It's a major community event held the third weekend in May and includes a big auction of rodeo stock. (The auction happened but the Rapture didn't!) The banner quotes the Treaty of Tripoli, signed by President John Adams, which says the U.S. is not founded on the Christian religion. Kelly plans to apply for a similar permit for July 4 to keep educating the Montana public.

FFRF statement on Day of Prayer case

The 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has denied FFRF's request for an *en banc* review of an April 2011 decision by a three-judge panel that dismissed FFRF's historic challenge of the National Day of Prayer.

The 7th Circuit did not rule that the National Day of Prayer is constitutional, only that FFRF did not have standing to challenge the law.

In effect, said Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor, the court slammed shut the courthouse doors against citizens injured when the government dishonors the constitutional principle of separation between state and church. "The appeals court panel had cavalierly tossed out the beautifully reasoned 2010 decision by U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb, in which she made a passionate defense of government neutrality in religion as the key to protecting freedom of conscience for all. Her decision was a succinct rebuttal of the

Religious Right's attempts to rewrite America's secular history as one of official government-fostered devotion."

FFRF, its plaintiffs, its 16,500 members and the 50 million nonreligious U.S. adults deserved better than to be told they have no rights in this matter, Gaylor said.

"It is not only FFRF and nonreligious Americans who should be concerned by the censorious direction of the U.S. courts. If FFRF and its members do not have 'standing,' than neither do theocratic groups, which are constantly in court trying to blend religion and government. It's bad legal precedent."

FFRF will continue to pursue its two other National Day of Prayer challenges, one in federal court in Arizona and one in state court in Colorado. "We will also be looking closely at state and regional government establishments of the National Day of Prayer," Gaylor said.

FFRF, Newdow resolute about pledge fight

FFRF and attorney Michael Newdow will continue to challenge the unconstitutional religious Pledge of Allegiance despite the refusal of the U.S. Supreme Court on June 13 to hear an appeal that upheld the "one nation under God" pledge in a New Hampshire case. Six of the court's nine justices are Catholic.

"It's not surprising," said Newdow, a Sacramento, Calif., atheist who has worked with FFRF on several cases involving state-church issues. "We'll keep trying."

"The Foundation will continue to raise consciousness on the harm to nonreligious children and their families created by daily recitation in our schools of a pledge that ties patriotism to piety and distorts perceptions about our secular government," said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

FFRF and a Hanover, N.H., couple with three children in the schools filed a federal suit in 2007 challenging the 2002 New Hampshire School Patriot Act that requires schools to set aside time each day to recite the pledge.

U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe's 2008 ruling against the plaintiffs was appealed to the 1st Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Boston. The appeals court upheld the district court in 2010.

In his appeal to the Supreme Court, Newdow argued that atheists are the

nation's "most disenfranchised religious minority" and need the high court's protection.

When Francis Bellamy wrote the pledge in 1892, the words were: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." After intense lobbying by religious groups, "under God" was inserted in 1954.

FFRF and Newdow are eyeing other courts in which to take challenges because of continued requests from nonreligious parents and teachers to help them keep religion out of public schools, Gaylor said.

"We thank Michael Newdow for his dedicated pro bono legal work to restore the pledge to its original secular wording and also thank our New Hampshire family for serving as local plaintiffs."

Co-President Dan Barker said FFRF remains committed to undoing a constitutional violation which creates a hostile atmosphere for nonreligious citizens. "Until all Americans are treated equally and none is made to feel like an outsider, we will not be 'one nation, indivisible,'" Barker said. "We are a nation under a secular and godless Constitution. When Congress tampered with the secular pledge, it breached the wall of separation between religion and government."

Chapman's 'The Ledge' puts you close to edge

Atheist writer-director Matthew Chapman's "The Ledge" opened July 8 in Los Angeles and New York City. It was nominated for Best U.S. Drama at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival.

"The Ledge" has an A-list cast (Charlie Hunnam, Liv Tyler, Terence Howard and Patrick Wilson) and an openly atheist hero. Chapman's website summarizes it: "A thriller in which a battle

of philosophies between a fundamentalist Christian and an atheist escalates into a lethal battle of wills. Ultimately, as a test of faith, or lack of it, the believer forces the nonbeliever onto the ledge of a tall building. He then has one hour to make a choice between his own life and someone else's. Without faith in an afterlife, will he be capable of such a sacrifice?"

Chapman, who is Charles Darwin's great-great grandson, was a 2008 guest on Freethought Radio. Chapman has written widely on the creation-evolution controversy, particularly the case of *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*, in which 11 parents successfully sued the school district to prevent a required statement in science classes whenever evolution was taught.

He's also written two books, *Trials of the Monkey: An Accidental Memoir*, and *40 Days and 40 Nights: Darwin, Intelligent Design, God, Oxycontin, and Other Oddities on Trial in Pennsylvania*.

"The Ledge" is available now through Video on Demand (your cable service), the iTunes Store and at SundanceNow.com/.

Correction

Jesse Ventura's birthdate was mistakenly listed as July 15, 1919, in the May issue's Freethought Calendar. He was born July 15, 1951.

Include FFRF In Your Estate Planning

Arrange a bequest in your will or trust, or make the Freedom From Religion Foundation the beneficiary of an insurance policy, bank account, or IRA. It's easy to do.

For related information (or to request a bequest brochure), please phone Annie Laurie Gaylor at (608) 256-8900.

FFRF

P.O. Box 750

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Freedom Depends on Freethinkers



FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 750 • Madison WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • ffrf.org

What is the Freedom From Religion Foundation?

Founded in 1978 as a national organization of freethinkers (atheists and agnostics), the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc., works to keep state and church separate and to educate the public about the views of nontheists.

The Foundation's e-mail address is info@ffrf.org. Please include your name and physical mailing address with all e-mail correspondence.

Foundation members wishing to receive online news releases, "action alerts" and "Freethought of the Day" should contact info@ffrf.org.



Declare and share your nonbelief in FFRF's online "Out of the Closet" campaign ffrf.org/out

Heads Up

A Poetry Column by Philip Appleman

Parable of the Perfidious Proverbs

How better it is to get wisdom than gold.
Money buys prophets and teachers, poems and art,
So listen, if you're so rich, why aren't you smart?

He that spareth his rod hateth his son.
That line gives you a perfect way of testing
Your inner feelings about child molesting.

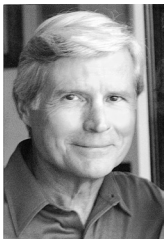
He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.
But here at the parish we don't find it overly hard
To accept his dirty cash or credit card.

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.
That's just why the good Lord made it mandatory
To eat your heart out down in Purgatory.

Wisdom is better than rubies.
Among the jeweled bishops and other boobies
It's also a whole lot rarer than rubies.

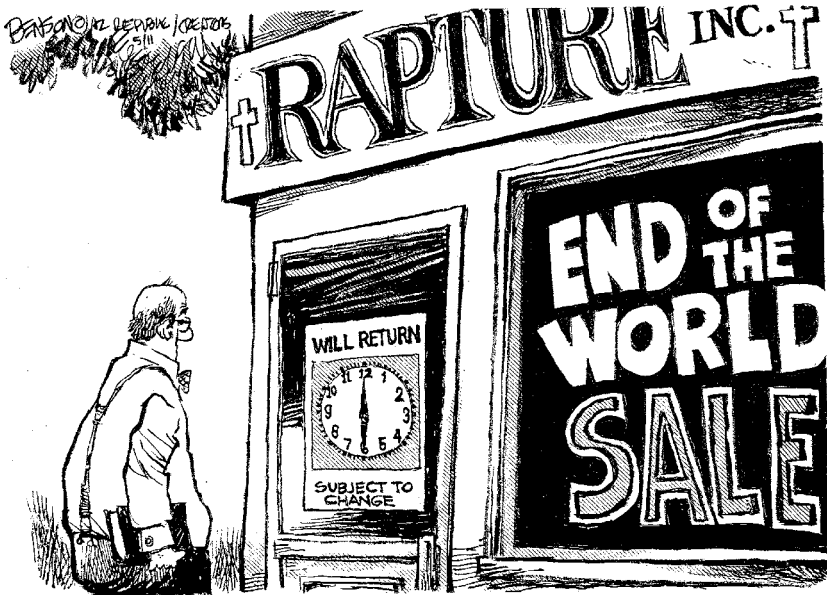
He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.
Trusting your heart may not be awfully bright,
But trusting Proverbs is an idiot's delight.

© Philip Appleman



Philip Appleman is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Indiana University. His published volumes of poetry include *Perfidious Proverbs and Other Poems: A Satirical Look at the Bible* (2011), *Darwin's Ark* (new 2009 edition) and *Karma, Dharma, Pudding & Pie* (2009). His nonfiction work includes the widely used *Norton Critical Edition, Darwin*, and the *Norton Critical Edition of Malthus' Essay on Population*. His poetry and fiction have won many awards, including a fellowship in poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Castagnola Award from the Poetry Society of America, the Humanist Arts Award from the American Humanist Association and the Friend of Darwin Award from the National Center for Science Education. His work has appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review*, *Partisan Review*, *Poetry*, and *The Yale Review*.

He and his playwright wife, Marjorie Appleman, are both Lifetime Members (four times over) of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. They recorded an excerpt of "Noah," Philip's comic masterpiece, for the Foundation's newest musical CD, "Beware of Dogma," featuring Dan Barker. That CD also includes Phil's poem "Fleas," set to the music of "Trees." *New and Selected Poems* is available for sale from FFRF for \$23 ppd, *The Norton Critical Edition, Darwin*, is \$22 ppd., *Kharma, Dharma, Pudding & Pie*, \$27 ppd., *Darwin's Ark*, \$23 ppd., and *Perfidious Poverbs*, \$24 ppd. (ffrf.org/shop/).



Overheard

Hi, this is Mike Huckabee, and I want to thank you for taking my call. I'm calling today because the nation's largest atheist organization, the Freedom From Religious [sic] Foundation, has claimed that our historic National Day of Prayer is unconstitutional. This is gonna prevent the time-honored tradition from taking place ever again. Look, my friend, this just isn't right. Can you imagine our children and grandchildren growing up in a society where we are forbidden to pray as a nation? It's unthinkable, but the reality is that all public mention of God would be erased if the Freedom From Religion Foundation wins this case. If they see a victory here, there's gonna be a renewed effort to rewrite our national motto and the Pledge of Allegiance, both of which refer to our Creator. That's why we have to speak out against this right now. As a Christian, I've joined the National Committee for Faith and Family, which is dedicated to keeping God alive in our society and defend our God-given right to pray for our country. With so much at stake, I need you to be involved now more than ever. Please stay on the line to add your name to the committee and help us protect the National Day of Prayer. Thanks and God bless you.

Robo-call received by FFRF member Dave Miller, Washington
National Committee for Faith and Family

Jesus must be so proud! Seriously, crucifixion wasn't cruel enough?
Randy Dojutrek, commenting on teen singer Justin Bieber's vertical "Yeshua" tattoo on the side of his torso
Los Angeles Times, 5-25-11

It must be strongly emphasized that our intention is not to "remove God from history and [Christians'] lives." Nothing on our billboard indicates such a desire, and no one in our organization shares it. We simply believe that sectarianism and religious warfare have no place in a government which is supposed to represent everyone, a point on which many Christians agree. The 2010 State of the First Amendment poll reports that 66 percent of Americans support the separation of church and state.
Francois Tremblay, North Central Washington Freethinkers, responding to criticism of an FFRF billboard his group co-sponsored
Wenatchee World, 5-19-11

The measure of successful military chaplaincy is not theological correctness or the number of converts made, it is the number of people served. On that basis, there must be room for a secular chaplain in the military.
Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, "Should atheist chaplains serve the military?"
Washington Post, 5-4-11

'Free thinker' denies God but still hugs his grandchildren.
Headline on letter to the editor from FFRF member Glenn Hardie, refuting a pastor's claim that "disbelief in God is for those with hard hearts"
Vancouver [B.C.] Sun, 5-18-11

I didn't run for office to express my spirituality. When I come into this building, it is not related to spirituality. The purpose of this buiding is to pass laws. It is not a church.
State Sen. Karen Carter Peterson, D-New Orleans, a Catholic, opposing a Ten Commandments display at the Louisiana Capitol
New Orleans Times-Picayune, 5-18-11

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Send \$2 with the name and address of each person you wish to receive a sample copy of Freethought Today to:

FFRF, P.O. Box 750, Madison WI 53701.

Freedom depends upon freethinkers
(Please specify whether the individual is a freethinker.)

YOUR WEEKLY ANTIDOTE TO THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

TUNE IN TO FREETHOUGHT RADIO

produced by the
Freedom From Religion
Foundation



Hosted by Dan Barker and
Annie Laurie Gaylor

Broadcasts and streams Saturdays at 11 a.m. Central, Progressive Talk The Mic 92.1 FM, Madison, Wis., and over several other stations.

iTunes or podcasts archived at: ffrf.org/news/radio

**Slightly irreverent views,
news, music & interviews**

Meet a twice-baptized member

Name: Bobbie Howard.

Where I live: Scottsdale, Ariz., (but I'm not one of those anti-everybody-who-isn't-a-WASP wackos).

Where and when I was born: New Haven, Conn., 1942. My parents lived in Old Lyme. They divorced when I was 10, and my mother and stepfather took us to the Caribbean when I was 12. My stepfather ran a small hotel (the only hotel) on the island of Bonaire, where we were the only Americans. My mother helped at the hotel and worked on various ventures like selling fresh mushrooms that she imported. They later ended up with a successful

paint store on the island of St. Croix.

Family: I'm happily single now. I have a grown daughter, son-in-law, two grandchildren, two sisters and a brother. I am the only admitted atheist and liberal in my family.

Education: Five years of boarding schools, including three years in a strict Anglican girls school on the British island of Barbados; two years of college in Florida; various noncredit courses (mostly beginner computer-related) taken at community colleges in the Phoenix area.

Occupation: I'm retired now, for good I hope! I worked 45-plus years,

mostly in clerical positions. I was a corporate instructor for Avis Rent-A-Car for five years, based in Atlanta but traveling to many other cities. I worked as EDI (electronic data interchange) coordinator at three companies.

How I got where I am today: From ages 12 to 24, I lived on four different Caribbean islands. On the first island, Barbados, the Anglican church (affiliated with the boarding school) would not accept my American baptism from a Congregational church in Connecticut, so I was forced to be baptized again at age 13. This was *so* humiliating and started me wondering if there really was a god.

Where I'm headed: I'm a very contented atheist and introvert. I hope to be able to continue to enjoy life.

Person in history I admire and why: I love the quotes of Robert Ingersoll. That man told it "like it was" years before doing that was acceptable. I also was very impressed by a woman who was a volunteer with me at a humane society in Atlanta when I was in my 30s. One day, she just stated very frankly that she was an atheist. I thought "Gee, she's a good person *and* an atheist! There must be many other people like her."

A quotation I like: "Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful." (Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman statesman, 5 BCE–65 CE)

These are a few of my favorite



Bobbie Howard

things: Reading, mostly mysteries and action thrillers that take place in exotic locales. I treat myself to lunch at least once a week. I take my current book, and I'm happy as a clam. People look at me with sympathy and say, "But aren't you lonely?" and I say "No!" I'm very sociable when the setting calls for it, but I'm perfectly fine by myself. I even took a cruise by myself and had a blast.

These are not: People who assume that I am religious.

My doubts about religion started: Age 12 or 13.

Why I'm a freethinker: Reality makes sense. Even if it's not perfect, it's easier to deal with if one uses facts.

Ways I promote freethought: Back in the '70s, I wrote letters to the editor in Atlanta and subsequently received death threats. My then-husband and daughter begged me to stop. I've written to my local baseball team and asked them to *not* do the "God Bless America" thing. I belong to about four other secular groups, and I send emails to politicians, etc., about church-state transgressions.



Bobbie Howard is at far left, back row, in Miss Hazel Poole's class at Codrington School in the 1950s in Barbados.



Overheard

For all those homosexuals who daren't tell their parents they are gay, for all those young girls who want to have an abortion, he absolutely deserved it.

Unnamed activist at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve, where four custard pies hit Belgian Archbishop Andre-Joseph Leonard, who called AIDS "a sort of intrinsic justice"

Agence France-Presse, 4-6-11

The show is about me growing up an atheist. It's very personal, and it's not that challenging to religious people unless they are very po-faced [piously humorless] about their religion. Then, they might not want to see it.

British comedian Richard Herring, on his solo show "Christ on a Bike: The Second Coming"

Highland News, 5-5-11

If the state bestows legal recognition on religious groups, then the state must also give the same privileges and benefits to nonreligious groups. As for prayer, it's time to take the "national" out of the National Day of Prayer and let Americans organize a multitude of prayer days, or no prayer day, according to dictates of conscience, not proclamations of governments.

Charles Haynes, director, Religious Freedom Education Project

First Amendment Center, 5-5-11

We live in a democracy which values free conscience and free thinking. That's the kind of education I want for

Australian children, and that's the kind of education the national curriculum is aimed at.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, an atheist, backing a proposed curriculum that omits mention of the bible

The Australian, 3-22-11

You know what's wrong with religion? They all lie.

Lyric from "They Lie," a song pulled from the Tony Award-winning "The Book of Mormon" as being too negative for the Broadway play

New York Times, 5-15-11

We live in a great country and a great state which allows people from Kansas to come here and exercise their right of free speech, just like the women here have their right to free medical choice without the interference of the state or federal government.

Dr. Brent Blue, Jackson, Wyo., on three days of protests by Operation Rescue America

Caspar Star-Tribune, 5-17-11

[Editor's note: Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, Mississippi and Arkansas have only one abortion provider each.]

Many of us say that it is good to come out. It has helped the gay community. Now everyone is comfortable with gays. I know I should come out. I know it's good. But I don't. I don't find sense in fighting with my family, arguing with my family all the time. So I compromise.



Lalit Mohan Chawla, 19, Delhi Free-thinkers, on challenges atheists in India face

Globalpost.com, 6-1-11

It should be DOWN LOW SWEET HYPOCRITE

Jack Magnan, commenting on a bill naming "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" Oklahoma's official gospel song

joemygod.blogspot.com, 4-28-11

Ours is just one of at least 60 New York City schools that have doubled as rent-free houses of worship — the vast majority of them evangelical Christian churches — in their off-hours. Many have little connection with the school communities. It's hard to imagine, for example, that the Village Church at Public School 3 in the West Village — a church that runs a Gender Affirming Ministry Endeavor associated with the movement to "cure" gay men and lesbians — is representative of the neighborhood.

Katherine Stewart, author of "The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children"

New York Times, 6-11-11

I support intelligent design. What I support is putting all science on the table and then letting students decide. I don't think it's a good idea for government to come down on one side of scientific issue or another, when there is reasonable doubt on both sides.

Rep. Michelle Bachmann, R-Minn., at



the Republican Leadership Conference in New Orleans

CNN, 6-17-11

There is a massive, irreconcilable conflict between science and religion. Religion was humanity's original cosmology, biology and anthropology. It provided explanations for the origin of the world, life and humans. Science now gives us increasingly complete explanations for those big three. We know the origins of the universe, the physics of the big bang and how the basic chemical elements formed in supernovas. We know that life on this planet originated about 4 billion years ago, and we are all descendants of that original replicating molecule. Thanks to Darwin we know that natural selection is the only workable explanation for the design and variety of all life on this planet. . . . It is no longer a question of whether religion shall wither away, just when.

J. Anderson Thomson, Virginia psychiatrist, author of "Why We Believe in God(s): A Concise Guide to the Science of Faith"

Austin American-Statesman, 6-17-11

I like to believe in the big-bang theory and, you know, the evolution of humans throughout time.

Alyssa Campanella, 21, newly crowned Miss USA, one of just two contestants in the pageant who "unequivocally" supported teaching evolution

USA Today, 6-20-11



FFRF Legal Victories

FFRF letter stops kindergarten prayer

In May, FFRF was alerted by a Pulaski, Tenn., resident that “kindergarten graduation” at Pulaski Elementary featured a two-minute prayer by a Church of Christ minister who offered it “in Jesus’ name.” It was the second complaint FFRF received in a year about violations at Pulaski Elementary. In December, FFRF complained about kindergartners being instructed to sing the religious song “Johnny Appleseed Grace” as a lunch blessing.

On May 26, FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert sent a letter to Tee Jackson, Director of Schools in Giles County, requesting an end to prayer at all graduations. Markert wrote, “The graduating kindergarten children, as young as 5, who have previously been taught prayer by their teachers and are again subjected to religious ritual on their big graduation day, cannot possibly be able to discern that the school district does not endorse the religious messages embodied in the graduation prayer.”

Jackson responded June 6, “We do not expect this circumstance in the future.”

Bible distribution nixed in Indiana

After FFRF was alerted that Gideon bibles were being given to fifth-graders at McCormick’s Creek Elementary in Spencer, Ind., Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott wrote a letter May 23 to Spencer-Owen Community Schools Superintendent Greg Linton: “When a school distributes religious literature to its students, it has unconstitutionally entangled itself with a religious message, in this case a Christian message.”

On June 2, the school’s attorney, Jack Woodruff, responded that students, supervised by teachers, had been allowed off school property during recess to receive bibles. Woodruff said Linton had “communicated in writing to his entire administrative team, that the facilitation of bible distribution to school students on school grounds is strictly forbidden.”

Woodruff continued, “In addition, Mr. Linton has taken it upon himself to make contact with the local director of Gideons International to advise him that their bible distribution to public school students is in violation of the law and that Spencer-Owen Community Schools will not be complicit in their distribution.”

Elliott noted, “We do not have any firsthand information that contradicts the superintendent’s account of how the distribution occurred; the complainant did not witness the distribution. In any case, the district responded quickly and appropriately.”

FFRF gets highway Easter cross removed

A complaint in April about a Christian cross on the Interstate 43 right of way near Cedarburg, Wis., led Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott to contact the state DOT’s Bureau of Highway Maintenance. A cross had also been put there last year at Easter time.

The state agency responded April 28: “[It] will be or has been taken down today, to be held for a short time in a county shop for the owner to claim

should the owner wish to pay for the cost of removal. We would like to notify the owner of the cross that nothing may legally be affixed to a highway right of way fence, but we do not know who owns and places the cross. Without that information, we cannot prevent a recurrence of this incident. Also, the state’s highways are patrolled less frequently than in the past due to reduced resources, which means that illegal signs and objects remain for longer periods of time.”

History won’t start with Adam, Eve

In April, FFRF received a complaint from a Glendale, Ariz., resident about religious displays in Glendale Union High School classrooms. A history teacher had displayed a timeline of world history which started with Adam and Eve and said, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” In the same school, a picture of Jesus and the Ten Commandments hung on the wall of a language arts classroom, where the teacher kept a bible on his desk.

FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott wrote a letter of complaint to Superintendent Jennifer Johnson, reminding her that “Courts have continually held that school districts may not display religious messages or iconography on the walls of public schools.”

After FFRF followed up on May 25, Johnson responded May 31 to say that the displays had been taken down. Johnson said she had directed the principal to “have a conversation with the two teachers involved and directing them to remove the questionable materials.”

She added that she wished the complainant had followed district protocol by objecting directly to school administrators instead of going through FFRF. “We can resolve issues more quickly and more efficiently when handled closest to the source of the concern.”

Local officials all too often don’t appreciate the potential for vitriol to be directed at people who inquire whether the law is being broken, said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president. “We see it time and time again — word somehow gets out that ‘so and so’ objected, and then they’re subject to retribution by their teachers or harassment by the classmates. There’s nothing wrong at all with the cloak of anonymity in these instances. Either the law is being followed or it isn’t.”

Mayor: Rub FFRF’s nose in complaint

The City Council in Prineville, Ore., voted May 24 to end city sponsorship of a Christmas crèche. FFRF received a complaint from a Prineville member in December about the nativity scene, traditionally set up at the entrance to City Hall. FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert wrote a letter Dec. 13 asking that the display not be put up. The city ignored the request.

According to a May 25 story in the Central Oregonian, the city council voted 5-2 to hand over sponsorship of the project to the private sector. Prineville Mayor Betty Roppe stated the decision was intended to avoid lawsuits or further legal complaints. “It is time to accept our obligations to the citizens of Prineville — they want the nativity

scene. But we also have a fiduciary responsibility to our citizens to not waste taxpayers’ money on lawsuits.”

Meeting attendees expressed strong discontent with the decision. Roppe told them to fight back in another way. “I think all of you, and us — anybody who wants to be involved — can make our holiday season in our community so big, so wonderful that we rub their noses in it.”

‘Belief in God’ expires in Ohio

In another chapter in a successful struggle for nonbelievers in the Lake Local School District in Uniontown, Ohio, the School Board left “belief in God” out of the new statement of values it adopted June 20. FFRF started battling the district in 2009 on the issue, which raised a lot of hackles locally.

The board eventually dropped the phrase but didn’t “officially” remove it until now, said FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert. The closest the new statement gets to any “higher power” is a goal to develop programs and partnerships “in the areas of mental, spiritual and financial health.”

FFRF helps stop Ten Commandments

After the Louisiana House of Representatives voted 91-0 on June 6 to erect a Ten Commandments monument at the Capitol in Baton Rouge, FFRF sent an Action Alert to members June 10 to “Keep the State Capitol secular!” The alert made the point that it’s a dishonest sham to claim that the monument was a legitimate display of U.S. legal history rather than a religious display. The bill had passed after a mere 30-second introduction and no discussion.

On June 15, a Senate committee voted 5-2 to defer the House bill, effectively killing it. Some members of the committee predicted the display would lead to lawsuits. “These are tight times. I’d rather spend money on services than litigation,” said Sen. Lydia Jack-

son, D-Shreveport.

God credit removed from park tree

A religious label has been removed from a tree in Whitnall Park in Milwaukee County, Wis., after FFRF sent a let-



ter of complaint in November. An area member contacted FFRF with photos of the label, which read: “Richard A. Kietzmann, Regional Manager. Only God can create a tree.”

FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert noted in her letter that it’s illegal for a public employee to nail a religious message to a tree in a public park.

On May 18, the Parks Administration responded: “The plaque has now been removed.”

FFRF schools Tenn. teacher on prayer

After receiving a high school student’s complaint in April, FFRF stopped illegal prayer in a classroom in Lenoir City, Tenn. The student at Lenoir City High School told FFRF that an algebra teacher was leading students in prayer before their final exams.

After Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert wrote a letter of objection, Superintendent Wayne Miller responded on May 5 that the teacher had been informed of the law against classroom prayer, that she had apologized in writing, and that Miller had taken steps to inform all district staff of the illegality of classroom prayer.

It Pays to Complain



FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott wrote Superintendent Mike Turner in Cayuga, Ind., about this sign at the North Vermillion High School athletic complex: “It is unconstitutional for the school to send a biblical message to students that it is ‘the will of God’ to ‘Remember your Creator.’ This is precisely the type of message that public schools are not allowed to endorse.” Turner responded that the School Board met June 20 with its attorney about the sign: “An acceptable replacement sign is being designed and will be made to replace the challenged signage. My timeline is to have the replacement sign in place before school starts for the 2011-12 school year.”

Louisiana grad protests school prayer

Fowler receives FFRF award for stellar student activism

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has inaugurated two annual \$1,000 student activist awards, one in memory of Catherine Fahringer, the other endowed by a generous West Coast couple. Although FFRF had already offered three awards so far in 2011, FFRF decided to name Damon Fowler, a graduating senior from Bastrop, La., as its fourth 2011 student activist.

Other 2011 activist recipients are Sarah McNair, of Virginia, for speaking out against Ten Commandments in Giles County schools; Duncan Henderson, 15, whose school district refuses to let him have a freethought club in Auburn, Ala.; and graduating senior Harrison Hopkins, who protested prayer at his high school graduation in Laurens, S.C. Harrison will accept his award at FFRF's annual convention in Hartford, Conn., in October.

Damon received a \$1,000 cash scholarship in memory of Catherine Fahringer for protesting and stopping school-initiated prayer at his high school commencement. He writes about why he protested the prayer, and what happened when he did.

By Damon Fowler

For a while, I kept my atheism a secret from everyone. Then I came out to my friends, but someone in the family found out and told everyone else. My parents didn't like it at all, but they soon learned to tolerate it since they couldn't change my beliefs.

A couple of months later, I noticed that my high school would be praying at the graduation ceremony.

I looked up Louisiana law concerning prayer in public schools and saw all that is allowed is a "brief moment of silent meditation or prayer." I was already familiar with the Constitution saying that the government cannot endorse any religion.

I put a post on Reddit.com to get a little support, because I knew I wouldn't get any locally. The Reddit community really gave me the support and motivation I needed.

I immediately contacted the school with an email stating that prayer on school grounds, promoted by the school, violates the Constitution and Louisiana law. The school gave me no response but made the complaint public, causing a big uproar in the community. I was the only open atheist graduating, so many people automatically assumed it was me.

When asked, I didn't lie, because I saw nothing wrong with what I had done. It was against the law to pray at graduation, and they had been breaking the law for more than a decade.

News spread quickly that I was the one who stopped the prayer. Many members of the community, including my own parents, attended a meeting at a church to protest removing the prayer. My parents barely spoke to me. They disconnected my phone and left me with no way of contacting my older brother, who contacted FFRF on my behalf.

I was unable to attend graduation practice due to threats against me, so the school was going to put me at the back of the line for graduation. Class Night came around, which includes a

ceremony for those who acquired merits and scholarships. Though told not to pray, a student prayed anyway, and administrators allowed it. She called for a moment of silence afterward, which seemed like a complete joke to the students. It was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, during which some of the students emphasized and yelled "under God!"

I felt so alienated from my class, as if they were all against me. It was very embarrassing, but still I pushed on and attended my graduation the next day. Thanks to the Freedom From Religion Foundation, I was placed in my rightful spot in line to graduate. FFRF also asked that there be increased security at graduation, which was provided. But they still prayed at my graduation.

It went better than I expected, aside from one person yelling "Jesus still loves you," as I walked to get my diploma. I left as soon as I could, but couldn't go back home. My parents had thrown my belongings outside, obviously kicking me out. I left for Dallas with my sister.

I've received a lot of support from across the country and around the world. A blog even started a donation to go toward a scholarship for me. I plan on going to college soon, and I will definitely keep fighting for constitutional rights whenever and wherever they are violated.

I am very grateful for the support I've gotten, and I thank everyone who has given even a few seconds out of their day to tell me that I did a good job.



Damon Fowler

Freethinking graduate is a real class act

Damon Fowler, who graduated May 21 from Bastrop High School, Bastrop, La., is receiving a \$1,000 scholarship for his courage in protesting illegal graduation prayer at his commencement. He had emailed his school May 15 to warn them that if prayer stayed on the schedule, he would contact the ACLU.

A local newspaper announced the next day that prayer would be dropped, then quoted teacher Mitzi Quinn criticizing the decision and making this derogatory comment: "What's even more sad is this is a student who really hasn't contributed anything to graduation or their classmates." (Damon had never taken a class with Quinn.) FFRF sent a letter to the district asking that she be disciplined.

At a May 19 awards ceremony for graduates, a student previously chosen to give the invocation announced a moment of silence, then identified herself as a Christian and prayed to Jesus to loud cheers. FFRF then complained on Damon's behalf when he was told he would receive his diploma last at graduation.

The school, at FFRF's request, placed him back in his original place in line but ignored FFRF's letter objecting to the scheduled moment of silence as a sham. Stephanie Schmitt, FFRF attorney, wrote, "This student was originally chosen for the invocation and is brought on stage for no other reason than to allow an opportunity for prayer to be given."

At graduation, a student subsequently led the entire stadium in the Lord's Prayer. A follow-up joint letter by FFRF and other groups was sent May 26 to protest the school's mishandling of this situation.

"We are so impressed with young people who have the guts to stand up to rogue school officials and classmates' mob mentality to defend the Constitution and freedom of conscience," said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

"The picture of an entire school body arrayed against a single minority student is shocking and disturbing. Instead of treating them as pariahs, the schools ought to be honoring these students for standing up for constitutional principles."

FFRF Legal Victories

Football chaplain out after FFRF letter

After FFRF's complaint, the football team at West High School in Knoxville, Tenn., will no longer have a volunteer chaplain. In December, FFRF was alerted by an area member that Rev. Graham Schulyer, a priest at Apostles Anglican Church, was serving as team chaplain. The complainant sent a copy of a local news article about the team's religious inclinations.

Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert contacted the Knox County Schools superintendent and the West High School principal, informing them of the constitutional violation: "A public high school football team should not employ a chaplain, seek out a spiritual leader for the team, or agree to have a volunteer team chaplain."

On May 3, the Knox County Law Director's Office responded: "West High School football team will not have a volunteer chaplain in the future. By policy, Knox County Schools neither advances nor inhibits religion."

Faith disappears from city website

The city of Grandville, Mich., removed religious language from its web-

site after receiving a complaint from FFRF. The website included a list of community values adopted in 2000, including "Faith, being guided by a strong religious heritage."

"Incorporating a proclamation of shared religious belief into the values of a municipality is inappropriate," wrote Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert in a March letter. "By implying that belonging to the Grandville community requires adherence to 'religious heritage' and valuing 'faith,' Grandville is compromising the First Amendment rights of its citizens."

Mayor James Buck responded May 4: "As of the date of this letter, the city of Grandville has complied with your request and the city's website no longer contains a page listing the community values, including one referencing faith."

Town settles with ACLU on prayer

The Point Beach [N.J.] Borough Council voted June 21 to pay \$11,200 in lawyer's fees to the American Civil Liberties Union, which battled the borough over its former policy of opening meetings with the Lord's Prayer. Only

one nay vote was cast.

"I'm glad it's done," said Sharon Cadalzo, the resident who sued the borough for saying the Lord's Prayer because it is used only by some religions. "I never expected it to take this long." She is Jewish.

An invocation is now read by the borough clerk with more general language asking for guidance to make good decisions for the town.

Pointing to the council chambers, Cadalzo told the Point Pleasant Patch that "There are people in there who used to be my friends who won't say hello to me now. But it's fine."

"She's been ostracized," said her husband, Luis Cadalzo. "But she's also had a lot of people come up to her in town and support her. But they won't come here and say that," he said.

What Is a Freethinker?



free-think-er n. A person who forms opinions about religion on the basis of reason, independently of tradition, authority, or established belief.

More FFRF legal actions, complaints

’Twas the season for more graduation prayer

FFRF attorneys sent out letters of complaint this spring to 16 schools about illegal prayer at public school graduations. Most were directed at high school ceremonies, but four went to colleges and one addressed prayer at a kindergarten graduation. Letters went to Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Illinois, Ohio, New York and North Carolina.

Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert was persistent in pursuing the situation in Laurens, S.C. Her first letter to Laurens School District 55 Superintendent Billy Strickland was April 14. In it, she objected on behalf of a graduate to the senior class voting on whether to have prayer at graduation. Strickland responded April 18 that in light of the letter, seniors would not be voting.

In an April 21 letter, Markert objected to a packet distributed to all seniors. Its “Tips for Graduation” ended with the line, “Graduation is not over until the prayer and recessional. . .” Strickland acknowledged on May 2 it was wrong to include the prayer reference, and said it would not part be part of the tips listed on the school website and that local media would be so informed.

Markert wrote again on May 27 after receiving information that four student speakers planned to pray. “These students’ prayers are not simply spontaneous statements on religiosity.”

Markert added, “[W]e ask the district take steps to ensure that student speeches do not become a forum for prayer being led as group devotion. If a student starts a prayer or asks the audience to join him/her in prayer, the district should stop the student and ask him/her to focus on the graduation of students and their hard work over the last four years. (Individual statements of personal belief represent the individual and are very different than a student leading and urging students to defy Supreme Court precedent by organizing graduation prayers.)”

(See page 24 for more on Harrison Hopkins, the Laurens graduate who went public and will receive an activist award from FFRF in October at its annual convention.)

Another student activist, Damon Fowler, headed off prayer at his graduation in Bastrop, La., and stirred up a hornets’ nest in the offing. See page 7 for what Damon accomplished and went through. Staff Attorney Stephanie Schmitt was FFRF’s point person and wrote several letters to school officials highlighting errors in judgment in the case.

Some of FFRF’s other graduation complaints:

Yellville, Ark.: The Yellville-Summit High School graduation included a student-delivered prayer. Past ceremonies also had scheduled prayers.

Mackinaw, Ill.: Students delivered an invocation and benediction “in Jesus’ name” at the Deer Creek-Mackinaw High School graduation. Our complainant informed us that prayers have been a regular and likely scheduled feature of past Deer Creek-Mackinaw graduations, despite their exclusion from the official program.

Little Rock, Ark.: When the Mills University Studies High School celebrated its graduating seniors, the au-

dience heard an unannounced invocation by the assistant principal. A parent of a graduating senior, an FFRF member, reported the violation. The parent wrote:

“[My children] have experienced ostracism by other students based on their unwillingness to conform to the majority religious views among their peers, so we anticipated that there would be some form of prayer at commencement and made a video recording of the event. We were correct — Assistant Principal Clayton opened the event with an invocation to God and Jesus. I am typically not outspoken in these matters and have spent my life tolerating such displays, but my kids found it to be offensive and inappropriate.”

Mogadore, Ohio: Field Local Schools scheduled a graduation invocation. The class treasurer delivered a prayer referencing Jesus Christ and the Book of Psalms.

Mesquite, Texas: A parent from the Mesquite Independent School District alerted FFRF to a scheduled student-led prayer, which took place at his daughter’s graduation.

Klein, Texas: At least four high schools in the Klein Independent School District had scheduled student invocations approved in advance by administrators.

Humble, Texas: Humble High School graduation included a student-led invocation and benediction. The benediction ended with “in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

Deer Park, Texas: Students and audience members were asked to remain standing after the national anthem for student-led prayer at Deer Park High School graduation.

Lewisville, Texas: A graduating senior contacted FFRF after their commencement ceremony from School High of Lewisville, which is a public charter school. Our complainant indicated that on June 3, 2011, a student-led prayer took place as part of the scheduled program.

(FFRF received numerous complaints from Texas. Given current Texas state law, which FFRF believes to be unconstitutional, staff attorneys are evaluating options to tackle prayer at high school graduations in Texas for the next academic year.)

College commencement prayer complaints were sent to Queens College-CUNY, Flushing, N.Y.; Nash Community College, Rocky Mount, N.C.; Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; and Lake Superior State University, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Indiana land plan huge gift to church

The Common Council in South Bend, Ind., voted 5-4 on June 27 in favor of Mayor Stephen Luecke’s plan to spend \$1.2 million to buy and demolish a Family Dollar Store and then turn the property over to St. Joseph’s Catholic High School, which will use the land for new athletic facilities, including a football stadium.

In FFRF’s June 14 letter to the city, Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott wrote that the city “cannot legally subsidize the creation of a religious school campus.”

The letter noted that St. Joseph’s Principal Susan Richter had sent an email to parents and alumni of the

FFRF urges stricter school flier policy

Due to earlier action by FFRF, the Alliance Defense Fund, a Christian legal group, has filed a lawsuit against the School District in Garfield Heights, Ohio. The suit challenges Maple Leaf Intermediate School’s refusal to distribute fliers promoting after-school bible education events. ADF is pressing the case for a mothers’ group that claims its free-speech rights were violated.

It’s not the first time the group has caused trouble at Maple Leaf, said FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott. FFRF first complained in 2007, and then followed up in 2008 and 2009, that the school was unconstitutionally sponsoring an annual field trip, organized by the mothers’ group, to a Nazarene church during the school day. Finally, in response to another complaint in May 2010, the school canceled the field trip and organizers changed it so that it took place after school.

FFRF’s online FAQ at ffrf.org/faq/state-church/ has information about common problems with fliers: “Some federal courts have deemed distribution of religious fliers in students’ take-home folders constitutional if the school flier system is akin to a limited public forum. This means if the school allows other outside groups, i.e., soc-

cer clubs, etc., to distribute fliers or other promotional materials, then the school cannot discriminate against religious organizations doing the same.”

The website notes, “Many enlightened school districts across the country have sought to avoid this entanglement by prohibiting third parties from using the take-home fliers system altogether.”

FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor, in a May 2011 letter to district Superintendent Linda Reid, noted that the mothers’ group “sought to use the school as a recruiting ground for its religious purposes. The prior support that the district provided seems to have created a sense of entitlement. That has put the district in the unfortunate position that it is currently in.”

Gaylor urged to district to amend its flier policies so that only school-sponsored announcements are sent home with students. “This avoids the difficult First Amendment issues that arise when the school becomes involved in distributing materials for other groups.”

Gaylor added, “What would the district do if the Westboro Baptist Church or other hate groups sought to distribute fliers? Such groups are allowed to share their views in a number of places, but the public schools should not be one of them; schools should not create a ‘forum’ for these organizations.”

U.S. subsidizes overseas religion

Last year, U.S. tax dollars restored an early 20th century cathedral in El Salvador, a convent in Guatemala, a Catholic church in Nicaragua and 17th and 18th century colonial chapels in Bolivia.

FFRF sent a letter June 22 to the U.S. State Department, seeking a halt to the practice. “More than \$2 million in U.S. federal funding was spent on the preservation of religious institutions, such as minarets, temples, mosques and Christian churches,” noted Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

FFRF formally asked that the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation no longer make religious sites and buildings eligible for tax-funded restoration.

“The Roman Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest institutions in the world. Let this church pay to restore its

own colonial chapels, convents and cathedrals — which, we might add, are a vestige of religious imperialism which caused untold misery, and which Simon Bolivar fought to free people from,” added Co-President Dan Barker.

Contact the State Department:

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520
Phone: 202-647-5291

Assistant Secretary Ann Stock
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State, SA-5
2200 C State, N.W.
Washington DC 20522-0500
Phone: 202-632-6445

separation of church and state.” At a committee meeting before the vote, Luecke objected to Councilman Oliver Davis calling the \$1.2 million expenditure “a gift” to the school. Luecke claimed it’s not a gift because the school “has agreed to allow scheduled public use of the football field and school buildings when the high school is not using them itself.”

City legal staff cited a 2003 Indiana Supreme Court ruling, *Embry v. O’Bannon*, which held that a private school can get public support if it derives only an “incidental” benefit and offers some public benefit in return.

Online forum tops 1,000 members

In April, the number of FFRF Forum members hit 1,000. Online administrator Darrell Barker emailed No. 1,000 to ask if he or she would tell Freethought Today about the Forum experience, and Henryetta Lee of Florida agreed. Offered a gift from FFRF's Shop, she declined:

"I am not comfortable accepting a gift simply for joining the Forum at the right time. There were 999 other members participating before I became a member. I am no more important than any one of them. Currently, FFRF is fighting many legal battles on our behalf. If possible, I would prefer that the cost of a T-shirt or book be donated to their Legal Fund."

More from Henryetta:

The FFRF Forum is a great way to connect with other members. I haven't posted yet; well, I did and accidentally erased the whole thing in edit. There are current events and issues, but my favorite area is the Lounge. It's like sitting in a cafe chatting about any-

thing, but you know no one is gonna say "God did or told them something." So you can relax and not worry about making a scene, having an unwanted heated debate or biting your tongue so you won't offend someone. Many of us have been there. I bit my tongue for so long with family and co-workers, I'm surprised I can still speak!

I've been a freethinker most of my life. To this day, I can't eat Ritz crackers, as that's what they served as snacks in bible school! My parents were moderate Christians, enforcing Sunday school but not church. Religion was rarely talked about at home. Yet, the sense was still there that one must believe, toe the family line.

Nearing the age of 40, I finally, slowly started "coming out." At the time, I worked for a small, family-owned business that had, until me, only very fundamentalist Christian, mostly Baptist, employees. After fighting with family over the fact that, at age 40, I could pursue my own beliefs (I really had to do this!), I then "came out" at work.

The whispers behind my back were

never quiet enough. My Meaning-of-Winter-Solstice decorations were laughed at, and my "obvious devil worship" became office gossip. Those were the days, and they weren't good!

Now, I'm a proud and happy lifetime member of FFRF. I make freethought labels and cards to give and send as well as handing out some of the FFRF nontracts. I also proudly sport a "Darwin fish" tattoo on my right wrist.

I live with my Canadian freethinking husband, Peter Murphy; a parakeet, Kenny; a cat, Peaches (adopted from a shelter when she was 10); and my new 5-year-old Chihuahua, Kita, who is my emotional support animal.

On the bus one day, a religious nut got into a debate with my husband regarding the idea that "God is perfect." Losing the debate, the man suggested, "Let me give you another example." "No," my husband said, "This one's fine."

The man quieted down shortly thereafter. As we exited the bus, I passed by him, gave him an FFRF non-tract and said, "May the Force be with



Henryetta Lee

you."

It's been FFRF (and the Forum) that have taken me from the quiet pain of past isolation to the quiet playful confidence of today.

FFRF's members-only Forum is an online space designed for FFRF'ers to contact each other, discuss FFRF events and debate the universe. More information is here:

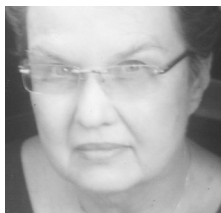
ffrf.org/get-involved/forum/

Wordplay: Onward, Christian Pollsters!

By Kate Musgrave

Archbishop of Can'tremarry:

The English prelate who categorically forbids royal remarriages and then sits back and enjoys watching the breakdown of practically everyone else's unions.



Kate Musgrave

Belt with a bible: To wield a copy of the ostensibly good Good Book upside the heads of unrepentant nonbelievers.

Chim and Panzee: The primordial couple whose remains would surely roll over at the sheer number of their descendants who categorically reject the family connection.

Darwinism v. Darlingism: The all-out competition in which the cold, hard facts of evolution vie with the raw emotionality of creationism in explaining the origin of life.

Emissionary: The religious figure called to go forth and spread the word as to which sexual practices are permissible and which lead to hell if not scads of dark-skinned toddlers.

Faithlift: The process by which a church's sagging membership is restored to its former fullness via spiritual botoxification, i.e., tactical injection of ever more thou-shalt-nots.

Godorrhea: The chronic discharge of biblical talk that tends to make hapless listeners apprehensive that they too become similarly orally infected.

Haloism: The perpetual struggle to keep the external sign of saintliness up above the head rather than down around the ankles.

Homilyland Security: The U.S. federal office whose most-dialed recorded message advises callers to get out their prayers against an incoming enemy,

given that Uncle Sam is probably not going to do a thing.

Holitosis: The offensive odor of sanctity that only atheists and other incorrigible sinners can detect with their keen noses for sniffing out hypocrisy.

Idollartry: The worship of the U.S. greenback to the exclusion of all other false gods.

Lepersentatives v. Sinators: The ongoing struggle between America's two legislative bodies to have the last word.

Moral erectitude: The stance that makes the pope swell to a greater height, including extra inches from platform shoes and papal miter.

Onward, Christian Pollsters! The cry that heartens faith-based statisticians to keep up the good (and hard) work of religiously minimizing the number of atheists out and about in the land.

Pelf-help Religion: The faith, propounded by America's prosperity ministries, that holds that the amassing of personal wealth taken from the pockets of the poor is unalloyed virtue.

Pledge of Reliance: The public promise to work assiduously to introduce religious totalitarianism, 51% today and 100% tomorrow, thereby making a theocracy of a democracy.

Salivation Army: The charitable organization that gladly feeds famished folks who line up at its doors, but not before they first pray themselves into pools of their saliva at their knees.

Split Parsonality: The man of God who one day denounces women's devilish ways and the next extols their angelic qualities.

Uncle Samta: The American philanthropic figure who once a year circles the globe distributing the choicest gifts to the haves and the dregs of his bag to the have-nots.

U.S. Priestident: The national leader who swears on the bible that he will

answer to God before he answers any voter.

Votes for Fetuses! The rallying cry of the preborn in their fierce struggle for resources with the postborn.

Washing-by-the-Ton, D.C.: The federal headquarters that hands out hefty-sized boxes of detergent to newly sworn officials' wives, complete with instructions on how to tackle the really tough stains.

Kate Musgrave writes: For most of my

*life, I've been creating meaning by playing with language, and I had the gratification of seeing my book, **Womb with Views: A Contradictionary** (Mother Courage, 1989), make the Library of Congress.*

After I retired from teaching college English composition, I settled down in Ann Arbor, Mich., to devote myself to ever more word invention without concern for publishing. Then I discovered Freethought Today, and I am once more getting my material out to the world.

It Pays to Complain

Buttinsky put in his place

FFRF member Elizabeth Liddell, Pennsylvania, writes:

I had surgery last week for the first time ever. While I was waiting alone to be wheeled into surgery, a man approached and leaned over me, without introducing himself, and asked if I'd "said my prayers." I didn't know if this was the anesthesiologist, a doctor, a nurse or what.

I answered, "I'm not the praying type," to which he responded, "Well, you *should* be." Then he went on with "the Lord" this and that, and how I should be thankful "for all He has done." I told him twice that it was inappropriate for him to be speaking to me like this. After the second time, he walked away.

I complained immediately to the nurse, who said that the man was a nursing assistant (no degree) who was not assigned to my case and shouldn't have been in the area at all. I am

pleased to report that all of the doctors, nurses and students who subsequently approached me expressed horror on my behalf and totally validated my concerns.

The nursing manager met with my husband during surgery to inform him of the incident and followed up with a meeting in my recovery room and a letter of apology. The nursing assistant admitted he does this frequently, but I'm the first to complain, so they thanked me for that and told me that they will do diversity training as well as discipline him.

All in all, I felt that the incident was handled very well, and I'm glad to have had the chance to right a wrong that was being done to people while at their most vulnerable — a captive audience, as it were. I thought you'd like to know!

[Editor's note: Thanks very much, Elizabeth. We're very glad to know!]

Meet one very nonbiblical Adam

Name: Adam Lee.
Where I live: New York City.
Where and when I was born: New York City, March 13, 1982.
Family: A mother, a father and a younger brother, all freethinkers. Godlessness, I'm happy to say, runs in my family! I've also been married for just over a year to my wonderful wife, Elizabeth, an ex-Roman Catholic turned Unitarian Universalist.
Education: A bachelor's degree in computer science from the State University of New York at Binghamton and a master's in computer science from Columbia University, plus as much reading as I can fit into my spare time.
Occupation: Software engineer for a major New York technology firm.
How I got where I am today: I've been a voracious reader all my life, which laid the seeds of my atheism. When I was a kid, I especially loved Greek and Roman myths. At the time it was just because they were great stories, but in retrospect they primed me to recognize the similar stories in the bible as equally mythological when I encountered them.
Thankfully, my parents chose to raise me without religion and let me make up my own mind, for which I'll always be grateful to them.
Where I'm headed: My lifelong ambition is to be an author, and with a little luck, I hope to realize it someday soon. My goal is to write novels and also (especially) books arguing for freethought and making the case for atheism as a positive worldview.
Person in history I admire and why: Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who defied family, clan, culture and religion — the entire universe of her society aligned against her, all teaching that a woman's role is to be a pious, obedient slave — to assert her rights as a woman and a human being.
She retraced the span of human progress in one lifetime, from the daughter of nomadic herders to an

elected leadership position in a modern, secular democracy.
A quotation I like: "We have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night." (Epitaph of two amateur astronomers, John and Phoebe Brashear, quoted in Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*.)
These are a few of my favorite things: The boundless beauty of nature. Finding fellow freethinkers whose ideas resonate with my own, especially those who've had the courage to reject harsh and oppressive religious upbringings. Reading a poem or a story and finding that one perfect image that sends shivers down your spine. Reading nonfiction and finding an argument so concise, so eloquent, so compelling that all I can think is, "I wish I had written that!"
And, I have to confess, I love cathedrals. I can't help admiring the craftsmanship, the colors of light in stained glass, and the vast, lofty spaces — even if I think the beliefs of the builders were complete nonsense.
These are not: Racism, sexism and prejudice of all varieties, especially the subtle kinds. Bullies who flaunt their power by persecuting the defenseless.
Anyone who's content in ignorance. Any person or idea that claims an authority not earned by its own merit.
My doubts about religion started: In my first year of college, when I found out that a good friend of mine was an evangelical Christian and a creationist and thought I was going to hell. The shock of hearing this from someone I respected was enough to send me on a quest to investigate which, if any, of the world's religions had the facts to prove its beliefs were right. As it turned out, I discovered that they were all wrong.
Why I'm a freethinker: Because the world needs as many of them as it can get!
Ways I promote freethought: Aside from writing (usually outraged, sometimes complimentary) letters to politicians and media, I spend a great deal

of time blogging for my own website, Daylight Atheism (daylightatheism.org).
I've also recently joined the speakers' bureau of the Secular Student Alliance, an excellent organization which nurtures and supports young free-

thinkers in colleges and high schools throughout the nation.
And, of course, I'm an FFRF Lifetime Member and happy to support the superb work FFRF does!

In Memoriam

Paul J. Gaylor

Paul Joseph "Jody" Gaylor Jr., 84, Madison, Wis., who was married to Freedom From Religion Foundation President Emerita Anne Nicol Gaylor, died May 5, 2011, from cancer of the brain. The terminal illness was diagnosed in October 2010.
He was born Aug. 30, 1926, in Springfield, Mo., the eldest of three children of Paul Joseph Gaylor Sr. and Irma Fairman Gaylor.
A World War II U.S. Navy veteran, he graduated from Drury College in Springfield in 1948 and did graduate work at the University of Kansas City. He and Anne met in Kansas City. He was active in athletics, especially boxing. He married Anne Nicol on Dec. 29, 1949, in Springfield. They moved to Madison in 1952.
He was publisher of the Middleton Times-Tribune, a weekly newspaper, in the 1960s and was vice president for many years of a building maintenance company in Madison. He served as an FFRF officer for many years, and was still a board member.
Jody was one of six plaintiffs in FFRF's historic federal challenge of the National Day of Prayer. As a plaintiff, Jody entered into the court record his distaste for prayer and for the Sunday morning hypocrisy by racist deacons at the segregated worship services at the Church of Christ he attended. He always said religion "never took" with him, even as a small child. He was forced to submit to a full baptism immersion at age 12 in front of his congregation, an affront he never forgave. His standard line, when asked if he believed in God, was to reply, "No, but I believe in the fool catcher."
After retirement, he took over household duties. He was a skilled cook and baker and presided over special "family dinners," as well as functions of FFRF and the Women's Medical Fund, the abortion fund charity co-founded by Anne Gaylor, which has helped nearly 20,000 women. He loved to serve his frosted brownies and other specialties. Jody tested many of the recipes appearing in FFRF's *World Famous Atheist Cookbook*, and several of his recipes are included in it.
He served for more than two decades as FFRF's principal volunteer — picking up and sorting mail, filling sales orders, chauffeuring his wife to numerous FFRF functions, doing errands and building repair and often surprising staff and volunteers with freshly baked cookies. He was principal photographer at FFRF events for its first two decades, taking convention and other photos appearing in FFRF's original newsletter and then in Freethought Today. He also served as volunteer photographer for The Feminist Connection, the monthly newspaper that his daughter Annie Laurie edited and published from 1980-84.



Photo: Brent Nicastro

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Anne; four children, Andrew, twins Ian and Annie Laurie, and Jamie; two much-loved granddaughters, Sabrina Gaylor, 21, and Lily Anne Gaylor, 9; a son-in-law, Dan Barker; and three daughters-in-law, Lisa Strand, Nancy McClements and Carrie Gaylor.
A sister, Margaret "Peggy" Gaylor Babunovic of Huntsville, Ala., also survives. His younger brother, Richard, died in childhood.
Jody chose cremation with burial of ashes in a family plot, and requested no funeral or memorial service. Memorials in his memory may be made to FFRF, Box 750, Madison, WI 53701 or to the Women's Medical Fund, Box 248, Madison WI 53701. Both are 501(c)(3) charities.



Testing recipes, with Atticus perched on a chair, for *The World Famous Atheist Cookbook* in the late 1980s.



Adam Lee at the San Francisco Exploratorium science exhibit on the effects of mirrors on perception.

Paul J. Gaylor, FFRF 'institution,' 1926–2011



Newlyweds, 1950.



Paul, age 17.



This family portrait ran in a Madison daily in the 1960s. From left are Annie Laurie, Anne, Jamie, Paul, Ian and Andy.



Wedding day: Dec. 30, 1949.



Brothers Dickie and Paul.



Paul holds the twins, Ian and Annie Laurie.



Granddaughters Sabrina Gaylor and Lily Anne Gaylor.



Paul and Anne, in their 70s, visited Lake Louise, Canada.

"Humankind = Humans + Kindness. No gods required."

Hilary, 25, Tulsa. Student... Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

"Reality is my god and my religion."

Melissa Robbins, Tahlequah. Entrepreneur . . . Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

"Born again Skeptic."

Rhonda Dorle, 36, Silver City... Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

"I don't need an eternal reward to be moral."

Ric Nourse, Tulsa. Husband, Dad, Artist... Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

"I have a personal relationship with reality."

Paul and Adrianna Sanchez, Glenpool... Polyatheists

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

"I can be moral without religion."

Sabina Ewbank, Muskogee. Psychology Student... Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

‘Out of the Closet’ campaigns make news

Continued from front page

membership for coming out of the

closet in a city which possibly has more visible religion — in the form of

church-owned billboards and mega-churches, and the notorious Oral Rob-

erts University — than any other U.S. city,” said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

Next stop: Columbus

Seven “Out of the Closet” billboards featuring local nonbelievers went up in June for a month in Columbus, Ohio, with several students participating.

“I can be good without God,” said Dylan Galos, a Columbus student and atheist.

“Reason over faith, always,” was the affirmative message chosen by Nick, another Columbus student and atheist.

Columbus student and atheist Ashley Paramore was pictured with her telescope: “I see beauty in the universe — without God.”

“We value reason & compassion,” said Amanda Metskas and August Brunsman, Camp Quest directors and atheists. August is also executive director of the Secular Student Alliance, based in Columbus, which supports campus secular student clubs nationwide. Camp Quest offers younger students religion-free summer camp enrichment experiences.

“Personal gods don’t compute” for FFRF member Jeremy Harris, of Worthington, an engineer and atheist.

“I don’t believe in Zeus, either,” quipped Ed Sweeney, a Columbus accountant, FFRF member and atheist, who served as local campaign coordinator.

Olivia Chen, Columbus student and atheist, explained: “Compassion is my religion.”

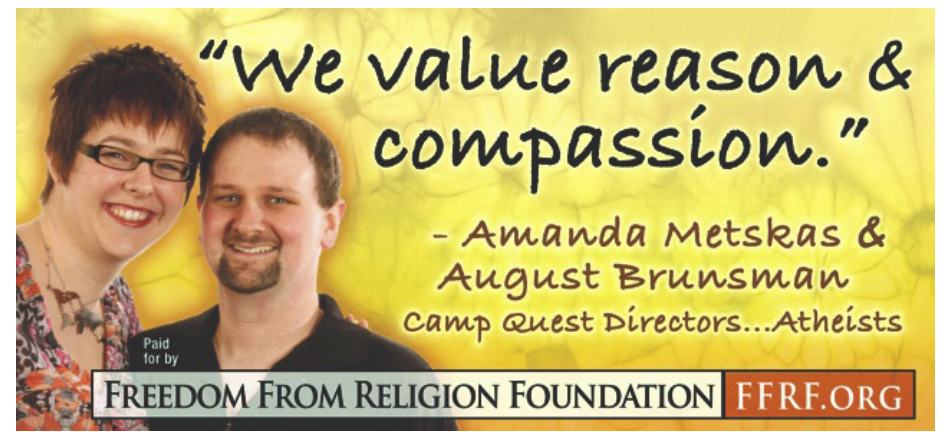
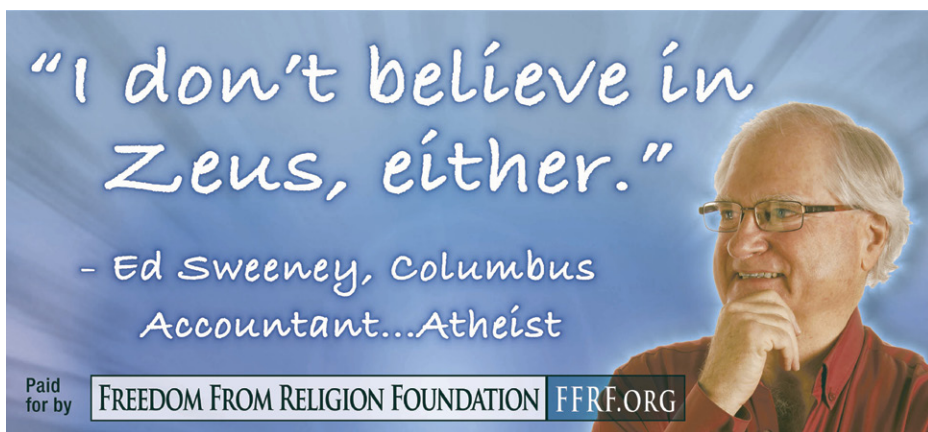
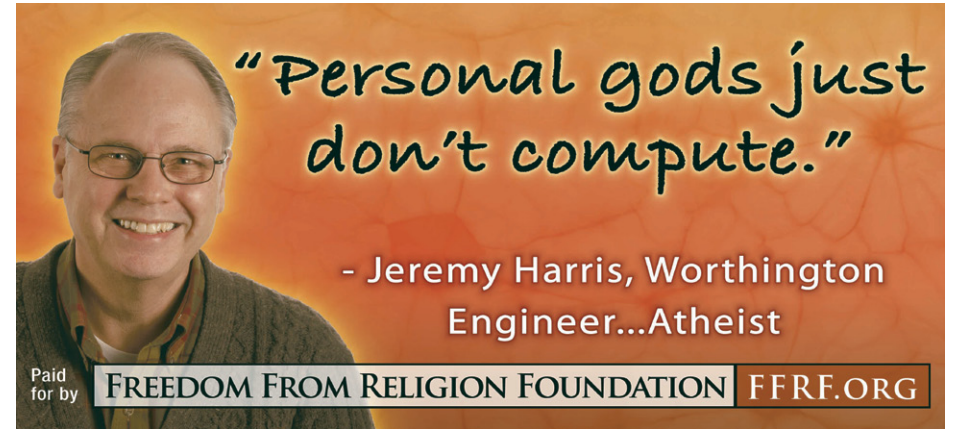
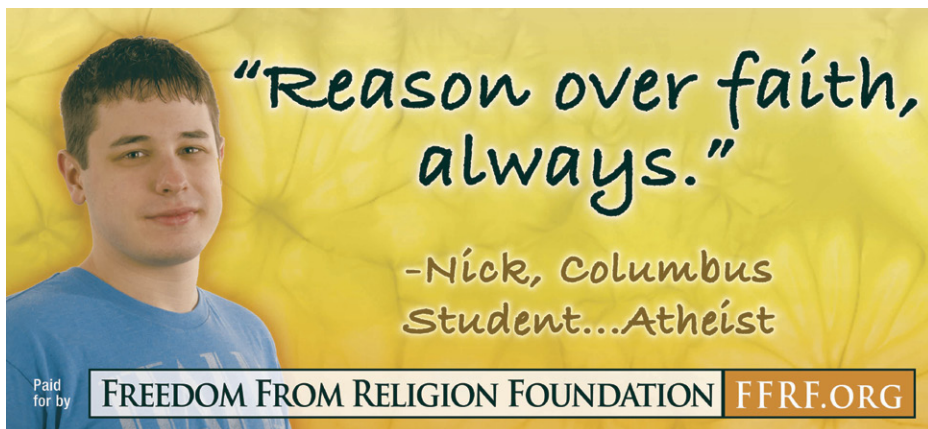
“We atheists and agnostics are your neighbor, your classmate, your colleague, the person who opens the door

Continued on next page



Tulsa outing

FFRF members and Tulsa-area freethinkers gathered at one of FFRF’s 10 “Coming Out of the Closet” billboards. From left are Jo Foster, Angela Villareal, Paul and Adrianna Sanchez, Cindy Cooper, West Ruffin, Mary Owen, Christopher Proctor, Greta Maclean and son, Kat Hanson, Deborah Dyer, Bob Noble, Lauren Blase, Susan End Bsl Uriarte, Rhonda Dorle, Ric Nourse, Aiden Poire, Cathy Poire, Sophia Poire, Jacob Poire and Willian Poire.



Columbus, Tulsa come out of closet

Continued from previous page

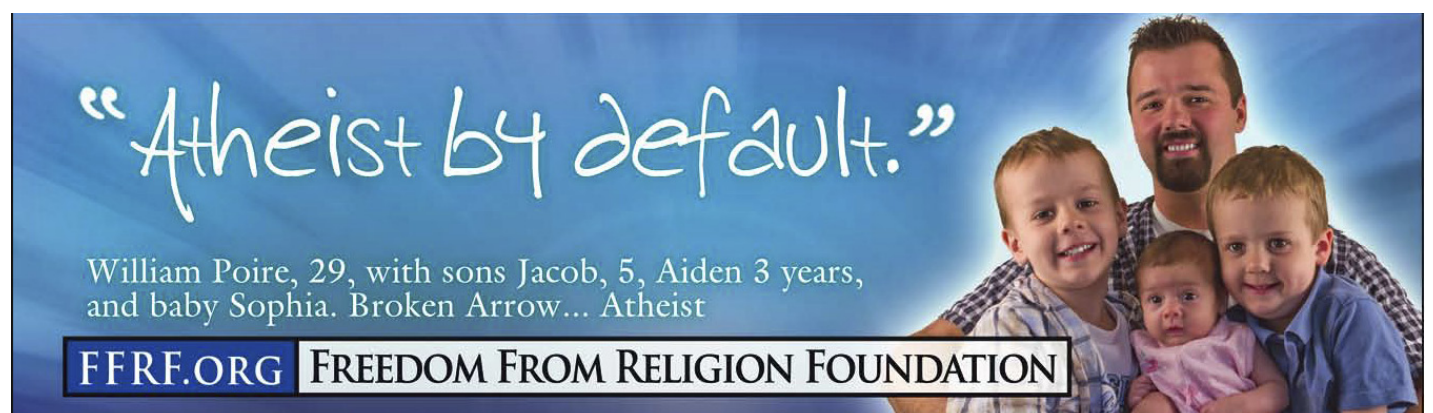
for you at the grocery store," said Dan Barker, FFRF co-president. "We're your friendly neighborhood atheists and agnostics."

"Our members are FFRF's greatest asset, the best advertisement for freethought," added Gaylor. "We are delighted to introduce them and their viewpoints to Columbus. It's high time to welcome atheists and agnostics and our point of view into the American mainstream."

Since FFRF can't put all of its members on a billboard, it has unveiled an interactive Web application, allowing any nonbeliever to coin a phrase, upload a photograph, choose an "Out of the Closet" appellation and post a virtual billboard at FFRF's website. Build your own billboard at ffrf.org/out/ and spread the word!

The campaign is paid for by donations to FFRF's billboard fund, which may specifically be earmarked for the campaign. Your contribution will make it possible for FFRF to take the campaign to new locations. FFRF plans to visit two new cities by fall.

If you're interested in helping to subsidize a billboard or coordinate a campaign in your area, please contact Annie Laurie Gaylor. FFRF depends on help from a local coordinator to book the digital photos and work with local participants.



This billboard appeared in Tulsa. Other billboards on this page were in Columbus.

Columbus church pulls plug on 'godless' FFRF billboard

Dylan Galos' billboard that's part of FFRF's "Out of the Closet" campaign in Columbus, Ohio, went over like a lead balloon with the property owner and had to be moved about three days after it went up in late June.

Galos, a student and atheist, announced to the world that "I can be good without God."

"The land where the billboard sits is owned by a church, and there were complaints about it," the ad agency told FFRF. "The church threatened to revoke leasing the land to the billboard company if it wasn't moved."

The billboard was moved from James Road and Allegheny Avenue to a nearby location on Columbus' east side.

"The action of this censorious church shows exactly why our campaign, intended to encourage social acceptance of nonbelievers, is so important," said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

"Do its deacons truly believe that

one can't be good without God?" asked Gaylor. "Nonbelievers know that it is not what you believe, but how you act, that makes you a moral person. We don't feel the need to be rewarded in heaven or threatened with everlasting punishment in order to do good and be ethical."

The church, a former nightclub, was later identified as Christ Cathedral Church, 3350 Allegheny Ave. Its website says it's located in an area formerly known by law enforcement as "Uzi Alley" for its high crime rate.

Co-President Dan Barker added, "Everywhere atheists and agnostics go, we encounter advertisements, marquees and other proselytizing messages. This is one of the few public advertisements anywhere in the nation right now, and there isn't room for it near to a church?"

FFRF member Joseph Sommer emailed June 27 to say that he'd worked at a humanist booth at Columbus' three-day Community Festi-

val, where the billboard campaign was getting very positive reviews. "And I couldn't believe that the Columbus Dispatch's online article about the billboards got 787 comments. The most I've ever seen before was in the 300 to 400 range."

The very first comment was "God help us (and them)!" The last post (when we checked at 4 p.m. June 27) was more encouraging:

"Should I accept your religion as proof of you being a good person? I don't believe in a god, and I'm fine with you believing in yours. Most of the people I know who believe in a god pray to it and seek forgiveness for what they've done. I accept what I've done and do my very darned hardest to make sure I don't repeat my mistakes. By the way, I've spent nearly every day this summer helping out the recreational sports in my suburb in one way or another. Those darned atheists, never helping out their communities!"

Black Collar Crime Blotter

Compiled by Bill Dunn

Arrested / Charged

Rev. Bernard Chojnacki, 36, Port Charlotte, **FL**: Exposing sexual organs and battery. Chojnacki, pastor at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, allegedly propositioned an undercover police officer at a Venice beach. He has been put on administrative leave. *Source: Miami Herald, 6-9-11*

Norman Collins Jr., Clarksdale, **MS**: Negligent homicide. Collins, music minister at Real Faith Christian Church, is charged in the death of his 3-month-old son, Norman Collins III, who died of hyperthermia.

Collins said he told a parishioner to bring the baby in from the car, but the parishioner claimed not to have heard the request. The baby's mother was singing in the choir. *Source: Clarksdale Press Register, 6-3-11*

Rev. James A. Hunter, 47, Sylvia Hunter, 44, Mobile, **AL**: 6 counts unlawful distribution of controlled substance, possession of controlled substance, receiving controlled substance. James Hunter, pastor at Forever Flowing Ministries, allegedly arranged to sell morphine to undercover deputies. Sheriff's photos showed a table with 4 guns and more than 100 pill bottles, mostly of prescription drugs. A website for the church, which also has a day care, says, "Though traditional family values and the general consensus on issues of morality have come under fire in recent years, the local church has often remained a place of consistency and hope for those seeking to maintain healthy communities and families." *Source: Mobile Press-Register, 6-2-11*

Emmanuel Animodi, 45, North York, **ON**: Sexual assault. Aminodi, a Pentecostal preacher who calls himself "Prophet" as the leader of Fire of Miracle Ministries, allegedly assaulted a woman who went for a prayer session at the church after midnight. *Source: Toronto Sun, 6-2-11*

Rev. Chris Hanson, 62, London, **ENG**: Suspicion of inciting a child to engage in sexual activity. Hanson, vicar at Ascension Church, was suspended "without prejudice" by the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford during the investigation. *Source: BBC News, 6-1-11*

Bishop Joe N. Flowers Jr., 41, Henrietta, **NY**: Course of sexual conduct against a child. The charge was filed against Flowers, senior pastor of Walk of Life Christian Center Inc., on the eve of his trial for allegedly molesting a boy under age 13. Course of sexual conduct means 2 or more acts. *Source: Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, 6-1-11*

Fr. Neil J. Byrne, 60, Brisbane, **AUS**: Possessing child exploitation material and 2 counts of making child exploitation material. Byrne is pastor of St. John's Wood and The Gap. Details of the alleged offenses came to light when a letter was sent to parents of a Catholic school affiliated with the parish where Byrne was a priest for 14 years. *Source: Courier-Mail, 5-31-11*

Jan Eastgate, a senior Australian official in the Church of Scientology, is charged with perverting the course of justice and has surrendered her passport in New South Wales. Eastgate is accused of coaching a then 11-year-old girl and the girl's mother to lie about alleged sexual abuse the girl suffered at the hands of her stepfather, a Scientology member. She alleged she was also told by senior church members that the alleged abuse was punishment for being bad in a previous life. *Source: The Australian, 5-31-11*

Rev. David E. Radtke, 52, Gibbon, **MN**: 2 counts of 3rd-degree criminal sexual conduct. Radtke, pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, is accused of fondling a 16-year-old Spanish foreign exchange student while she slept in the Radtke home.

According to the complaint, the girl told a deputy that Radtke gave her back massages about every 2 weeks between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. At times, she would fall asleep. On May 17, as she lay on the couch, Radtke rubbed her legs until she fell asleep. She awoke to find him molesting her inside her underwear. She said there were other times when she would awaken and "felt a similar feeling," the complaint said.

"What happened is not legal in any place of the world and you know what I mean!" the student, said in a text message to Radtke's wife, the complaint said. *Source: Star Tribune, 5-27-11*

Akwasi Oppong, 29, Nyanyano, **GHA**: Attempted rape. Oppong, an evangelist for Power of Jesus Church, is accused of assaulting a married 30-year-old woman who had come to his hotel room in Kasoa for counseling. Police Commander David Tefutor said Oppong allegedly demanded sex before the counseling could



take place and took off his clothes and asked her to pull his penis. The woman said she went to the bathroom and called police. When a policeman came, Oppong allegedly hit him in the head with an empty beer bottle and fled.

Oppong claimed the woman made romantic overtures first and that she'd called him for spiritual advice on how to help her stunted business grow. *Source: Ghana Daily Guide, 5-27-11*

Douglas R. Pope, Statesboro, **GA**: Child molestation and 3 counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes. Pope, youth pastor at Merrywood Baptist Church, is accused by a 14-year-old girl of "inappropriate behavior and touching [that] has been occurring over the past two years and also involved other juvenile females," a police press release said. *Source: WSAV News, 5-25-11*

Ervin S. Witmer, 49, Owen, **WI**: 3 counts of sexual assault of a child under 16. Witmer, pastor of Church of the Brethren in Stanley and Wisconsin district manager for Choice Books, is charged with having sex in a Madison Super 8 Motel with a 15-year-old boy he met on the Internet.

According to the complaint, the boy told police he met someone online named "Sam" who dropped him off at a library after they had sex. Witmer's number was found on the boy's cell-phone.

Virginia-based Choice Books specializes in Christian fare and provides "inspiring and wholesome reading material for shoppers across the United States," its website says. *Source: Wisconsin State Journal, 5-25-11*

Rev. Michael Nowak, Kenosha, **WI**: 2 counts of unlawful use of a telephone. Nowak, pastor of St. Therese of Lisieux Catholic Church, was placed on administrative leave by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, after allegations surfaced.

According to a criminal complaint, Nowak took a 17-year-old girl to a movie, then called later to ask her to dinner. The girl told police Nowak asked her to "wear a low-cut shirt to show off your cha-chas." He also allegedly called a 14-year-old girl and offered to perform oral sex on her.

Racine County authorities are investigating a possible third victim.

"It's unfortunate what's going on with the father. If it's true, it's a shame," said parishioner Roger Montes. *Source: WTMJ News, 5-24-11*

Rev. Jeremy D. Caraway, 36, Loyall, **KY**: 2 counts each of 2nd-degree rape, 1st-degree sexual abuse, 2nd-degree sodomy and 1st-degree unlawful transaction with a minor. Caraway, pastor of Loyall Church of God, allegedly raped a female under age 14 who is a congregation member.

The alleged victim's grandparents are her legal guardians. The grandmother set up an account to monitor the girl's Facebook messages, state police said. The grandmother called police after seeing something that raised her suspicions. *Source: Lexington Herald-Leader, 5-24-11*

Adam D. Carter, 25, Mansfield, **LA**: 3 counts of computer-aided solicitation of a minor. Carter, youth minister at Temple of Knowledge Church International, is accused of sending sexually oriented text messages to underage male church members. *Source: Shreveport Times, 5-24-11*

Timothy Dampier, 34, Seattle, **WA**: 2nd-degree child rape, 1st-degree child molestation, 3 counts of 2nd-degree child molestation, 3rd-degree child molestation, sexual exploitation of a minor and communication with a minor for immoral purposes. Dampier is a music minister at several area churches, worked at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue and was a licensed foster parent and group counselor. He's believed to have had sexual contact with at least 5 male teens from 2006-11.

"He sings under the anointing of God. He is highly anointed," said his childhood friend Damon Lyons. "He's very gifted and not only that, he has been a great service to the community and to churches that he's in, either as a minister in song or in the word of God. There is a loss here on both sides."

According to court documents, numerous alleged victims, who are ages 11-17, said Dampier watched pornography with them, and one boy said Dampier "paid him for sex." *Source: Bellevue Patch, 5-23-11*

Bishop Joe Willie Fox Sr., 60, Milwaukee, **WI**: 1st- and 2nd-degree sexual assault. Fox, pastor of a storefront church, allegedly had a sexual relationship, including intercourse, with a teen for 2 years, starting when she was 13. Fox gave her between \$50 and \$100 for having sex, she told police. *Source: Journal Sentinel, 5-23-11*

Rev. Randy White, 53, Tampa, **FL**: Driving under the influence (0.093 blood alcohol). White resigned as co-pastor in 2009 from Without Walls International Church, which he and then-wife Paula as co-pastor built into one of America's largest churches, one which was built on preaching the so-called prosperity gospel. They announced they were divorcing in 2007, after the church came under financial scrutiny for the Whites' failure to repay a \$170,000 loan from an elderly widow. *Source: AP, 5-22-11*

Sarv Narayan Jha, 56, Darbhanga, **IND**: Rape. Jha, a married Hindu priest, is charged with raping a 17-year-old girl May 10. He often visits private homes to perform religious rituals.

"On the fateful day, Jha, who was known to the family of the victim and had been a regular visitor to the house for the past 15 years, found her alone and sexually assaulted her," said a senior police officer. The girl later told her mother, despite Jha's warning to stay silent, the officer said. *Source: Hindustan Times, 5-20-11*

Rev. Shawn Francis Ratigan, 45, Independence, **MO**: 3 counts of possessing child pornography. Ratigan was associate pastor at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Kansas City until last December, when he moved to a priests' residence run by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist. A technician working on Ratigan's private computer found multiple "upskirt" images of girls as young as 3 or 4 years. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph made copies of the images and gave the computer to Ratigan's family, which destroyed it. The diocese later gave police the images.

The day after the computer tech alerted the diocese, Ratigan was found unconscious in his closed garage with his motorcycle running but has recovered. A suicide note said he was sorry "to the kids and his family," court documents said.

Police have identified several of the children and are interviewing them.

Julie Hess, St. Patrick School principal, said she detailed her concerns in a May 2010 letter to the diocese. "I seek to fulfill my responsibility as school principal in relaying a growing body of parent and teacher concerns regarding Pastor Shawn Ratigan's perceived inappropriate behavior with children," Hess wrote. *Source: Kansas City Star, 5-19-11, 5-26-11*

Rev. Richard Cobb, 57, Brookhaven, **PA**: Theft and criminal solicitation. Cobb, pastor at St. Mark's Baptist Church, and an accomplice allegedly swindled a Germantown property owner out of \$10,000. The accomplice posed as a license and inspections officer and cited the property owner for violations. The scam was

'Wear a low-cut shirt to show off your cha-chas.'

— Fr. Michael Nowak's alleged request to teen girl

discovered when a real officer issued violations to the owner, who insisted he'd already paid the fines. *Source: Delco Times, 5-19-11*

Rev. Alexander Bede Walsh, 57, Abbots Bromley, **UK**: 23 counts of indecent assault and 2 counts of serious sexual assault. Walsh, a Catholic priest, is accused of molesting 7 boys ages 7 to 16 between 1974-94 in Coventry and Staffordshire. *Source: Coventry Telegraph, 5-19-11*

Helen Gvozdic, 76, Roseville, **MI**: Embezzlement of more than \$50,000 but less than \$100,000. Gvozdic allegedly stole about \$80,000 from St. Stevan Decanski Serbian Orthodox Church while she was treasurer. She's one of the church's founding members.

Church members alerted Warren police last year. Detective Brian Kajewski said the missing money stems from checks remitted to "cash." The probe has been slowed by records written in Serbian. *Source: Oakland Press, 5-18-11*

Rev. Jeffrey L. Reaves Sr., 50, Petersburg, **VA**: Misdemeanor domestic assault. Reaves, senior pastor at Good Shepherd Baptist Church, is accused by his adult daughter, Jasmine Reaves, of slapping her and knocking her down, after which he allegedly kicked her in the back, hit her in the face and pushed her in a closet. *Source: Richmond Times-Dispatch, 5-18-11*

Rev. Bruce Sanders, 48, Eufaula, **OK**: Rape by instrumentation, sexual battery and indecent exposure. Sanders, pastor of North Fork Baptist Church, is accused of molesting a 19-year-old woman starting when she was 16 when she lived with Sanders and his wife. She's now a student at Oklahoma Baptist University. *Source: Muskogee Phoenix, 5-18-11*

Dharam Prakash Kapoor, New Delhi, **IND**: Rape. Kapoor, a married Hindu priest, is alleged to have repeatedly drugged and raped a female Delhi University student over a period of 4 months at a temple.

Kapoor, told the alleged victim that "God Bajaji wanted him to have sex with her." The woman turned over to police a CD she discovered that showed the alleged assaults taking place. *Source: India Today, 5-18-11*

Christopher A. Gonzalez-Garay, 19, Edgerton, **WI**: Sexual assault of a child. Gonzalez-Garay, a youth counselor at Oaklawn Academy, is accused of molesting a 14-year-old boy at the Catholic boarding school, which is operated by the Legionaries of Christ and has ties to the right-wing Regnum Christi movement. The founder, the late **Rev. Marcial Maciel Degollado**, had relationships with at least 2 women and fathered up to 6 children, 2 of whom he allegedly abused sexually. The recently beatified Pope John Paul II was one of Maciel's strong supporters.

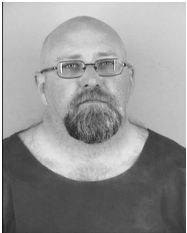
The complaint said Gonzalez-Garay, a Mexico native, admitted touching the boy, but claimed he had apologized and asked him to forgive and pray for him. *Source: Wisconsin State Journal, 5-17-11*

Rev. Derrick T. Griffin, 40, Minneapolis, **MN**: 2nd-degree murder. Griffin, an associate minister allegedly stalked his estranged wife and then shot her escort, Kristopher Miller, 27, outside Miller's home. Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman said his office will present the case to a grand jury to see if a charge of 1st-degree murder is warranted. *Source: Pioneer Press, 5-16-11*

Rev. Leon Edwill Piepenbrink, 51, St. Paul, **MN**: 7 counts of theft by swindle. Piepenbrink, pastor at Shepherd of the Hills Church in Inver Grove Heights, is suspected of embezzling about \$62,000 from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod over multiple years.

Church members grew suspicious last summer after he told them his safety was threatened. He requested reimbursement for security systems, bulletproof glass and purchase of a gun. Piepenbrink also reportedly told church officials he was shot at by the occupant of a vehicle near Hastings. During questioning about alleged fabrications, he admitted stealing money, the complaint said. *Source: South-West Review, 5-16-11*

Rev. Riccardo Seppia, 51, Sestri Ponente, **ITA**: Immoral behavior with a minor and with the use of stupefying substances. Seppia, pastor at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in the Genoa suburb, is accused of molesting an altar boy, age



‘Perhaps one day, your Lord will forgive you. I haven’t.’

— Victim statement at William Allen’s sentencing

16, and giving him cocaine. Police suspect he abused 5 other boys. Seppia is jailed and has been suspended from his duties.

Emanuele Alfano, 24, a former seminarian described as Seppia’s friend and lover, was arrested on suspicion of procuring boys for Seppia after police intercepted his phone call to the priest. Seppia told authorities he is HIV-positive. *Source: AP, 5-15-11; AKI, 5-19-11; La Repubblica, 5-31-11*

Hafiz Khan, 76, Miami, **FL**: Izhar Khan, 24, Margate, **FL**: Conspiracy to provide material support to a conspiracy to kill, injure and kidnap people abroad. They allegedly planned to funnel at least \$50,000 to the Pakistani Taliban. The Khans, father and son, are Muslim imams at separate mosques.

Another son, daughter and grandson were also indicted. *Source: CNN, 5-14-11*

Richard Taylor, 61, Anchorage, **AK**: 3 counts of sexual abuse of a minor and 1 count of attempted sexual abuse of a minor. Taylor is deacon and director of True Vine Ministries. The victim told police that Taylor had been touching her inappropriately for almost a year and a half and would give her money each time. She alleged she could “probably guarantee she was not the only person” Taylor abused. *Source: Anchorage Daily News, 5-13-11*

Rev. Joseph J. Spencer, 26, Murrieta, **CA**: Rape, sexual intercourse with a person under 18 and more than 3 years younger than the defendant, oral copulation with a child under 18 and rape with a foreign object. Spencer, assistant pastor and choir director at Mountain View Community Church in Temecula, allegedly picked the teen up at school at least 5 times after her mother dropped her off. She was a choir member.

Spencer is on probation on a conviction for sexual molestation in 2008 in which he pleaded guilty. *Source: Murrieta Patch, 5-13-11*

Rev. Alex Williams, Atlanta, **GA**: Aggravated assault and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. Williams, pastor of Mechanicsville Church of God in Christ, allegedly shot a 13-year-old in the hip for throwing rocks at his van, breaking the rear window. The boy was listed in stable condition. *Source: AP, 5-9-11*

Joel Clement, 53, North Conway, **NH**: Felonious sexual assault. Clement, an elder at Valley Christian Church, is accused of molesting a girl, age 12. The pastor and 2 other church elders have already been convicted of not reporting the allegation to police. The girl’s parents told church officials, who allegedly ignored them, before going to police 6 months later. *Source: Boston Globe, 5-11-11*

Rev. William Bland Jr., 60, Petersburg, **VA**: Aiding in forgery, accessory before the fact in obtaining money on false pretenses and willful misconduct by a notary public. Bland, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church, is accused of helping an insurance agent defraud his estranged wife out of more than \$373,000.

Bland should have known, the grand jury decided, that Ralph Bolling “had [Patricia Bolling’s] name forged to a Consent of Spouse document so as to have paid entirely to himself a pension earned during the marriage.” The pastor is alleged to have falsely affirmed that Patricia Bolling signed the document in his presence. *Source: Progress-Index, 5-10-11*

Rev. Edward Tratsaert, 67, Queenstown, **S.A.F**: Sale of infant formula not meant for resale. Tratsaert, a Catholic priest, was arrested with about 1,000 cans of formula meant for government hospitals, the Eastern Cape Health Department said.

Tratsaert allegedly sold 14-ounce cans of the Nestlé formula, clearly marked “not for resale,” for 35 rand (\$5) each, said Health Department spokesperson Sizwe Kupelo. “At certain instances, mothers were turned away by nurses in hospitals instructing them where to go purchase it, instead of getting it for free,” Kupelo said. *Source: iafrica.com, 4-30-11*

Alvaro D. Guzman, 24, Houston, **TX**: Indecency with a child. Guzman, a Kids Life Ministry volunteer at Pastor Joel Osteen’s Lakewood Church, is accused of having sexual contact with an 8-year-old autistic boy in February 2010.

Court documents said a witness, who’s also a volunteer, saw Guzman massage the boy’s “private parts” in a play tunnel in a church child care room. She told police Guzman looked around the room to “determine if anyone had seen him” after touching the boy. *Source: Fox 26 News, 5-6-11*

Joel A. Huddleston, 28, Okeechobee, **FL**: Lewd and lascivious molestation of a child. Huddleston, youth pastor at Buckhead Ridge Christian Church and social studies teacher and girls basketball coach at Yearling Middle School, al-

legedly molested a 12-year-old girl at his home.

“His wife came home and could not find him and got in through a locked door into a bedroom area and discovered the young lady and him in the room,” said Sheriff Paul May. “She was in a state of undress and he was clothed. They were both on the bed, our understanding is both were asleep. His hands were upon the young lady.”

Huddleston’s wife took photos on her cellphone. *Source: WPEC News, 5-5-11*

Rev. Raymond “Bud” Mosley, 69, Silver Springs, **NV**: Forcible sexual assault of a child under 14 and lewdness with a child under 14. Mosley is associate pastor at Silver Springs Christian Church, where his wife is senior pastor. According to the complaint, Mosley allegedly “encouraged, instructed and compelled” a 4-year-old girl to kiss and touch his genitals “at or near” the church. His wife turned him in. He was arrested at the casino he also works at. *Source: Nevada Appeal, 5-4-11*

Rev. Charles Thessing, 49, Morrilton, **AR**: Smuggling contraband. Thessing, pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, was charged with a felony for trying to sneak in a gallon freezer bag half full of loose-leaf tobacco for an inmate on death row at Varner Supermax Prison. *Source: AP, 5-5-11*

Rev. Charles E. Ledford, 53, Simpsonville, **SC**: Forgery, bank fraud, breach of trust over \$2,000 and 9 counts of breach of trust over \$10,000. Ledford was pastor at Elmwood Avenue Church of God for almost 10 years before leaving last November. He’s accused of stealing about \$254,000 during his tenure at the church. *Source: WLTX News, 5-4-11*

Rev. John A. Jackson, 61, Winston-Salem, **NC**: Embezzlement. Jackson, former pastor at Goodwill First Baptist Church in Madison, was removed after church administrators became suspicious. While police were investigating a stolen computer, it was discovered Jackson had spent \$10,982 of the church’s money on insurance for 5 cars without authorization.

The vehicles were a 2006 Cadillac SRX, 2008 Cadillac Escalade, 2004 Cadillac Deville, 2006 Cadillac DTS and 2009 Cadillac CTS. The alleged offenses happened between February 2004 and March 2011.

Court records show Jackson had embezzlement charges in Wake County in 1991, 1995 and 1996. Church administrators said they never checked his record because they were going by the good-faith rule. *Source: WGHP News, 5-4-11*

Charles S. Fox, 47, Camp Hill, **PA**: Indecent assault and 5 counts of corruption of minors involving four victims. Fox allegedly molested 4 students at Covenant Christian Academy when he taught there in 2006-08. *Source: CBS 21 News, 5-4-11*

Joshua Carroll, 28, Tucson, **AZ**: Sexual conduct with a minor. Carroll, who was recently “let go” as a teacher at River of Life Christian School, is accused of having inappropriate contact with a girl, 13. The mother of the alleged victim called police, who collected physical and computer evidence and arrested Carroll. *Source: Ariz. Daily Star, 5-2-11*

Pleaded / Convicted

Ernest Willis, 52, Gilford, **NH**: Found guilty by a jury of rape after earlier pleading guilty to statutory rape.

The woman, now 29, and Willis were members of a fundamentalist Baptist church when the 2 alleged rapes occurred in 1997. She was 15 and Willis was 38 when he allegedly impregnated her. Church officials forced her to stand before the congregation and apologize before sending her to Colorado to live with a couple she didn’t know. The baby was put up for adoption. *Source: AP, 5-28-11*

Daren Palmer, 42, Idaho Falls, **ID**: Pleaded guilty to wire fraud and money laundering. The plea agreement said between 2002-08, Palmer got \$75.8 million from 68 investors, many of them fellow Mormons, in an affinity fraud Ponzi scheme. Palmer lived in a 16,000-square-foot home across the street from the Mormon church where he cleaned the sanctuary.

Wayne Klein, a court-appointed receiver, said investors “knew that Palmer was [Mormon], and that gave them comfort.” Prosecutors esti-

mated losses at \$20 million. *Source: NY Times, 5-26-11*

Rev. Jamaar Manlove, 28, Bear, **DE**: A jury found Manlove, co-pastor of Vision Builders Christian Center, guilty of 2 felony theft counts and 3 misdemeanors related to what prosecutors called one of Delaware’s largest mortgage frauds ever. He was accused of preying on people facing an imminent sheriff’s sale and promising them he would get them cash back with a chance to buy their homes back. *Source: News Journal, 5-18-11*

Rev. Joseph Mavambu, Riviere-Verte, **NB**: Pleaded guilty to touching a minor for a sexual purpose in a plea bargain that dropped charges of sexual invitation of a minor and sexual assault. Mavambu served Catholic parishes in northwestern New Brunswick and has been suspended by the Diocese of Edmundston. He moved in 2000 from the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Source: Daily Gleaner, 5-18-11*

Rev. Joseph Davis, 65, Succasunna, **NJ**: Pleaded guilty to 2nd-degree theft. Davis resigned in July 2010 as pastor of St. Therese Catholic Church a week after an audit found money missing. A subsequent probe determined Davis had stolen about \$200,000 during his nearly 2-decade tenure there, including money from the collection plate, votive candles and proceeds from bingo and the Rosary Society. *Source: Newark Star-Ledger, 5-17-11*

Rev. Jason LaPierre, 35, Hudson Falls, **NY**: Pleaded guilty to 2nd-degree grand larceny. LaPierre, a minister at River Church in Kingsbury and director of marketing for Hudson River Community Credit Union in Corinth, admitted embezzling \$400,000 over 4 years.

Saratoga County District Attorney James Murphy III said LaPierre will not make restitution. “The bonding company is paying it back to the credit union in one lump sum. The bonding company will have to go after LaPierre.” Murphy said LaPierre wrote cashier’s checks and endorsed them with the name of the credit union manager. *Source: The Saratogian, 5-17-11*

Rev. Kenneth Terrell, 46, Bloomingdale, **GA**: Pleaded guilty to wire fraud. Terrell allegedly stole at least \$200,000 from New Harvest International Ministries, where he was pastor. He’s also awaiting trial on charges he molested a minor male who attended New Harvest. *Source: Savannah Now, 5-4-11*

Bishop Raymond Lahey, 70, Antigonish, **NS**: Pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography for importation. Lahey, who resigned as head of the Catholic Diocese of Antigonish, was charged after customs agents examined his laptop computer as he returned to Canada from an overseas trip in 2009. They found 588 graphic images of children, 33 videos and stories featuring enslavement of children, estimated as young as 8 years.

His passport showed he’d visited Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Germany — countries that are notorious sources of child porn. *Source: AP, 5-4-11*

Rev. Joel Church, 70, Rogers, **AR**: Pleaded guilty to possessing child pornography. In a plea bargain, 2 related charges were dropped. Church, the founder of Freedom Bible College and Seminary, was arrested after images of nude children were found on his computers at home and at school. *Source: Ozarks First, 5-2-11*

Sentenced

Brian R. Gray, 33, Winder, **GA**: 15 years in prison and 10 years’ probation after pleading guilty to child molestation, statutory rape and enticing a child for indecent purposes. Gray was a youth pastor at Monroe Church of Christ. He was convicted of conducting a 9-month sexual relationship, often at his home, with a 15-year-old girl who was in his youth group. *Source: Athens Banner-Herald, 6-14-11*

Rev. Samuel Chai Cho Oh, 66, Garden Grove, **CA**: 1 year in prison and 1 year of home confinement after pleading guilty to 10 counts of visa fraud and 2 counts of money laundering. Oh, pastor of Union Church and president of California Union University in Fullerton, was charged with operating a scheme that let foreign students enter and remain in the U.S. by pretending they were students at CUU, which has

Creep of the Month



Disgraced and defrocked

Patrick Joseph McCabe, 75, headed home to Ireland to face 10 counts of indecent assault for allegedly molesting at least 6 boys as young as 10. From 1973-81, he was a priest in the Archdiocese of Dublin. It wasn’t long before complaints were heard. Here’s one from 1978, included in the Irish Murphy Report, which devotes a chapter to McCabe but redacts his name:

“A female helper employed in the house entered [the] 6-year-old son’s bedroom and found Fr [name redacted] lying on the child who was naked on his bed. Fr [name redacted] tried to pass it off as a game. It was reported that the little boy later remarked that Fr [name redacted] was choking him and that he thought priests were holy.”

Multiple sources have confirmed that McCabe is the priest whose name is redacted. The report details how he was sent to the U.S. in 1982 for treatment at a New Mexico facility, where he was diagnosed as a pedophile and got Depo-Provera shots to reduce his sex drive. But a year later, the late Bishop Mark Hurley of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, Calif., turned McCabe loose at St. Bernard Parish in Eureka. He worked in several parishes until 1987, when he was forced to resign amid allegations he molested 4 boys in Humboldt County. Civil suits are pending.

He was handed over in June at San Francisco Airport to officers of An Garda Siachana, Ireland’s national police. “This case encapsulates everything that was wrong with the archdiocesan handling of child sexual abuse cases,” the Murphy Report said. *Source: bishop-accountability.org; San Francisco Chronicle, 6-7-11*

lost its certification.

Oh is a naturalized U.S. citizen from South Korea, where many of the students were from. He was also ordered to turn over school property valued at \$4 million and \$418,000 to the federal government. *Source: L.A. Times, 6-13-11*

Rabbi Saul Kassin, 89, Brooklyn, **NY**: 2 years’ unsupervised probation for money laundering after pleading guilty. Kassin, leader of about 75,000 New York Syrian Jews, was among 5 rabbis arrested in 2009 in a federal probe. He agreed to forfeit \$367,500 for using a charity to transmit money. *Source: Asbury Park Press, 6-2-11*

Rev. Carlton F. Hammonds, 57, Willows, **CA**: 3 years and 8 months in prison after a jury convicted him of 3 counts of lewd acts and misdemeanor battery. Hammonds, former Willows Baptist Church pastor, was tried for a series of reported incidents in 2006 involving girls ages 12, 13 and 15 at the time.

Victims testified about aggressive touching they said progressed to include groping of their breasts and buttocks, with Hammonds repeatedly saying he loved them. *Source: Willows Journal, 6-2-11*

Brian D. Mitchell, 57, **UT**: Life in prison for kidnapping and unlawful transportation of a minor across state lines to engage in sexual activity.

Mitchell, a homeless street preacher when he took 14-year-old Elizabeth Smart from her bedroom in 2002, claimed God told him to “take a young girl by force” so they could practice polygamy. Smart, now 23, testified she was raped nearly every day for 9 months.

Wanda Barzee, Mitchell’s estranged wife, is serving 15 years after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit aggravated kidnapping. Smart was forced to watch Mitchell and Barzee having sex during her captivity. *Source: Salt Lake Tribune, 5-25-11*

Rev. Christopher Settlemoir, 27, Warren, **MI**: 81 months to 15 years in prison after pleading no contest to 2 counts each of 1st- and 2nd-degree criminal sexual conduct. Settlemoir, pastor at Antioch Baptist Church, was also sentenced to 1 to 4 years for accosting a child for immoral purposes.

Prosecutors alleged Settlemoir forced a 15-year-old boy to participate in sex acts and accosted 2 other boys younger than 16 between September 2009 and April 2010. *Source: Detroit News, 5-24-11*

Rev. Felipe D. Pacheco, 55, San Antonio, **TX**: 1 year in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to manufacture counterfeit permanent-resident cards. Pacheco, pastor of Ministerios Epicentro Donde Nace La Bendición, made and sold fake “green cards” and Social Security cards. *Source: Express-News, 5-21-11*

Rev. Samuel A. Jordan, 55, New Albany, **PA**: 25 to 60 years in prison after being found guilty of 5 counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse with a person under 16. Jordan, a long-haul trucker and pastor at Laddsbury Com-

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page
munity Church, allegedly preyed on boys ages 15 and 11 on several occasions.

He pleaded guilty to misdemeanor sex crimes in 1986 and was sentenced to prison, where he served 11 months. *Source: Towanda Daily Review, 5-16-11*

Rev. Paul Hartig, 46, Waterloo, **ON**: 9 months' home detention, 3 years' probation and 200 hours of community service for theft of over \$5,000. Hartig, senior pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church, admitted helping himself to \$12,000 in church donations over 16 months. He was twice captured on surveillance video. *Source: Waterloo Record, 5-11-11*

Fr. Kevin F. Phillips, Bathurst, **NSW**: 3 concurrent 9-month terms in prison after pleading guilty to 4 counts of gross indecency with a male under age 18. Phillips admitted molesting a student at St. Stanislaus College in 1990 when he was assistant chaplain at the Catholic boarding school.

The abuse began when Phillips let the boy and a friend drink whisky in his room. Phillips exposed himself and performed a sexual act in front of the boys. In May 1990, the teen went to Phillips' room, where he read from a sex education book. "Thereafter, the complainant visited the offender's room several times each week," the facts to the court stated. *Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 5-12-11*

Rabbi Gavriel Bidany, 47, Tel Aviv, **ISR**: 60 days in jail after being found guilty of assault in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn for twice fondling a 23-year-old female Israeli Army officer while she slept on a flight to New York.

Magistrate Judge Ramon Reyes said at sentencing he believed Bidany, a married father of 11, "testified falsely" at trial. *Source: The Smoking Gun, 5-12-11*

Kathleen Dake, 58, Blackhawk, **CA**; **Evelyn Peinado**, 64, Alamo, **CA**; **Virgilio Lukban**, 46, Danville, **CA**: Embezzlement. They allegedly stole \$360,000 from St. Isidore Catholic Church, where Peinado served on the finance committee. Dake and Lukban were employed by the parish, said Detective Sgt. Allan Shields. *Source: San Francisco Chronicle: 5-3-11*

Craig S. Wheeler, 49, Fayetteville, **NC**: 120 counts, including statutory rape, sex offense with a student and taking indecent liberties. Wheeler, an administrator at Eastover Christian Academy, is accused of setting up a makeshift residence at the school and conducting a year-long sexual relationship with a 14-year-old female student. *Source: Fayetteville Observer, 4-29-11*

Fr. William J. Allen, 81, Ottawa, **ON**: 4½ months of house arrest and 9 months' probation after being found guilty of indecent assault. Allen was pastor at St. Monica's Catholic Church and taught at St. Pius X High when he allegedly molested 3 brothers for several years, although he was only charged for offenses against one.

"Perhaps one day, your Lord will forgive you," the victim, who was 16 in 1974, told Allen in court. "I haven't."

He testified his older brother was assaulted every Wednesday for 5 years after choir practice in the church rectory. "When you violated that trust, Mr. Allen, you displayed such a shameless hypocrisy that you, a Catholic priest, became a grotesque, disgusting example of evil." *Source: Ottawa Citizen, 4-20-11*

Civil Lawsuits Filed

The mother of a girl who went into anaphylactic shock and died from cardiac arrest is suing **Rev. Glories Powell**, Las Vegas, and **Moment of Truth Ministries**, aka the **Church of Divine Appointment**, in district court in Clark County, **NV**. The suit alleges Brianna Benbo, 16, died in 2010 due to an allergic reaction to bee pollen that was in a capsule that church staff gave her in preparation for fasting for a religious ritual. She died 4 hours after taking the pill. *Source: KNTV News, 6-15-11*

The **Seattle Catholic Archdiocese** is being sued by 3 men who allege they were sexually abused by priests decades ago, and that the church failed to protect them.

The men alleged they were repeatedly molested in the 1960s and '70s as members of St.

‘The brothers carried long leather straps. It was a very abusive place.’ — Attorney statement on Christian Brothers bankruptcy filing

Anne Parish in Queen Anne, WA. The complaint names three priests: **John Marsh**, **Gerald Moffat** and **Dennis Muehe**. Marsh is retired, Moffat is defrocked, and Muehe is dead. In 2005, the archdiocese settled a lawsuit alleging Moffat had repeatedly abused an altar boy in the early '70s. The settlement came after the victim committed suicide as an adult in a parish parking lot. *Source: Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 6-5-11*

Parents of a girl, now age 7, filed a lawsuit alleging that **Fr. Shawn Ratigan**, 45, Kansas City, **MO**, a priest in the **Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese**, took nude photographs of their daughter. The suit names Ratigan, **Bishop Robert Finn** and the diocese as defendants and alleges that from 2006-10 Ratigan engaged in sexually explicit conduct with the girl.

The lawsuit also alleges that in 2006, a diocese employee reported to officials that she observed suspicious behavior involving Ratigan and a 4-year-old girl. In response, the lawsuit alleges, the diocese and Finn concealed the report. *Source: Kansas City Star, 6-2-11*

In Houston, **TX**, 70 plaintiffs seek to enjoin **Rev. Theodore Baines Sr.**, pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, from entering church property. They also seek damages for trespassing, theft, conversion and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The "embarrassed and humiliated" Baptists want Baines removed and allege he stole money from the church, made lewd remarks to women, threatened parishioners with a gun, and was involved in "violent criminal activity," including waving a handgun at motorists while cruising with open bottles of alcohol and loaded guns in his pickup. *Source: Courthouse News Service, 5-26-11*

Emmanuel Christian Center of the Assemblies of God in Spring Lake Park, **MN**; its youth pastor in 2005, **Paul Brandon**, 47; and the **Minn. District Council of the Assemblies of God** are defendants in a suit filed by a man who alleges Brandon sexually abused him 6 years ago when he was 15.

The plaintiff alleges the abuse occurred during church-sponsored sleepovers at Brandon's home. Brandon was convicted in 2010 of 4th-degree criminal sexual conduct and is on probation after serving a 4-month work release sentence. *Source: KSTP News, 5-26-11*

The mother of a Chicago boy abused by defrocked priest **Daniel McCormack** has sued the **Vatican** for its alleged role in covering up clergy sex abuse.

"The reason we have to do this is because Daniel McCormack is just one of many offenders who've been allowed to offend in secret," attorney Jeffrey Anderson said. "Until there is change at the top, children remain at risk."

The boy's family settled for \$1.6 million in 2008 with the Chicago Archdiocese after McCormack pleaded guilty to molesting 5 boys. Anderson asserts he can reopen the case since the Vatican was not party to the settlement. He said he has new evidence leading "from McCormack to the pope." *Source: AFP, 5-12-11*

Archbishop of Philadelphia **Cardinal Justin Rigali** and other archdiocesan officials are being sued in connection with alleged sexual abuse of a boy by a priest who formerly served in Delaware County, **PA**. The alleged victim is mentally disabled due to the abuse, the suit claims.

The father of the alleged victim, now 32, filed the suit on behalf of his son, who alleges **Fr. Rev. Robert L. Brennan** molested him 17 years ago in the rectory of Resurrection of Our Lord Parish, where Brennan was parochial vicar from 1993 to 2004. *Source: Delco Times, 5-10-11*



Take his remote away

"Ask the good folks in Talladega, Ala., or Joplin, Mo., about their god. He must be a monster," writes John Evans, Georgia, about this sign in Cherokee County, Ga.

Fr. Raymond F. Schulte, 58, of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, **MN**, is being sued in Puerto Rico for allegedly molesting the plaintiff at a boarding school run by the **Order of St. Benedict**, also named as a defendant. The plaintiff alleges he was sexually abused in about 1978 when he was 14. *Source: AP, 5-3-11*

Civil Lawsuits Settled

Bishop Eddie Long, Lithonia, **GA**, pastor at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, has settled civil suits with Jamal Parris and 3 other young men who alleged Long lured them into sexual relationships by using his position and lavishing them with gifts.

The men will divide \$2.2 million equally and get \$400,000 in payments until the money is paid out over the next 20 years, a source familiar with the settlement said. The final figure comes to \$22 million for the 4 men and \$2.8 million for the plaintiffs' attorneys.

The case wasn't investigated criminally because Georgia's age of consent is 16. The young men were 17 and 18 when the alleged sexual contact occurred. *Source: Christian Post, 5-26-11; Redding News Review, 6-8-11*

A Texas man in his 40s settled a suit against the Catholic **Diocese of Fort Worth** for an undisclosed 6-figure amount, according to his attorney Steven Schulte, who said documents suggest the diocese knew 11 years before his client was abused that **Msgr. James Reilly** molested other children.

At least 20 people have accused Reilly of abuse. He worked from 1969-87 at St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church in Arlington and died in 1999. *Source: Houston Chronicle, 5-11-11*

Legal Developments

Two investigations of alleged fraud by **Rev. Jerry Hanoum**, 61, Brentwood, **CA**, were suspended after Hanoum was found shot dead in his vehicle. It's been ruled a suicide. Hanoum was accusing of defrauding former churchgoers at Mountain View Christian Center in Oakley. Plaintiff Donna Quinlan alleges fraud and financial and psychological elder abuse in a civil suit, stemming from loans she made to the church. *Source: Contra Costa Times, 5-14-11*

The Illinois Supreme Court denied the **Diocese of Belleville's** request to overturn a \$5 million jury award in 2008 to James Wisniewski, Champaign, who sued the diocese and **Fr. Raymond Kownacki**, 76, alleging Kownacki molested him for 5 years as an altar boy in the 1970s.

Wisniewski testified the priest showed him a gun and threatened to kill his parents if he told. The suit alleges the diocese engaged in "fraudulent concealment" by moving Kownacki, now removed from clerical duties, from one parish to another. *Source: Bloomberg News, 5-25-11*

The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled against an Ohio pastor in prison for wanton murder by driving drunk in 2009. **Rev. Daniel Gabbard**, 40, was driving a tractor-trailer that crossed the center line and killed a Kentucky prosecutor. The court affirmed his conviction and said he couldn't argue he had ineffective counsel. *Source: LEX 18 News, 5-19-11*

New York's Court of Appeals will rule if Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes must release records in an alleged sex abuse case involving **Rabbi Abraham Mondrowitz**, who fled to Israel in 1986 amid allegations he abused patients in his psychotherapy practice.

Attorney Michael Leshner, who represents 6 alleged victims, suspects Hynes didn't try to extradite Mondrowitz in order to avoid hurting his ties with the Orthodox community, a charge Hynes denies. Hynes' spokesman said the charges aren't extraditable offenses and that Mondrowitz faces immediate arrest if he returns to the U.S. *Source: Jewish Week, 5-10-11*

The North American branch of the **Christian Brothers** filed for bankruptcy amid mounting sexual abuse claims against U.S. and Canadian members.

Plaintiffs' attorney Michael Pfau said he's settled more than 50 cases for \$25.6 million in the last 5 years, most of them originating at a now-closed orphanage and boarding school in Kent, Wash. "There were rapes, molestations and beatings. The brothers carried long leather straps. It was a very abusive place," Pfau said. *Source: Reuters, 4-29-11*

Allegations

At least 80 alleged sex abuse victims, with more expected to join, are part of a legal action announced in Belgium targeting Catholic officials.

"The group of victims of sexual abuse in the church have summoned the **Holy See**, the **Belgian bishops** and **superiors of religious orders and congregations** in the Ghent Court of First Instance," a statement said.

Two days earlier, Belgian bishops agreed in principle to compensate victims. About 500 have come forward so far.

Among several alleged victims who took part in a press conference in Ghent was author Roel Verschueren, who said he was abused by Jesuits from the ages of 12 to 14 "just around the corner from here." *Source: AFP, 6-1-11*

Removed / Resigned

Fr. William Myers, pastor at St. Raymond

Catholic Church, Menlo Park, **CA**, was placed on administrative leave for potentially committing a "boundary violation" with a 17-year-old boy at a Ross Dress For Less store.

According to a police report, Myers tried to strike up a conversation with the boy, whom he did not know, and followed him into a dressing room stall. The boy's father called police. No criminal charge was immediately filed.

Archdiocese of San Francisco Bishop William Justice told parishioners that when he confronted Myers, the priest told him he's in treatment for sexual addiction. *Source: San Jose Mercury News, 6-2-11*

Fr. Herman Spronck and "**Fr. Van B.**" of the Salesians of St. John Bosco in the Netherlands were suspended from clerical duties after it was discovered Van B., 73, belonged to a pro-pedophilia group and Spronck defended the group, Martijn, which advocates legalizing sex between adults and children.

RTL Nieuws published interviews with Spronck and Van B. "Society thinks these relationships are harmful. I disagree," RTL quoted Van B., who served on Martijn's board, as saying.

RTL quoted Spronck: "We shouldn't consider age so rigidly. You should never break into the personal space of a child if the child does not want that, but that has to do with the child himself. There are also children who themselves indicate that it is OK. Sexual contact is then also possible." *Source: Catholic News Service, 5-24-11; AP, 5-20-11*

Other

The **Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL**, disclosed it has spent \$4.7 million to settle sex abuse cases since 1990. In a letter, Bishop Robert Lynch listed 59 credible instances of sexual misconduct with a minor involving 8 diocesan priests and 10 credible instances involving 4 priests from outside the diocese. *Source: Tampa Tribune, 6-3-11*

The advocacy group Justice for Magdalenes testified before the UN Committee Against Torture during a review of Ireland's human rights record. **Magdalene laundries**, which closed in 1996, were profit-making workhouses run by 4 orders of nuns. Most residents, called "penitents," were unmarried women who had had sex, including being raped, and unmarried mothers or mentally disabled women.

They typically worked 7 days a week for no pay. Multiple allegations of physical, mental and sexual abuse have been made. Evidence shows collusion with Irish courts, which often looked at the laundries as a parallel prison system. *Source: NY Times, 5-25-11*

Pope Benedict's crackdown on "loose living" resulted in the eviction of about **20 Cistercian monks** from the monastery at the basilica of Santa Croce. "An inquiry found evidence of liturgical and financial irregularities as well as lifestyles that were probably not in keeping with that of a monk," said Vatican spokesman Ciro Benedettini.

In 2009, Sr. Anna Nobili, 40, a nightclub dancer who became a nun, performed her "holy dances" at the monastery. Nobili, who has said she prays using her body, has routines that include lying spread-eagled in front of the altar, clutching a crucifix. *Source: The Guardian, 5-25-11*

Rev. Matthew D. Jarrell, 41, Terrell, **TX**, was found hanged to death in a West Virginia jail cell 2 days after being arrested for sexual assault. Jarrell, senior pastor at Open Door Baptist Church, was alleged to have forcibly sodomized a 36-year-old woman he met in a Charleston bar after offering her a ride home. She told police she got away when his pickup got stuck in the mud. He told church members he was going to a convention in Pennsylvania.

Jarrell, married with 4 children, was known for "planting" new churches for evangelical ministries and was a featured speaker at the 2010 national God Save America Revival Conference.

Sgt. T.S. Mills said Jarrell hanged himself with a bed sheet. *Source: Huntington News, 5-23-11; Charleston Daily Mail, 5-22-11*

In the wake of Osama bin Laden's death at the hands of U.S. Navy SEALs, **Rev. Jim Moats**, 59, Newville, **PA**, pastor at Christian Bible Fellowship Church, bragged to a newspaper about his service in Vietnam as a SEAL. People soon were contacting the paper to take issue with things Moats said in the story that made them believe he was lying.

Two days later, Moats admitted he'd gotten his gold Trident medal at a military surplus store. "I never was in a class. I never served as an actual SEAL. It was my dream," he said. And while he did serve in the Navy, he was never near Vietnam.

Retired SEAL Don Shipley, Chesapeake, VA, maintains a SEAL database for the Navy. "We deal with these guys all the time, especially the clergy. It's amazing how many of the clergy are involved in those lies to build that flock up," Shipley said.

He said Moats' stories appeared to be lifted from the movies "Under Siege" and "G.I. Jane." *Source: Harrisburg Patriot-News, 5-9-11*

Email: blackcollar@ffrf.org



Rhyme time fail

Been down so long, bottom look like up? Carol Moore, Alabama, wonders if the sign in Eastaboga, Ala., celebrates the mental or economic downturn.

Religion as the root of sexism



By Barbara G. Walker

The central premise of Christianity is that human beings are to be allowed into heaven, only because God demanded, and got, a blood sacrifice of his allegedly beloved son, to bring about redemption from their original sin, after God had formerly left all of them unsaved. The blood sacrifice was essential. The bible says that all things are purged by blood, and “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

St. Augustine and other church fathers insisted that only this blood sacrifice could have atoned for Woman’s original sin of disobedient apple-eating, which brought death into the world, and with which all generations were infected simply by the passage of every child through a female body. God laid his curse on Eve: “In sorrow shalt thou bear children, and thy husband shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16), which was interpreted as a punishment deserved by all “daughters of Eve” forever. All three major patriarchal religions still use this same text.

The early Christian Tertullian told Everywoman that she is another Eve, the “devil’s gateway,” and on account of her “even the Son of God had to die.” So Woman, rather than God, was made responsible for the death of Jesus and even for the existence of death itself. Jesus’ death as atonement for original sin seems especially pointless today, when even the Catholic Church is willing to admit that the story of Eden is just a myth.

Still, ever anxious to absolve God of the murder of his son, early Christians often blamed the Jews along with Woman, calling them “Christ killers.” Throughout the centuries, churchmen pointed to the passage in Matt. 27:25, where the Jews declare their responsibility through all generations: “His blood be on us, and on our children.” But this was a misinterpretation of what was actually a ritual formula repeated at all sacrificial ceremonies where a god-surrogate, human or animal, was killed. It meant that all present, and their descendants, would be “washed in the blood of the Lamb,” so to speak, and redeemed.

In ancient Rome at the Taurobolium, for example, celebrants stood under a grating where the sacrificial bull was killed, and literally bathed in the divine blood, and were said to be “born again for eternity.” Jesus was by no means the only human savior-god whose death was thought to redeem his

followers. There were literally dozens of similar, earlier, virgin-born, miracle-working “sons of God” in the ancient world. All their myths contributed to the Judeo-Christian synthesis.

But none of the others were so replete with sexism. Clement of Alexandria said every woman should be filled with shame by the thought that she is a woman, and quoted Jesus’ words from the Gospel According to the Egyptians: “I have come to destroy the works of the female.” St. Peter’s remark in the Gospel of Thomas was that “women are not worthy of life.” St. Odo of Cluny said that a woman is nothing more than “a sack of dung.” Andrew the Chaplain said woman is by nature inconstant, fickle, disobedient, and prone to every evil. John Scotus Erigena taught that the sinless part of humankind is embodied in man, the sinful part in woman.

St. Thomas Aquinas claimed that every female is a birth defective, imperfect male, begotten only because her father was ill or in a state of sin. In the 19th century, Anglican churchmen declared women “intrinsically inferior in excellence, imbecile by sex and nature, inconstant in mind, and imperfect and infirm in character.”

Even today, the Catholic Encyclopedia says “The female sex is in some respects inferior to the male sex, both as regards body and soul.” Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote: “There is nothing more pathetic in all history than the hopeless resignation of woman to the outrages she has been taught to believe are ordained of God.”

Wife-beating and enslavement have been so prominent in Western culture that a standard symbol of “marriage” on Alsatian New Year’s decorations was a toy man beating a toy wife. From the pulpit, men were ordered to beat their wives, and wives to kiss the stick that beat them. An ecclesiastical “Rules of Marriage” text from the 15th century said that a husband must bully and terrify his wife, and if that didn’t work, he must “beat her soundly, for it is better to punish the body and correct the soul.”

A man’s home was said to be his castle, and his wife’s prison. Up to the middle of the 20th century, American law upheld the “doctrine of immunity,” which meant that the sanctity of the home could not be invaded to arrest a husband for assaulting his wife, because this would “destroy the peace of the home.” Only in 1962 did a judge rule that there was a certain lack of peace in the home of a wife-beater. Even so, most churches still retained the bride’s marriage promise to “obey.”

Churches now try to deemphasize the holocaust perpetrated against women under the Inquisition and other European witch hunts, but it is clear that many millions were arbitrarily tortured and murdered during the 500 years of inquisitorial domination, simply because clergymen taught that women were evil.

The Inquisition persisted for centuries because it was a highly profitable extortion racket, developed for the economic benefit of the Church. Immediate confiscation of the property of accused persons was its *raison d’être*. The popes publicly praised the rule and noted that “the business of defend-

It is estimated that about 85 percent of the Inquisition’s victims were women.

ing the faith languished lamentably” when confiscation was not promptly carried out. There was no need to wait for a confession, though the use of torture made confession almost inevitable in any case. It is estimated that about 85 percent of the Inquisition’s victims were women, who committed none of the crimes of which they were accused, such as consorting with devils, raising storms, causing illnesses by magic, or keeping familiar spirits in the form of dogs, cats and other animals.

Islam’s abuses of women

Restrictions on and abuses of married women, similar to those of traditional Christian culture, are still evident in Islam. The “great theologian” Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, whom the *Encyclopedia of Islam* calls the most influential authority after Mohammed himself, agreed with Jews and Christians that Eve was the original source of all sin. Because of Eve’s offense, Allah ruled that every woman must be punished in various ways in addition to bearing the “sorrow” of childbirth.

She must be separated from her parents and married to a stranger, which can be accomplished when still a child. She cannot divorce her husband, though he may divorce her and turn her out of his home any time, just by saying “I divorce you.” He keeps the children and may also have up to four wives. She must never leave his house unless accompanied by an adult male relative. She must keep her head covered, even at home. She can have no control over her own person.

Under Sharia law, women have a lesser share in inheritance, and cannot

serve as judges or rulers. They have no recourse if their husbands choose to beat, starve, rape or mutilate them, or even kill them for the sake of “honor.” A majority of Muslim women have little or no formal education and know nothing of any religion other than Islam.

Religions perpetrate a great many lies. Some are harmless enough, even rather charming, like fairy tales. But two lies are the vilest and most destructive of all human concepts.

The first is the lie that “our” way of believing is the One Truth, and that all other ways are false and of the devil. It’s only a short step from this to fanatical aggression and “holy war” against all those who doubt “our” doctrines or call “our” god into question. The Truthers are terrified of any doubt or scholarly examination of their beliefs, and their terror can make them collectively homicidal lunatics.

The second most destructive lie is the denigration of woman as the source of all evil — the lie that has blackened all three major patriarchal religions throughout history. It still clings to credence in many parts of the world. Until this particular lie has been fully disproved and abandoned, no religion deserves a hearing.

We may talk of mutual tolerance and freedom of religion as good, humane goals, but there is no freedom where women, the mothers of the race, are suppressed or abused. The myth of Eve’s guilt may be the vilest lie ever perpetrated. It deserves not tolerance but blame.

*Barbara G. Walker is author of the monumental feminist/freethought sourcebook **The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets** (1983). Her 20 other books, published by Harper & Row, include **The Skeptical Feminist**. An atheist, she has also specialized in debunking New Age assertions.*

*Order Walker’s new book (many chapters of which were originally published in Freethought Today), **Man Made God** (Steller Press), \$24 ppd., from FFRF, PO Box 750, Madison, WI, 53701, or at ffrf.org/shop/.*

News Briefs

Catholic charity has its limits

Following up on its threat, Catholic Charities of Rockford ended adoption and foster care services rather than comply with Illinois’ new civil unions law that took effect in June. In doing so, CCR ended \$7.5 million in state contracts, fired 58 workers and displaced about 350 foster children.

Diocese of Rockford spokeswoman Penny Wiegert blamed the state for not protecting charities’ ability to discriminate against same-sex couples.

South Korean man found crucified

The body of a 58-year-old man was found May 1 nailed to a wooden cross in an abandoned stone quarry near Mungyong, South Korea. Next to the body was a mirror, thought to be placed so the man, a taxi driver with

the last name Kim, could see himself suffer.

He was wearing a loincloth and crown of thorns. His hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and he had a stab wound in his side, similar to the biblical story of Jesus’ death. Police found a hammer, electric drill and “how-to” guide for building crosses at the scene. The drill was used to make holes in his palms. Kim’s SUV was parked near the pit.

Acquaintances said Kim had extreme religious views. After days of investigation, police said they believe the man committed suicide without any assistance. Officials simulated some elements of the crucifixion and concluded that he could perform the act on his own.

Police said they found the man’s notes planning the crucifixion. Before his apparent suicide, Kim closed his bank account and canceled his mobile phone contract.

Cities that pray together fare no better

By Darrell Barker

At 6 p.m. sharp on Tuesday, April 26, with Alabamans comfortably seated for the Tuscaloosa City Council meeting, the mayor asked everyone to rise for the “Call to Order” prayer:

“Dear God, bless our proceedings today. Give us wisdom to know what is just and the strength to do what is right. Amen.”

After the obligatory Pledge of Allegiance, people sat down, assured their God would guide official decisions and make Tuscaloosa a great place to live. After the usual proclamations, announcements, presentations, “hearing from the public” and after votes authorizing this payment and approving that requisition, the council adjourned for the night, thinking all was well with the world. What they should have prayed was this:

“Dear God, give us the wisdom to know what is *just ahead of us.*” Because the next day, a series of exceptionally violent “act of God” tornadoes tore through the state, leaving “scorched earth” paths of destruction and killing 238 people, including 45 in Tuscaloosa County.

The tragedy happened a month after my astute FFRF Forum team (Rene Morris, Frank Hribar and Lili Leader) completed a research study on the efficacy of prayer in 200 cities ranked and rated by Forbes magazine in 2010 as “Best Places for Business and Careers.” We searched the online archived council meeting minutes and meeting videos for each municipality on whether they opened meetings with prayer.

Although Tuscaloosa didn’t make it into Forbes as a worse/best finalist, what happened there that ominous day should make any self-respecting and responsible city council across America’s fruited plain take a hard look at FFRF Forum statistics or conduct their own honest research to seriously question what good prayer does anybody. And how could you prove that it does?

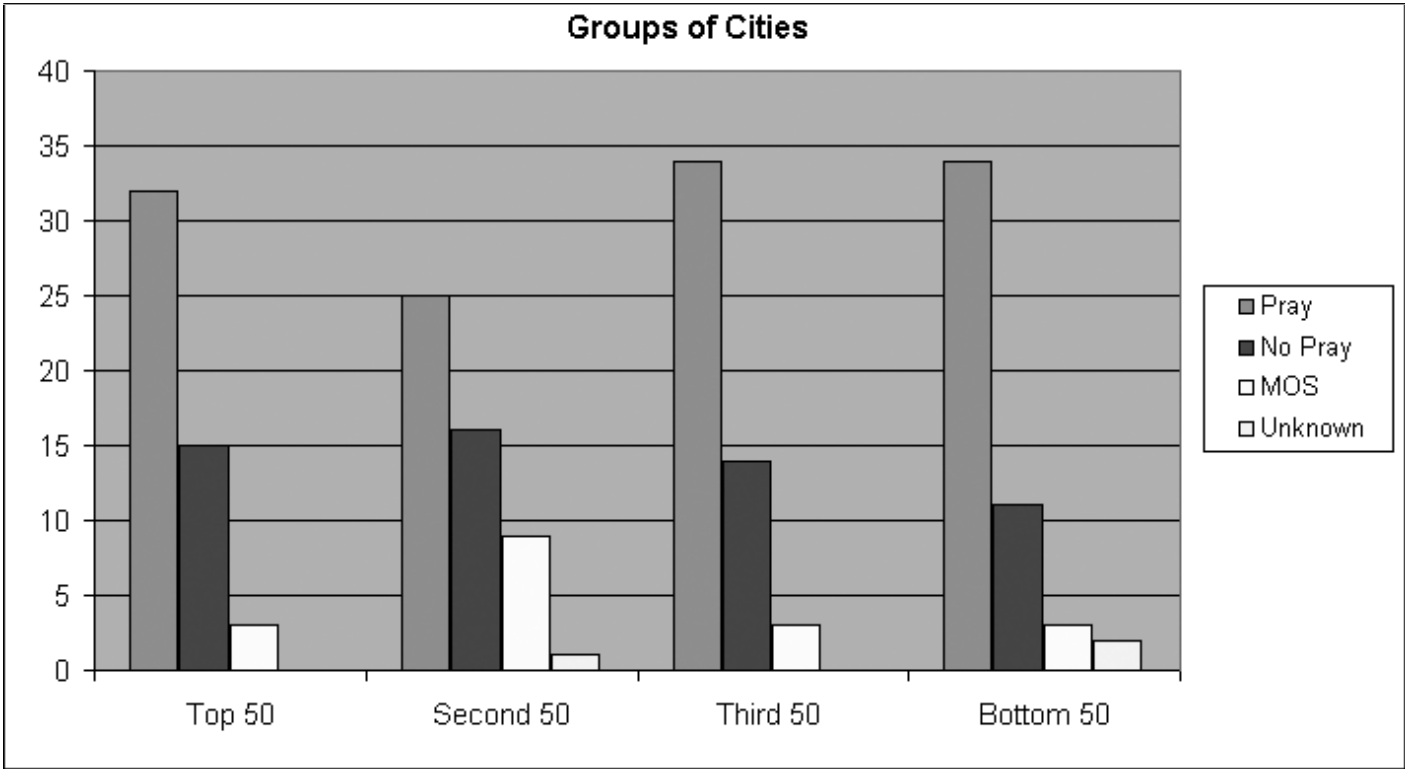
Mundane issues like liquor licenses and filling potholes seem like easy, straight-up-or-down decisions that an omniscient deity shouldn’t be bothered with when common sense would suffice. Wouldn’t an “almighty God” have more important things to worry about, like ensuring the dogcatcher doesn’t step in it?!

Some of what we discovered:
Of the top 10 cities, 20% didn’t pray and still were highly ranked. (Fort Collins, Colo., at No. 4, doesn’t pray. How did *that* happen?)

About 60% of the bottom 10 cities prayed for wisdom at council meetings. They prayed hard too, but still received no measurable help from above. The remaining 40% of the bottom 10 didn’t bother to pray and still bottomed out. What does it all mean? Does God favor some cities and ignore others?

Almost half of the top 24 cities didn’t concern themselves with prayer. What should that indicate to responsible mayors — that there’s no plus to prayer? We think so.

One surprise: “Sin City” Las Vegas prays, and Salt Lake City (“City of the Saints”), doesn’t. But because their God works in mysterious ways, they be-LIEve.



Most of the cities that had been praying for wisdom before the 2008 “act of man” financial tornado ripped across America, destroying houses, businesses and lives, protest for being ill advised by their cherished wisdom giver? They evidently received bad advice, for apparently they weren’t given pertinent enough warnings to save money for a very long and “rainy day.”

Anne Nicol Gaylor’s signature saying bears repeating: “Nothing fails like prayer.”

Here are the 20 top and bottom “best” and “worst” career cities and their prayer policies. (1 = Pray; 2 = No pray; 3 = Moment of silence; 4 = Indeterminable):

- #1. Des Moines IA, 1; #2. Provo UT, 1; #3. Raleigh NC, 1; #4. Fort Collins CO, 2; #5. Lincoln, NE 1; #6. Denver, 2; #7. Omaha NE, 1; #8. Huntsville AL, 1; #9. Lexington, KY, 1; #10. Austin, TX, 1;

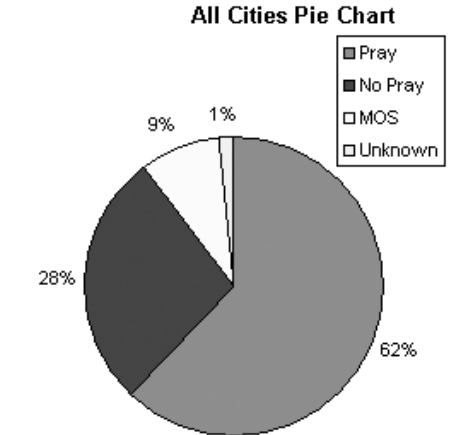
- #11. Ogden UT 3; #12. Colorado Springs CO, 1; #13. Cedar Rapids IA, 1; #14. Boulder, CO, 2; #15. Fayetteville AR, 2; #16. San Antonio, 2; #17. Charlotte NC, 1; #18. Seattle, 2; #19. Portland OR, 2; #20. Salt Lake City, 2.

- #181. Springfield MA 3; #182. Palm Bay FL, 1; #183. Atlantic City NJ, 1; #184. Visalia CA, 1; #185. Fresno CA, 1; #186. Beaumont TX, 1; #187. Bakersfield CA, 1; #188. Rockford IL, 1; #189. Corpus Christi TX, 1; #190. New Orleans, 1;

- #191. Canton OH, 1; #192. Youngstown OH, 2; #193. Stockton CA, 1; #194. Detroit, 1; #195; Utica NY 4; #196. Salinas CA, 2

- #197 Flint MI, 2; #198. Modesto CA, 1; #199. Vallejo CA, 2; #200. Merced CA, 1.

Darrell Barker is administrator of the FFRF Forum, an online resource for Foundation members at ffrf-forum.org/. He



also volunteers for FFRF in other capacities and has been a member since 1986 (and a younger brother to Co-President Dan Barker since 1951). Rankings of all 200 cities are in the “Lounge” section of the forum. The topic is “Rated and Ranked.”

Liberty U. flush with federal money

Students at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., got about \$445 million in federal financial aid money last fiscal year, according to U.S. Department of Education data. That makes Liberty, founded by Rev. Jerry Falwell, the top recipient in Virginia. It has 52,000 online students and 12,000 in residential programs.

Liberty had a 56% percent hike in federal student aid, from \$284 million in 2008-09 to \$445 million in 2009-10, according to a Lynchburg News & Advance analysis. The \$445 million included \$385.9 million in student loans. The rest is grants and aid for students in programs such as work study.

Last year, Liberty got \$55 million in Pell Grant money, ranking 28th in the nation and no. 1 in Virginia. In some financial aid programs, Liberty was a top 10 recipient nationwide.

Liberty’s financial aid office has expanded from 51 to 138 employees over the past four years. By comparison, Lynchburg College employs four people in its financial aid office, while Randolph College and Sweet Briar employ three and two, respectively. The school operates a 50-person call center to field financial aid questions around the clock.

Dawkins, Pinker among New College profs

The New College of the Humanities in London will offer degrees in English, philosophy, history, economics and law starting in 2012, The Independent reported June 6. The private college was founded by 14 professors. Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion*, will teach evolutionary biology and a required course on science literacy.

Other academics include historians Sir David Cannadine and Niall Ferguson, former Oxford professor of poetry Sir Christopher Ricks and psychologist Steven Pinker. Dawkins and Pinker are FFRF Honorary Directors. AC Grayling will serve as the college’s first master. He is the author of *The Good Book: The Humanist Bible*, a manifesto for secular humanists that was published in March 2011.

Students will take core courses in three areas: science literacy, logic and critical thinking, and applied ethics. Annual tuition is almost \$30,000. It’s estimated enrollment will be 375 initially.

Arkansas atheists sue over bus ads

Reuters reported June 9 that the

Central Arkansas Coalition of Reason alleged in a lawsuit that the Central Arkansas Transit Authority and its advertising agency are discriminating against the group because they’re being required to pay tens of thousands of dollars to put \$5,000 worth of ads on 18 buses in Little Rock. The ads would read: “Are you good without God? Millions are.”

Other groups, including churches, have not been required to pay the fee, which amounts to \$36,000 in insurance in case of an attack on the buses by angry Christians, according to the suit.

The insurance was requested by the transit agency’s advertising firm, On The Move Advertising. Because a handful of similar ads had been vandalized in other states, the ad agency required the payment for insurance reasons.

CoR spokesman LeeWood Thomas quoted an email from the ad agency: “Arkansas is the buckle of the Bible Belt and I can easily envision zealots or upstanding citizens with a strong faith acting out.”

Thomas said his group is being singled out. “The insurance money needed from us basically says CATA and On The Move trust the atheists in this community more so than the religious, otherwise the churches that advertise would have that extra insurance premium added to their total cost.”

State/Church Bulletin

Appeals court evicts churches from schools

A 2-1 decision June 2 by the 2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Manhattan overturned a lower court ruling that let the Bronx Household of Faith hold services in a public school.

The ruling lifted an injunction preventing the school district from enforcing its policy that prohibits outside groups from renting school facilities for “religious worship services, or otherwise using a school as a house of worship.” The congregation had been meeting in New York’s P.S. 15 since the rule was first enjoined in 2002.

The state Department of Education said it’s reviewing how to implement the decision. The city said it has no intention of immediately evicting the groups. “We are very pleased with the court’s decision today in this long-standing case, which, reversing the lower court, upholds the Department of Education’s policy not to allow public schools to be used for congregational worship services,” said City Attorney Jane Gordon. “The Department is quite properly concerned about having any school in this diverse city identified with one particular religious belief or practice.”

“Jews and Muslims generally cannot use school facilities for their services because the facilities are often unavailable on the days that their religions principally prescribe for services,” Judge Pierre Leval ruled. “At least one request(ed) to hold Jewish services (in a school building used for Christian services on Sundays) was denied because the building was unavailable on Saturdays. This contributes to a perception of public schools as Christian churches, but not synagogues or mosques.”

Leval also took issue with the evangelical church’s membership. “Bronx Household acknowledges that it excludes persons not baptized, as well as persons who have been excommunicated or who advocate the Islamic religion, from full participation in its services,” Leval wrote.

Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president, said that among the top complaints FFRF gets is churches using tax-supported public schools as their primary place of worship. “The low rental prices amount to taxpayer subsidy of worship. Huge religious banners, planted on public school property on weekends, are sometimes left up nearly permanently. We have had complaints about used diapers left in classrooms and school swimming pools routinely

used for baptisms. Public school names are used in advertising and fliers with no disclaimers.”

Groups fight Colorado school voucher plan

Three civil liberties groups filed suit June 21 in Denver District Court challenging the Douglas County [Colo.] School District’s voucher plan that gives private schools public money, the Denver Post reported.

Mark Silverstein, American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado legal director, said the group intends “as soon as possible” to ask the court for an injunction to stop the voucher payments.

“We all support the right of parents to send their children to private schools,” Silverstein said. “The issue is they cannot do so with taxpayers’ money.”

Plaintiffs include Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, a rabbi, a United Church of Christ pastor, Douglas County’s library director and several parents.

The district’s “Pilot Choice Scholarship Plan” allows up to 500 vouchers of \$4,575 each for private schools. Of the 19 schools approved for participation as of June 21, 15 are religious in nature.

School vouchers boost parochial schools

In May, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels signed the nation’s most expansive school voucher program into law. The School Scholarships Act authorizes up to \$5 million in vouchers. Daniels also signed another bill expanding charter schools.

Families who qualify for vouchers can get up to \$4,500 for grades 1 through 8. There’s no limit on high school. It caps the number of scholarships at 7,500 for the 2011-12 school year, 15,000 for 2012-13 and no limit thereafter.

Vouchers will start being accepted this fall at eligible nonpublic schools. Luke Messer, executive director of School Choice Indiana, said that churches that couldn’t afford to open their own schools may reconsider now that parents can get vouchers.

Idaho school’s bible as textbook case heard

In *Nampa Classical Academy v. William Goesling*, a private school seeks to overturn a decision by the Idaho Pub-

lic Charter School Commission that bans use of the bible as a primary text.

A federal judge upheld the commission’s decision, and on June 8 the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals heard arguments. The school is represented by the Alliance Defense Fund, an evangelical law firm.

The state argued that use of scripture promotes one religious view over another by focusing on certain denominational versions of the bible. The academy has closed due to financial troubles but is in the process of refiling its application to operate.

Wisconsin expands voucher program

Gov. Scott Walker signed a two-year budget in June that expands the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program to schools in Milwaukee County outside the city and to the Racine Unified School District. Efforts to include Green Bay schools in the program were defeated. However, districts in midsize cities like Green Bay could come into the program in coming years as their demographics change.

The law also loosens income and other restrictions that previously limited the number of participants and the schools they could attend.

State Superintendent Tony Evers said the public school system is under attack. “To spend hundreds of millions to expand a 20-year-old program that has not improved overall student achievement while defunding public education is morally wrong.”

Kansas gov pushes faith-based Out4Life

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback wants to match every inmate leaving state prison with a faith-based mentor, the Wichita Eagle reported June 20. Brownback spoke at an Out4Life conference sponsored by Watergate felon Charles Colson’s Prison Fellowship Ministries.

Partners in Brownback’s “Mentoring 4 Success” program include the state Department of Corrections, Prison Fellowship, Reaching Out From Within and Spiritual Advisors. Out4Life (“The State of Reentry”) has also launched in Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Arizona, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, Oregon and California.

End sought to Amish buggy break

The Kentucky Court of Appeals unanimously denied a petition June 3 from nine Amish men cited for failure to have slow-moving-vehicle symbols on their buggies. Senior Judge Ann O’Malley Shake wrote that the men’s religious rights could not infringe on the public safety and sent the case back to Graves County Court, The Associated Press reported.

Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Scott Robbins said he will ask at an Aug. 25 hearing for the citations to be enforced. If the men refuse to pay the \$25 fines and \$138 court costs per violation, they could be jailed for up to six months for contempt. They’re represented by American Civil Liberties Union attorney Bill Sharp of Louisville.

The Old Order Swartzentruber sect contends the orange emblem is too worldly and that the shape could be construed to represent the trinity. They want to instead use reflective tape and lanterns after dark. Several other cases are pending.

They Said What?

Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by Roman soldiers.

Recipe for Easter Story Cookies, each step of which includes a bible verse
Catholicmom.com, 4-25-11

This is state Rep. Bobby Franklin. Thank you for calling to give me encouragement about my sponsorship of House Bill 1, recognizing that prenatal murder is murder. I’m not able to take that encouragement right now, so at the tone please leave your name, number and a message. Thanks!

Answering machine message from Georgia Rep. Bobby Franklin, R-Marietta, a Reformed Presbyterian Church member who believes government should return to its biblically defined role

Mother Jones, 3-30-11

We pray that Allah raise him to heaven and reward him for his good deeds.

Al Qaida statement praising Osama bin Laden and naming Ayman al Zawahiri as his successor

McClatchy Newspapers, 6-16-11

Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Brian David Mitchell, singing a hymn at his sentencing in Utah for kidnapping 14-year-old Elizabeth Smart in 2002 and raping her for nine months

Salt Lake Tribune, 5-25-11

With the recent E. coli outbreak, God would still have His people trusting in Him and living life to the fullest. The difference is, when His people make the effort to pray over their food and beverages, it might be less rote and include a bit more gratitude of His willingness to provide it and protect them.

Columnist Elizabeth Delaney, “E. coli prompting renewed interest in prayer over meals”

Christianity & Politics Examiner, 6-8-11

We all are born with this sort of disease, and the cure for the disease is the blood of Christ.

Patricia Heaton, star of “Everybody Loves Raymond” and the Web series “Versailles”

“The Adam Corolla Show,” 5-23-11

I think it’s really a dangerous area for a governor who stands up from the top of the state to say, “You should teach this. You shouldn’t teach that.”

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, answering a question at a town hall if creationism should be taught in public schools

Newark Star-Ledger, 5-10-11

Governor, please turn your focus from Iowa [GOP presidential primary] back to New Jersey. We have problems to solve. And how to weave religion into our science classes is not among them.

Star-Ledger editorial

Newark Star-Ledger, 5-10-11

Lord, I thank you for the miracle of prayer. It makes me think of the radio. I don’t know how it works, but I know that it works.

Pastor Mike Barres, Andrews, N.C., at a National Day of Prayer service
Andrews Journal, 5-18-11

Marquee Madness



Eden it’s not

“Cruel and unusual punishment,” comments Jim Knobloch, Wisconsin, who spotted this in Paradise, Mich.

In the News

Gay marriage legal in New York

The New York Senate passed a bill June 24 legalizing same-sex marriage, making the state the largest in the U.S. to do so.

Senate approval, by a 33-29 vote, was the final hurdle for the bill, which Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed into law less than an hour after passage.

Gay couples can begin marrying in New York by late July.

Gov. Jack Markell signed Delaware's civil unions bill into law May 12. Effective Jan. 1, the law will provide legal protections and benefits for same-sex couples.

Poll: Half won't vote for atheist president

In a Gallup Poll conducted June 9-12, fewer than half of respondents (49%) said they would vote to elect as president an otherwise well-qualified candidate who happened to be atheist. That's an improvement since 1958, the first year the question was asked, when just 18 percent would have supported an atheist.

The June poll showed that 22% would not vote for a presidential candidate who is Mormon, and 32% said they wouldn't vote for a gay or lesbian candidate.

Twins guard assails women for kissing

A Minnesota Twins baseball security guard was reprimanded for allegedly scolding a lesbian couple for kissing at Target Field on May 27.

Kelsi Culpepper said she gave Taylor Campion a quick kiss as one of them was going in the restroom. Culpepper told WCCO the guard, who wasn't named, came up and said, "I saw you kissing that girl, you can't do that. . . . [W]e don't play grabas** here."

After the women objected, the

guard allegedly said, "Well here in the stadium, we adhere to the Ten Commandments."

The women have filed a complaint with the state Department of Human Rights.

"That security guard has received both a verbal and written reprimand that will be put in his personnel file, and he understands that that is not an acceptable behavior," Twins spokesman Kevin Smith said.

Bible thumper ejects two gay swimmers

The city of Hazard, Ky., suspended an employee for ejecting two gay men from a public recreational facility. Kim Haynes, a man in his 60s, cited the bible as his reason.

The unidentified gay men had been swimming June 10 at the Hazard Pavilion with a group from Mending Hearts, which provides care to people with developmental disabilities.

Haynes said he objected to the men's alleged excessive display of affection and admitted telling them "We don't tolerate that kind of activity around here." He also told Laura Quillen of Mending Hearts that "You need to go home and read your bible."

Charlotte Pearlman, pavilion manager, was reprimanded by the city for unbecoming conduct for using "inappropriate and obscene language" when declining comment to Anderson Cooper's CNN television crew.

Camping's stroke not one of insight

Rev. Harold Camping, 89, Oakland, Calif., who predicted Armageddon would begin with the return of Jesus on May 21, suffered a mild stroke June 9 and is recovering in a nursing home.

When his rapturous prophecy failed, Camping said Judgment Day had indeed occurred, but only in a "spiritual" sense, not physically. He set



a new date — Oct. 21, 2011 — for Jesus' actual return.

Camping's speech was affected by the stroke, and he is no longer broadcasting on Family Radio.

In a related story, Saduki Mwambene, a 39-year-old Malawian bicycle repairman, was given a six-month suspended sentence for "circulating false documents that threatened the peace and security of citizens."

Mwambene was arrested for handing out documents that proclaimed Judgment Day would come on May 21, a court official told AFP.

The leaflets were printed and distributed by Family Radio.

Judge sanctioned for pledge demand

The Mississippi Supreme Court on June 9 affirmed the state Commission on Judicial Performance's recommendation that Chancery Judge Talmadge Littlejohn of New Albany should be publicly reprimanded and fined \$100 for jailing a lawyer who stood up for but refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance in Littlejohn's courtroom.

The commission found Littlejohn abused his contempt powers by jailing Oxford attorney Danny Lampley for five hours Oct. 6. The Clarion Ledger reported that Littlejohn "promises to

respect and protect the First Amendment rights of anyone who refrains from reciting the pledge in his courtroom."

Lampley said as a child he saw fellow students banished from class for refusing to say the pledge due to religious objections. "I didn't care for it then, as a fourth-grader. You're made to feel different. I don't like the element of coercion about it."

Oregon faith-healing couple sentenced

Rebecca and Timothy Wyland, Oregon City, Ore., were sentenced to 90 days in jail after being convicted June 7 of first-degree criminal mistreatment of their infant daughter Alayna. Rebecca Wayland's jail term begins the day after her husband is released.

The Wylands belong to Followers of Christ Church, which rejects medical care. Authorities said the couple failed to provide medical care for Alayna's hemangioma, a mass of blood vessels that engulfed her left eye and nearly blinded her. The Wylands instead prayed over Alayna and anointed her with oil.

In June 2010, state child protection workers took custody of Alayna, now 18 months old, who is improving under court-ordered medical care.

Dr. Jack Kevorkian, agnostic, 1928–2011

Dr. Jack Kevorkian, 83, died June 3, 2011, of a pulmonary thrombosis at a hospital in Royal Oak, Mich.

Kevorkian was born May 26, 1928, to Armenian immigrants in Pontiac, Mich. He earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan in 1952 and later specialized in pathology. He wrote a series of articles in the 1980s detailing his reasoning on the ethics of euthanasia. His first known involvement in a physician-assisted suicide occurred in 1990, after which the state of Michigan revoked his medical license.

Believing in the right to die, Kevorkian assisted in the pain-free suicides of more than 130 people with terminal illnesses. He spent eight years in prison after being convicted of second-degree murder in the death of a 52-year-old man with Lou Gehrig's disease. He was released on parole, his health broken, in 2007.

In his 1990 keynote address at FFRF's annual convention in Ann Arbor, Mich., Kevorkian told convention-goers: "Religion is telling law what to do, and law is telling doctors what to do. Religion dictates to law, and law dictates to ethics. No wonder we have problems. That's insanity!"

It was his first speech on the topic to a nonmedical group. He detailed the history of euthanasia and abortion as standard procedures in the secular medical world until Christianity injected its influence on the profession several centuries later.

After his release from prison, Kevorkian told The New York Times that his harshest critics were "religious fanatics or nuts."

In 2009, he told FOX host Neil Cavuto that his parents "never foisted religion on me. My father never was religious much. My mother was the old

country religion, but not fanatic. But I never believed in God. I never believed in Santa Claus."

Standing beside her uncle's flag-draped casket at a public memorial service at White Chapel Cemetery, Ava Janus told mourners that Kevorkian simply wanted the gravely ill to have a choice about how they would die.

Kevorkian was a lifelong bachelor. His friend Ruth Holmes said his motto was, "The more you are the less you need."

"Few men are willing to brave the wrath of society," Holmes said. "That was our dear friend, Jack Kevorkian."

The media and critics taunted Kevorkian as "Dr. Death," trying to paint him as a macabre person instead of a progressive medical reformer.

Anne Nicol Gaylor, FFRF president emerita, said, "We greatly admired Dr. Kevorkian, one of freethought's

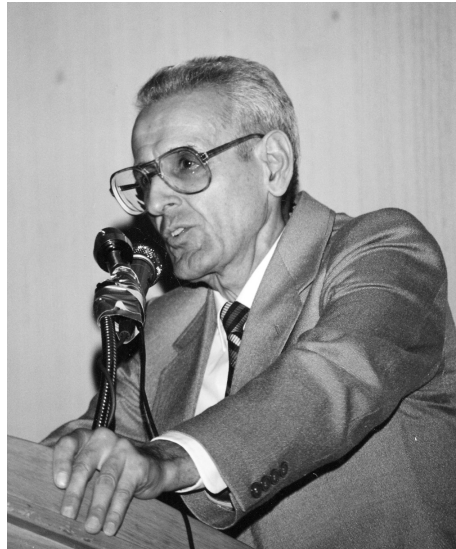


Photo: Patricia Streasick

heroes, who braved the wrath of the church, social orthodoxy and the state in order to ease unnecessary human suffering."

"It should be a human right to be able to painlessly end one's own life, surrounded by loved ones, when the time comes," Gaylor said. "That was Dr. Kevorkian's object. The main opposition to death with dignity is the church."



Letterbox

In appreciation of Foundation's work

As Tom Robbins would say, "The world situation was desperate, as usual." But instead of getting off a letter to my congressman, I wish to join the ranks of FFRF Lifetime Members with this donation.

I'm sure many of your supporters are bemused by the "Yankee diddled theater of the absurd in one interminable no standing room act" so ubiquitous in American culture and institutions. I continue to applaud your dedication to upholding the tenets of our subverted Constitution. As a sardonic commentary on the global situation, I recommend Roy Andersson's films "You the Living" and "Song from the Second Floor."

Name withheld by request
Iowa

...

Here's another Lifetime contribution! My husband, Bob, made his last year. We read Freethought Today cover to cover, amazed at how much you manage to accomplish.

Unfortunately, the Prescott area isn't ready yet for billboards. This seems to be a hotbed of conservative religion. What do you think of all the crosses on tennis players? Maybe they're all praying to win! Keep up the good work.

Jo and Robert Chanaud
Arizona

...

Please accept this \$1,000 donation in memory of Paul J. Gaylor and the contributions of the Gaylor family to our secular nation.

The founding of FFRF by Anne Nicol Gaylor and Annie Laurie Gaylor and its subsequent successes is a most noteworthy achievement.

Sean Wilks, Lifetime Member
Washington

FFRF offers more bang for the buck

When I joined FFRF a year ago, my thought was only to support an organization which reflected my own values and to help further your efforts to educate people and protect our First Amendment rights. Certainly, I had no expectation that I'd find the details of your work to be particularly interesting.

So it's been to my great surprise that I find myself reading through each Freethought Today with fascination, amazement and amusement. My wife and I discuss some of the legal battles and debate the relative merits of FFRF's positions. Win or lose, there's real value in bringing these issues to the public's attention, so we know there *is* a debate, and that the status quo can be and is being questioned.

Reading your paper brings a sense of joy and even relief as I discover how many rational, reasoning and open-minded people there are in America. Let's continue to make it safe and welcoming for people to cast off their ties to the dogma and traditions of their upbringing, together finding the best solutions to today's problems, using the tools of science and sound thought.

I'm happy to include my Lifetime Membership renewal with this letter.

Ian McEwen
Colorado

...

My husband gave me a membership to your organization as a gift a few months ago, and I had to write to say it is one of the best gifts I have ever received.

I have lived in fear as I see more and more Christian "values" shoved in my face by the very government founded to ensure that never happens. For years, my husband and I have felt very alone due to the fact that we are atheists. We had no community to join until now.

Keep up the good work and fighting the good fight for all of us who want freedom from the oppression of religion.

Jeaneanne Buterbaugh
Wisconsin

Delighted to see Washington billboard

Congratulations on FFRF's new billboard located on North Wenatchee Avenue [in Wenatchee, Wash.]. It's about time something like this happened in this community, mostly comprised of right-wing religious zealots. I was both surprised and *delighted* to see this.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Phil Conner
Washington

Huckabee fundraiser robo-call backfires

I got an automated phone call with a recorded message from Mike Huckabee for the National Committee for Family, Faith and Prayer that specifically mentioned FFRF.

Needless to say, it was full of distortions, if not outright lies. Of course, after listening to Huckabee's message, you were invited to wait for an operator so you could contribute financially.

I was tempted to wait, give them a piece of my mind and let them waste their time except that the operator would probably just be some poor peon who had no real connection to Huckabee's cause and was just trying to earn a living.

We must be doing something right to get this sort of response. Keep up the good work!

Roger Skinner
New Mexico

Inventing gods benefits the gods' inventors

The archaic biblical myth of an End Times Rapture is not a joking matter. The bible is nothing more than a retooled collection of myths proclaimed by "god-men" intent on instilling the hope of heaven and the fear of hell should their unschooled minions decide not to worship them with constant praise and tithing in this world.

An average fifth-grader today knows that our world did not materialize in six days. It's incredibly poignant that the very first book of the bible commands one to fear knowledge as the forbidden fruit, or "Thou shalt surely die."

A serious learning experience from this latest round of Rapture revival should be to fear ignorance and embrace knowledge, or "Thou shalt surely never live."

Patrick Sebald
Washington



Truly, we are blest!

Ken Worrell took this photo in Harvest, Ala., a Huntsville suburb, while he and his dad, Don Worrell, were looking at April 27 tornado damage

...

I'm now at peace with the reality that all of those "gods" out there are just an invention of the clergy. There's not a single one of them that makes any sense to me. After reading the Christian bible and sections of the Koran, I think Barbara Walker is right, *Man Made God* (a wonderful book, by the way).

Norm Biegner
Florida

God: Feckless, heartless or both?

Has anyone noticed that the recent disastrous weather and flooding is located precisely in the most devoutly religious part of the country? And Gov. Rick Perry is *again* issuing official proclamations calling on the people of Texas to pray to end the drought.

Seems like nothing fails like prayer.

Peter Howse
Oregon

...

The recent wave of national disasters, commonly called acts of God, again illustrates the delusions of grandeur held by some of these so-called born-again Christians. Comments like, "The Lord spared me, because he has plans for me" are an insult to anyone's intellect and sense of decency. Are those who perished of no use to their Lord?

Joe Bahlke
California

Debaptism certificates simply 'da best'

Please send me two debaptism certificates. I intend to staple one to my original baptismal certificate from 1941 as an affirmation of my atheist roots since I was 14. I hope it convinces my children that I want no funeral and no religious freaks at my deathbed. I

have all the living wills, etc., but one never knows if people really believe you.

I have two daughters, raised 100% nontheist, yet both went from freethinkers to *no* thinkers after they married. One is now coming back to reality, and two of my grandkids became atheists after college.

About half of the people I meet/know are atheists but don't want the spouse, boss or neighbors to know. I'm working on them.

Patricia Baird
Nevada

At 87, not ready to leave closet

Your latest issue suggests that I should come out of the closet, but I hesitate. I am 87 years old, in poor physical condition and have no family.

My father, who was born in Bohemia (then part of imperial Austria), was a freethinker, as are most Czechs. But to appease my mother's Viennese Catholic family, he agreed to a Catholic wedding, although he exacted something in return: Neither my sister nor I would be brought up as Catholics.

My mother thought it would be nice to have "polite Sunday school training, so we went to a Christian Science Sunday school. Shortly before I turned 12, I told my father that I could no longer bear "Mary Baker Eddy, talking burning bushes or Red Seas that parted." He agreed.

My best friends know my beliefs, but other friends (Christians all) — those whom I've asked to handle my funeral — would be dumbfounded if I were to come out of the closet. Shhh. . . because, you see, only *they* know where my already purchased burial plot is and where I want my parting gift of free food and liquor served.

U.J. Zachaty
Illinois

Sharing
the
Mail

Credit Avon lady for my atheism

This is a true story about why I'm an atheist. I was a small child when Brownie, our family pet dog, was run over by the Avon lady's station wagon. I remember watching my father's grim, sad face as he buried Brownie on the hillside.

A few months later, my twin brother Greg and I decided that we would go get Brownie and bring him back. I don't think we really understood the concept of life and death. We found the spot and dug into the ground with a shovel. All that was left of Brownie were some canine teeth, which were in the ground where we found them.

It was then that I realized that when we die, we go back into the earth and become part of it and turn into soil.

Brownie had a beautiful spot on the side of the hill where he was buried. He was now part of a field where wild flowers bloomed and cows grazed and made cow pies.

No religion could ever replace the lesson I learned that day with my brother. I don't remember if we told our parents what we had done.

Today, I'm not afraid to die, knowing that my ashes will join the earthen soil that nourishes wild flowers and gives cows the ingredients to make pie.
Gary Mercer
Florida

This is true: A scam is a scam is a scam

I'm an atheist simply because I think it is wrong to lie. Telling myself or others something is true that I do not know for a fact to be true is lying. Unfortunately this is what all religions do and insist that I do as well. Telling people I know there are things out there that really aren't out there (the supernatural) is lying. Telling people I know we live on after we are dead is lying. Any "ism" or organization that tells me it is a virtue to believe without seeing or knowing is lying.

How can it be a virtue to lie to myself and to others? A lie is a lie is a lie. It seems to me the only way a person can still sleep at night while deceiving themselves and others into believing such lies are somehow true is to alleviate their well-deserved guilt by surrounding themselves with other like-thinking liars. I don't think intellectually honest people can do that. I don't think they should do that. I know that I can't.

That is why I am an atheist. After eliminating all the pedantic folderol, it really is that simple. A scam is a scam is a scam.
James Krider
Indiana

McCollum case inspires in dark times

I just saw "The Lord Is Not on Trial Here Today" on PBS. Thank you very much for pointing out this inspiring case [McCollum v. Board of Education]. It looks like the dark times of the post-



Let the End Times roll!

FFRF member Harry "Zombie" Greenberger and the New Orleans Secular Humanist Association had a "Left Behind" costume party May 21 at Napoleon's Itch on Bourbon Street. NOSHA sold indulgences, released balloons with messages to "Raptured" friends and family and engaged in overall merriment. (photo by Robert Carver)

World War II drive to conformism are back, so it's very important to have material like this out there. It also starkly highlights the contrast in the intellectual integrity of the Supreme Court then and now.

I was struck by the religionists' reaction (very similar to your compelling selection of "loving Christian" hate mail) to Vashti McCollum's fight. It seems to argue for the hypothesis that religionists know at some level that their beliefs are untenable and can only be maintained by constant social pressure and threats of violence.

Absent social pressure, the proposition "Give us 10% of your income, and in return we'll rape your children and scar them with threats of eternal torture" would have very few takers.

Ullrich Fischer
Washington

Gans tune: 'Save us from the saved'

For some great music overall and a wonderful FFRF-type song, check out the David Gans album, "The Ones That Look the Weirdest Taste the Best." Included is the song, "Save Us From the Saved," which includes the lines "Give me freedom from religion / Save us from the saved."

Chris Mehuys
Illinois

People clueless about the godless pledge

It's come to my attention that many people younger than 60 or 70 have no idea that the Pledge of Allegiance didn't always include "under God." I'm nearly 74 and said the pledge every day in school, as did everyone who served in World War II. Our pledge didn't include "under God."

We should stress that we want *our* pledge back. People I tell are amazed to learn its history.

Miriam Noonan
Ohio

Celtic marriage pledge good without god

I just read your article on who can perform marriage ceremonies [in Oklahoma] besides church officials and judges. It's about time! At my son's and daughter-in-law's wedding, "The Celtic Wedding Pledge" by Morgan Llywelyn was read. It's great without referring to religion:

You cannot possess me for I belong to myself.

But while we both wish it, I give you that which is mine to give.

You cannot command me, for I am a free person,

But I shall serve you in those ways you require.

And the honeycomb will taste sweeter coming from my hand.

I pledge to you that yours will be the name I cry aloud in the night

And the eyes into which I smile in the morning.

I pledge to you the first bite of my meat and the first drink from my cup.

I pledge to you my living and my dying, each equally in your care.

I shall be a shield for your back and you for mine.

I shall not slander you, nor you me.

I shall honor you above all others, and when we quarrel, we shall do so in private

And tell no strangers our grievances.

This is my wedding vow to you.

This is the marriage of equals.

Sandra Murray
Wyoming

Biblical punishment doesn't fit crime

Heidi Johnson's letter, "Inefficient god moves in mysterious way" [April11], reminds me that the Judeo-Christian god is not only inefficient in miracle work but also malevolent with frightful regularity. For example, 2 Kings 2:23-24 says that the Prophet Elisha cursed 42 boys "in the name of the Lord," because they made fun of him. Shortly thereafter, his god sent two she-bears who tore all those youngsters to pieces.

I searched in one of my bible commentaries for a theological explanation of why a "compassionate" deity committed such a deed. And of course the answer was predictable: The International Bible Commentary, published by Guideposts, New York, explains that Yahweh punished those boys with death because they showed contempt for one of his prophets.

Instead of having those boys torn to pieces by wild animals, why couldn't Yahweh just have appeared to them and gently persuaded them to apologize to Elisha and promise not to make fun of him again?

David Quintero
California

This sacrifice just isn't worth it

As one does when having one's hair cut, I was chatting with my hairdresser. She was raised in a Soviet country

when religion was against the law, so I figured she would be "supernatural free." We got on the subject of suicide bombers eager to die for the promise of 75 or whatever number virgins they're promised in the afterlife.

"I can't believe how gullible they are," she said, and I agreed. But then she added, "Don't they realize what good are all those virgins once they've blown up their penises?"

It reminds me of the Woody Allen story about the family whose uncle believed he was a chicken. They didn't take him to a psychiatrist because they needed the eggs.

Even where there is no organized religion, there's still plenty of residual irrationality.

Joan Reisman
New York

Proselytize with a side of fries

The Chicago Tribune describes Amy Dickinson as its "signature general advice columnist."

Dear Amy: I go out to eat with my cousin once a month, and we take turns picking up the check. When it is her turn to pay, she slides a religious pamphlet in with the payment, advising the waiter or waitress about what (according to her religious beliefs) it takes to be "saved."

I find this proselytizing offensive and feel that it reflects on both of us, since she is paying for my meal. It seems wrong to subject the waiter to a religious reading just to receive payment.

Any thoughts before our next outing? It's her turn to pay.

— **Offended**

Dear Offended: If these pamphlets offend you, then you shouldn't read them. They might not offend a waiter.

You don't mention talking about this, but it sounds like an ideal topic for you two cousins to discuss.

Hat tip to Duane Polzien, Nebraska

Losing Faith In Faith:
From Preacher To Atheist
by Dan Barker

*"An arsenal for skeptics.
A challenge to believers."*

Hardback, 342pp., photos.
Member price: \$20.00
Non-member price: \$25.00

**FFRE, PO Box 750, Madison
WI 53701**
ffrforg/shop



Yes we can!

Dan Barker debated Christian apologist Jon Kaus on the topic “Can We Be Good Without God?” on May 15 at Gustavus Adolphus College (“firmly rooted in its Swedish and Lutheran heritage”) in St. Peter, Minn. The debate, sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, packed Alumni Hall with more than 450 students, community freethinkers and FFRF members. During cross-examination, Dan asked, “Is God more concerned with his own glory than with human suffering?” Jon answered quickly, “Yes, he is.” Pictured (left) are FCA organizer Chris Whitney, Dan Barker, moderator and political science professor Kate Knudson, Jon Kaus and FCA organizer Kelly Myers.



FFRF member Brent Michael Davids, a noted Native American musician from the Twin Cities, stopped by Freethought Hall in late May before his appearance with the Madison Chamber Orchestra. Brent, who has been featured on Freethought Radio, poses with FFRF Co-President Dan Barker by the flowering crab tree. Brent is a member of the Stockbridge Munsee (Mohican) community. Dan is a member of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) community.

FFRF: Iowa church discount in error

The Cedar Rapids Kernels, a Class A Midwest League baseball team in Iowa affiliated with the Los Angeles Angels, promotes Sunday games as “Faith Day” and discounts tickets by \$2.50 for people with a church bulletin. That violates the U.S. and Iowa Civil Rights Acts, FFRF Staff Attorney Stephanie Schmitt told the team’s general manager in a May 26 letter.

“As a place of ‘public accommodation,’ it is illegal for Cedar Rapids Kernels Baseball to discriminate, or show favoritism, on the basis of religion,” Schmitt wrote.

Texas governor wraps himself in prayer

On behalf of its 700 Texas members, FFRF called on Gov. Rick Perry to disassociate from a prayer conclave at Reliant Stadium in Houston and to rescind his prayer proclamation calling Aug. 6 a “Day of Prayer and Fasting for our Nation’s Challenges.”

“The Response: A Call to Prayer for a National in Crisis,” although privately sponsored, was initiated by Perry.

Perry has invited the 49 other governors and other public officials to participate in this “non-denominational Christian prayer and fasting” event to deal with “financial debt, terrorism, and a multitude of natural disasters.”

The event, described as “a non-denominational, apolitical Christian prayer meeting,” has adopted the homophobic American Family Association’s statement of faith. Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback said in June that he intended to attend.

FFRF called on Perry remove himself as an endorser of the event. The Houston Clergy Council in mid-June issued a statement condemning Perry’s proclamation of prayer and fasting, noting the American Family Association’s anti-gay and anti-Muslim record, and saying, “We ask that Rick Perry leave the ministry to us and refocus his energy on the work of governing our state.”

Contact Gov. Rick Perry:
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711-2428
Phone: (512) 463-2000
FAX: (512) 463-1849

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback
Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 241S
Topeka KS 66612-1590
Phone: 785-296-3232
Email: governor@ks.gov

FFRF calls for Rapture fraud probe

In a May 31 letter, FFRF called for California Attorney General Kamala Harris to investigate how many innocent people may have suffered financially, emotionally and physically due to Pastor Harold Camping’s \$100 million campaign predicting Armageddon on May 21.

FFRF noted numerous calls for apologies by victims of Camping’s “Rapture” crusade and concerns for the untold numbers of people he and his organization duped.

“Our organization seeks to hold Camping accountable in a more tangible way,” said the letter from FFRF Co-Presidents Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker. “We ask you to investigate Camping’s 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Family Stations Inc., for fraud and deceit.”

Family Stations is an umbrella for Camping’s religious projects.

“We understand that Family Stations Inc. maintains that the primary source of the \$100 million was the liquidation of property owned by the nonprofit, whose reported donations totaled more than \$18 million in 2009 — well before his Rapture campaign reached its zenith. It is not unreasonable to believe that at least that amount comprised part of the total advertising budget in 2010 and 2011.

“There are media reports of dozens of Camping’s followers who liquidated their own assets to contribute tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars to Camping’s organization, convinced (by Camping) that they would have no need for the money or material goods after May 21 and that they were needed by Family Stations Inc., in order to advertise for the proclaimed Rapture. Others incurred thousands of dollars in debt through extravagant purchases and family vacations, allegedly convinced (by Camping) that they should enjoy the world before its impending destruction. Some quit their jobs, sold or abandoned their homes, packed their families and moved to

prepare for the ‘end of the world.’ ”

The formal complaint provided evidence that the actions of Camping and Family Stations “seem to show that they neither behaved nor conducted business as if they sincerely believed the world would end on May 21, and they

continued to solicit donations up to, on, and after that date.”

To read FFRF letters, and news releases in full, visit ffrf.org/news/. To read current Action Alerts, visit ffrf.org/news/action. You may sign up to get on FFRF’s e-lists.

After the Rapture



FFRF member Ray Bradley (right) of the Central North Carolina Atheists and Humanists debaptizes Greydon Square at the May 21 Rapture After Party in Fayetteville. “I’d like to thank FFRF for the idea and material for our ceremony,” says Bradley, CNCAH treasurer. “It certainly was a great hit at the party.” Square, a rap musician and atheist, performed the next day at the group’s Rapture RAP-Up. The fun was covered by the Fayetteville Observer, with CNCAH President Geri Weaver’s comment, “It can be very daunting to stand up and say ‘I don’t believe’ here in the bible belt. Hopefully, events like this will help raise awareness that nonbelievers are just like other people. We don’t cook babies. We aren’t trying to destroy America.”



Stain remover

FFRF member Leigh Anne Hunnicutt shows off her DeBaptismal Certificate that was signed, sealed and delivered by Dan Barker. About 20 freethinkers at the Rapture After party shed the stain of baptism forced on them as innocent babes.

Parish exemption case to be revamped

The Freedom From Religion Foundation withdrew its parish exemption challenge, *FFRF v. Geithner*, on June 24 from the California Eastern District. It plans to refile and reconfigure the lawsuit.

“Unfortunately, the decision by the Supreme Court this spring in *Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn* has had a very chilling effect and forced our hand,” said FFRF Co-President Dan Barker. In *Winn*, the high court ruled that a group of Arizona taxpayers lacked standing to challenge tax credits, ultimately funding tuition at religious schools.

“Either we were going to get dismissed or we needed to withdraw,” explained Barker.

FFRF, along with 21 of its California members, filed the federal lawsuit in Sacramento in October 2009, challenging tax benefits for “ministers of the gospel.” Under both federal and California law, payment in the form of housing allowances is not taxable income.

The unique benefits, permitting clergy to deduct from taxable income their housing allowances furnished as part of compensation, date to 1954. At that time, Congress amended the tax code to permit all clergy to exempt their housing costs from income taxes. U.S. Rep. Peter Mack Jr., D-Ill., author of the amendment, declared:

“Certainly, in these times when we are being threatened by a godless and antireligious world movement, we should correct this discrimination against certain ministers of the gospel who are carrying on such a courageous fight against this foe. Certainly this is not too much to do for these people who are caring for our spiritual welfare.”

FFRF is planning to pursue the parish exemption provided by the California Franchise Tax Board in California state court, and will soon announce other challenges.

The case was handled by litigation attorney Richard Bolton, with Michael Newdow generously serving as local counsel in Sacramento.

“We thank Mike for his invaluable assistance, and our 21 Sacramento-area FFRF members who served as taxpayer plaintiffs, some of whom are volunteering to continue on as plaintiffs in a challenge in state court,” said Annie Laurie Gaylor, who directs FFRF with Barker. To read more about FFRF’s federal challenge, go to ffrf.org/legal/.

34th FFRF convention, Hartford, Conn., Oct. 7–9

Student activist joins convention roster

The Freedom From Religion Foundation’s 34th annual convention takes place the weekend of Oct. 7-9, 2011, at the Marriott Hartford in downtown Hartford, Conn.

Speakers and honorees announced to date include:

- **Harrison Hopkins**, who will accept a \$1,000 student activist award and talk about how he and FFRF protested an illegal senior class vote on whether to have prayer at his high school graduation in Laurens, S.C.
- **Rebecca Newberger Goldstein**, author of *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction*, will be named Freethought Heroine 2011 and will speak on “36 Arguments Against the Existence of God.” Named “Best Novel of 2010” by the Christian Science Monitor and “Five Favorite Books of 2010” by National Public Radio, *36 Arguments for the Existence of God* ends with a chapter in which Rebecca’s atheist protagonist offers 36 arguments against the existence of God.
- **Professor Jerry Coyne**, will receive FFRF’s Emperor Has No Clothes Award. Coyne, a professor in the department of ecology and evolution at the University of Chicago, is author of the recent book, *Why Evolution is True*.
- **Steve Trunk**, a military veteran, FFRF Board Member and Lifetime Member, will receive FFRF’s Atheist in Foxhole Award as plaintiff in a victorious lawsuit declaring the Mount Soledad cross in San Diego unconstitutional. The checkered challenge has been in the courts since the 1980s, with Steve assuming lead-plaintiff status after the death of the original plaintiff.
- **Mitch Kahle**, founder of Hawaii Citizens for the Separation of State and Church, will be named Freethinker of the Year for persuading his state Senate to drop prayers.

FFRF will arrange for a shuttle and reserve the historic Mark Twain Home and Museum for a staggered group tour on Friday afternoon.

Registration opens late Friday afternoon. The formal program begins at 7 p.m., followed by a dessert reception. Events continue through Saturday night and conclude by noon Sunday morning after membership and Board of Director meetings. If you want to tour the Twain house, plan your itinerary to make time on Friday afternoon.



Rebecca Newberger Goldstein



Harrison Hopkins



Jerry Coyne

FFRF convention rates are \$159 plus tax, single, double, triple or quadruple. Reserve your rooms directly by requesting “Freedom From Religion Foundation” Group Block by calling tollfree (866)373-9806. You may make reservations online at www.Marriott.com. Use the group code “**frffrfa**.”

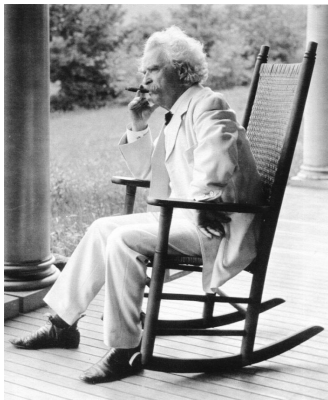
Rooms are held until Sept. 6 unless filled before.

Register with FFRF (only \$50 per member, \$55 per spouse or companion accompanying member, \$95 for non-member) using the handy registration form this page or go online at: ffrf.org/outreach/convention/

Return to: FFRF, Attn: Convention, P.O. Box 750, Madison, WI 53701

Freedom From Religion Foundation’s 34th Annual Convention October 7–9, 2011

Make checks payable to “FFRF”
Marriott Hartford Downtown
Hartford, Conn.



No. registering

_____ FFRF Member registration(s) @ \$50 per person	\$ _____
_____ Non-member spouse or companion accompanying member @ \$55.....	\$ _____
_____ Non-member registration(s) @ \$95	\$ _____
(or join for \$40, save \$5!)	
_____ Student registration(s) @ \$25 (Ask about student group rate)	\$ _____
_____ Saturday Non-Prayer Breakfast @ \$25* per person	\$ _____
_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian option _____ no. of vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan option _____ no. of vegan	
_____ Saturday Night Dinner @ \$45* per person	\$ _____
_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian option _____ no. of vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan option _____ no. of vegan	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free dinners required on above selections	
* Meal prices include 21 % gratuity and 6 % sales tax	
_____ Mark Twain Tour (includes shuttle) @ \$16	\$ _____
_____ Mark Twain Tour (student) (includes shuttle) @ \$14	\$ _____
Total: _____	

Name(s) Please include names of all registrants for nametags

Address

City/State/Zip Please include phone/e-mail (in case we have a question about your registration)

FFRF welcomes 29 new Lifers

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is delighted to announce 29 new Lifetime Members. They are:

Lane Adams, Jerry Appanaitis, Jo Chanaud, George Cunningham, David Dell, Britt Girard, Diana Haverberg, James M. Hicks, Windell D. Horton, Shawn P. Kelly, Philip Kogan, Gregory Kuethe, Laraine Martin, Daryl McDonald, Robert R. McElwain, Ian McEwen, Cary McMillan, Josephine McSweeney, Paul O’Brien, William B. Palm, Michael Peralta (surprise from Rose Secrest), Patrick Phillips, Joel Rives, Albert Reuben, Bernie Schatz, Rose Secrest, Albert Ruben, Sarah Sumner and Jeremy Welling.

Additionally, one new Iowa Lifetime Member preferred not to be publicly named.

States represented are Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont and Wisconsin.

Lifetime Memberships are offered for individuals who designate \$1,000 as a membership or membership renewal, which goes into safe rainy day savings. Lifetime Memberships, like all dues and donations to FFRF, are deductible for income-tax purposes and mean never another renewal notice!

FFRF sends its warmest thanks to all 29 new Lifetime supporters.