

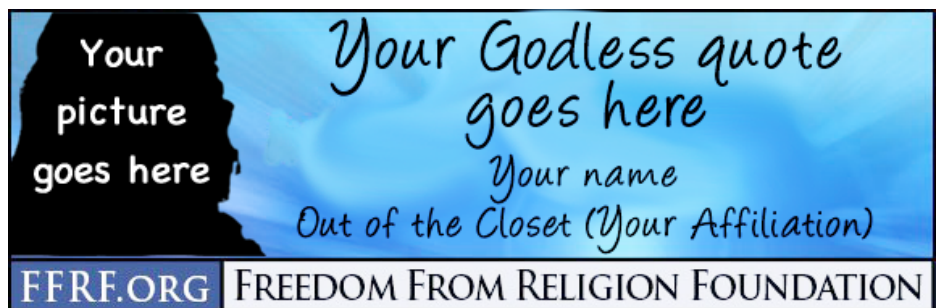
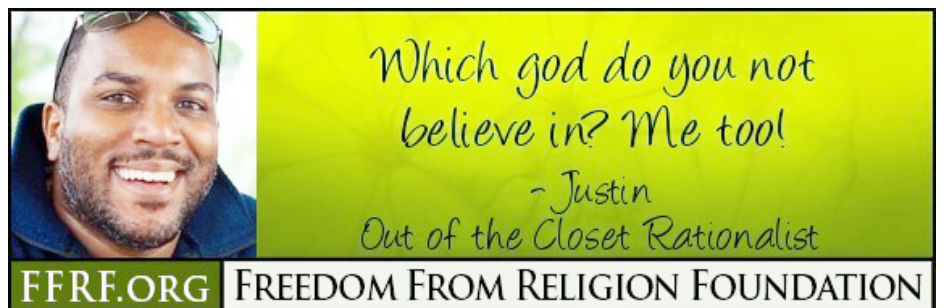
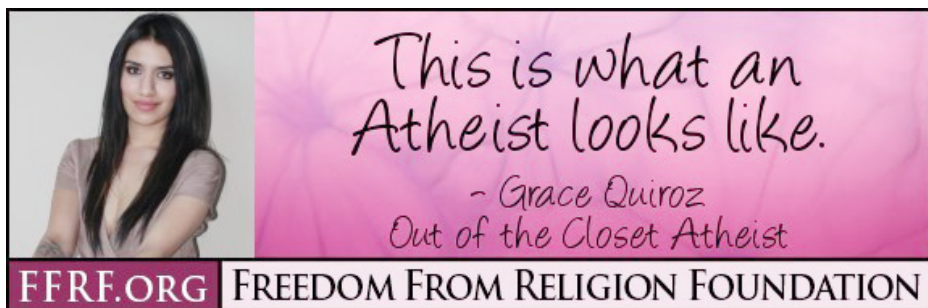
# Freethought Today

Complimentary Copy  
Join FFRF Now!

Vol. 28 No. 4

Published by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.

May 2011



## FFRF launches 'virtual billboards' to put faces on freethought

# Calling all nonbelievers out of the closet!

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is inviting nonbelievers everywhere to "come out of the closet" and to declare and share their nonbelief via FFRF's unique new online "virtual billboard" application.

Help dispel myths, educate and promote reason by adding your voice, face and message to FFRF's friendly neighborhood freethinker campaign.

FFRF, the largest atheist-agnostic association in the U.S. with more than 16,500 members, first debuted its personalized public relations "Out of the Closet" campaign on bus signs and billboards last fall.

The inviting ads feature individual nonbelievers, their views and their faces. The "Out of the Closet" campaign

so far has visited Madison, Wis., is up currently in the Raleigh-Durham Triangle area of North Carolina, and will launch in several other cities soon.

"Although we can't put everyone on a real billboard, every nonbeliever can participate in this unique 'cyberboard' campaign," explains FFRF Co-President Dan Barker, a former minister and author of *Godless*.

The interactive campaign was announced in late April. "We're proud that the very first person to submit a 'cyberboard' was Richard Dawkins, who knows the value of coming out of the closet," Barker adds.

"Although the nonreligious — including one in six U.S. citizens — are a significant segment of the world

population, many Americans have never knowingly met a nonbeliever," FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor points out. "Our 'Out of the Closet' campaign aims to remedy that by show-

casing friendly neighborhood atheists and agnostics, who are the best advertisement for freethought."

It's working for the gay rights movement.  
*Continued on page 12*

## 'No law' should mean no law

# FFRF seeks rehearing on Day of Prayer ruling

A three-judge panel of the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago ruled April 14 that the Freedom From

Religion Foundation and its plaintiffs don't have standing to continue their historic challenge of the National Day of Prayer. The 1952 congressional act declared a National Day of Prayer and requires the president to issue an annual proclamation exhorting citizens to pray.

FFRF is filing for a rehearing, an *en banc* review, by the entire 7th Circuit. The three-judge panel overturned the strong April 2010 ruling by U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb in favor of FFRF. Crabb enjoined President Obama from issuing a prayer proclamation last year, but stayed her order pending his appeal.

Crabb, in ruling the National Day of Prayer unconstitutional, had reasoned: "In this instance, the government has taken sides on a matter that must be left to individual conscience." Crabb added, "The same law that prohibits the government from declaring a National Day of Prayer also prohibits it from declaring a National Day of Blasphemy." Crabb noted a National Day of Prayer was no more within the purview of government to declare than encouraging "citizens to fast during the month of Ramadan, attend a synagogue, purify themselves in a sweat lodge or practice

*Continued on page 8*

## Paul Gaylor dies

Paul J. Gaylor ("Jody"), 84, died on May 5, 2011, of brain cancer. He was married for 61 years to Anne Nicol Gaylor, FFRF president emerita. Jody was a member of the Board of Directors and previously served on FFRF's governing Executive Council. He was a plaintiff in FFRF's ongoing challenge of the National Day of Prayer.

Jody was the principal FFRF volunteer for its first 20 years — opening mail, filling book and sales orders, and was legendary for surprising staff with freshly baked cookies. A retrospective will run in the next issue. Cards or notes may reach Anne c/o FFRF, PO Box 750, Madison, WI 53701.



Photo: Brent Nicastro



FFRF placed 80 exterior ads, including the one above, on buses in Washington, D.C., in late April, plus 100 interior ads and four metro dioramas, timed to make a statement on the National Day of Prayer on May 5.



# Meet a (Trekkie) Member

## ‘It is only logical’



Susan Sackett and Gene Roddenberry not long before he died in 1991.

**Name:** Susan Sackett.  
**Where I live:** Scottsdale, Ariz.  
**Where and when I was born:** New York City, Dec. 18, 1943.  
**Family:** Jan Wright, my companion. He is also my best friend. I have a golden retriever named Kali, and since I lost a beloved dog this year, I'll be looking to rescue a German shepherd-mix soon.  
**Education:** Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Conn.; University of Florida-Gainesville, bachelor of arts, master of education.  
**Occupation:** Writer, former television and film production associate for Gene Roddenberry of "Star Trek." I worked with him for 17 years until his death in 1991.  
**How I got where I am today:** A hap-

py series of circumstances — being in the right place at the right time, getting to know the right people and perseverance!  
**Where I'm headed:** I will continue to write when the opportunity presents itself, although I am enjoying my retirement! And I'll continue volunteer work to advance humanism and freethought.  
**Person in history I admire and why:** Dare I say it? Gene Roddenberry, my mentor, for his optimism, faith in humanity and a brighter future for us all.  
**A quotation I like:** "Keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out." (Carl Sagan)  
**These are a few of my favorite things:** Travel to new places and the chance to

meet new people and learn about different cultures, curling up with a good read on a rare Arizona rainy day, dogs and animals of all kinds, movies and, of course, chocolate!  
**These are not:** Chaos (disorganized people and situations); people who "believe" and never question anything, and don't want to.  
**My doubts about religion started:** Sorry to say, but not until I was well into adulthood. I probably was a non-believer, but didn't realize it until Gene Roddenberry shared a copy of Asimov's *Guide to the Bible* with me. It struck a chord with me. I'd been having dialogues with Gene about religion and belief since 1974, when I first began working with him. So it was a gradual thing. Being Jewish, I didn't have to give up a Trinity — I was only one god away from being a freethinker!  
**Why I'm a freethinker:** As Mr. Spock



Susan Sackett

might say, "It is only logical." I cannot find any good evidence for the existence of any gods, so I am "without a god" — an atheist.  
**Ways I promote freethought:** FFRF member since 1995 (and Life Member, courtesy of Dr. Harold Saferstein, since 2007). I'm on the board of directors of the American Humanist Association and was president of our local chapter, the Humanist Society of Greater Phoenix, for 11 years, retiring this year to give others a chance to continue what I began. I also travel the country giving talks on "Humanism in 'Star Trek,'" discussing the show and how Gene used it to promote his humanist and freethought values.

## Atheist in Foxhole



"Atheist in Foxhole" awardee Sgt. Justin Griffith stands with his new daughter Zoe. Justin exposed state-church violations at his Army base in Fort Bragg, N.C. To read more about the July 3-5 Lake Hypatia Advance speakers, see page 5.

### A Note to Subscribers

Your address label shows the expiration date of your membership in FFRF, which includes your subscription to Freethought Today and "Private Line." If your label shows May or earlier, your subscription has expired. Your prompt renewal (\$40-single membership; \$50-household; \$100 sustaining; \$25-student) saves us time and postage, and is tax-deductible. (Subscription-only is \$20/ year.) Freethought Today is published 10 times a year, with combined issues in Jan/Feb and June/July. Send to FFRF, Box 750, Madison WI 53701.

### Send Us Your Address Change Promptly!

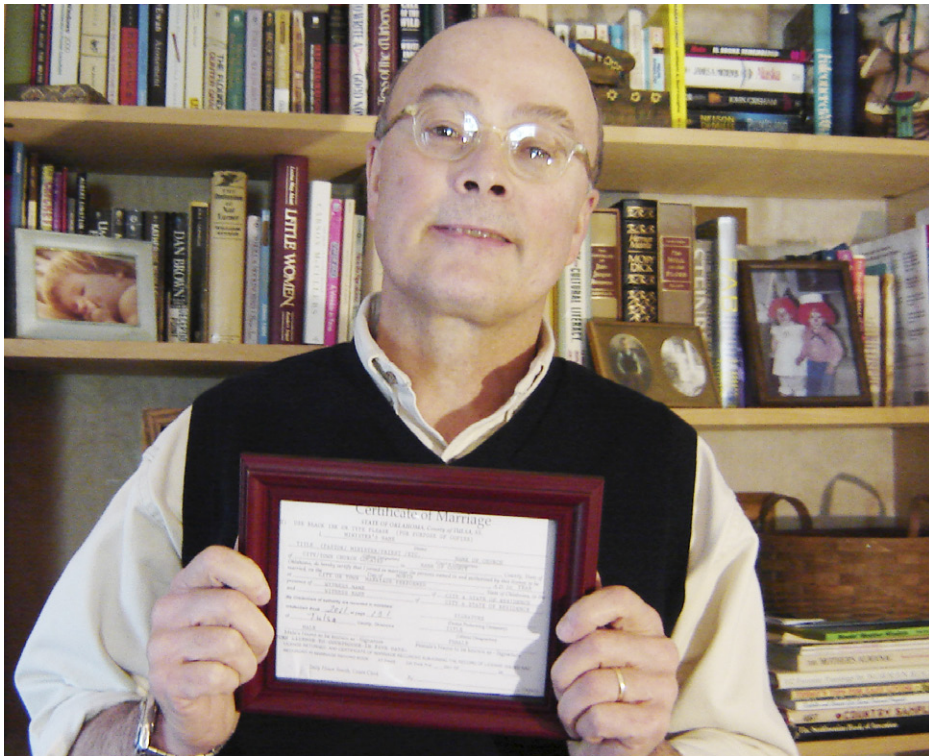
Don't miss a single issue! If you move, notify us directly and promptly. **The Post Office does not forward third-class mail.** FFRF cannot be responsible for replacing back issues if we have not been notified prior to your move. Back issues, while they last, may be ordered for \$2 each.

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May 2011  
*The only freethought newspaper in the United States*



# Tulsa chapter members register to perform weddings



FFRF Tulsa chapter President Randy Bradley holds a marriage certificate. "The chapter was interested in making sure that the county was not reserving any special privileges for superstitious nonsense. We felt that religious affiliation should not reserve special privileges for anyone."

Nontheists wanting to say "I do" without clergy involvement in Tulsa County, Okla., may now do so, thanks to members of FFRF's Tulsa chapter.

"Up until now, the religious community has had a monopoly on who can officiate at weddings," Bill Dusenberry, an FFRF member and coordinator of the Tulsa Coalition of Reason, told the Tulsa World.

Randy Bradley, president of FFRF's Tulsa chapter; William Poire, FFRF member and president of the Atheist Community of Tulsa; and Dusenberry registered April 28 with the county to officiate at weddings.

Poire said it's the first time celebrants approved by FFRF were registered. Dusenberry, who led the effort, said having secular celebrants will add to the celebratory atmosphere and co-

hesiveness associated with being married by a person who's a member of one's group.

FFRF'er Ron McDaniel's research of the state statute led Dusenberry to the county, because Oklahoma makes counties the final arbiters. The county Court Clerk's Office accepted the Tulsa FFRF chapter as the equivalent of an ordaining organization for the purpose of approving celebrants. FFRF member Larry Roth designed the required letterhead stationery.

Jason Jones, supervisor of the Family Division in the Court Clerk's Office, said the three FFRF applicants presented letters stating they met that organization's requirements as celebrants. "That's good enough for us to issue the license," Jones said.

Dusenberry said the chapter has developed an application process for prospective celebrants and for couples seeking a ceremony.



## Dry behind the ears

Ken Proulx, a Wisconsin Lifetime Member who turns 87 in July, says: "I wish I had had this DeBaptismal Certificate 50 years ago to show my grandfather. He died an angry man, insisting that I could never leave the Catholic Church."

FFRF debuted the certificates last month. Two gold-sealed and embossed certificates on parchment, personally signed by FFRF's Dan Barker, are \$5. Order from FFRF, Attn: DeBaptism, Box 750, Madison WI 53701. After the minimum order of two for \$5, additional copies going to the same address are \$2 apiece.

You may also order them online here as well as download a free color version: [ffrf.org/news/timely-topics/debaptismal-certificate/](http://ffrf.org/news/timely-topics/debaptismal-certificate/)

# FFRF welcomes 21 new Lifers, one After-Lifer

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is delighted to announce 21 new Lifetime Members and one new After-Lifer.

New Lifetime Members are Paul Amoroso, Aaron Arres, David Ball, A.J. Bushnell, Guy T. Craig, Duane Damiano, Carl de Boor, Mike Franklin (gift from Dr. Harold Saferstein), Susan Grumbaum (gift from Dr. Harold Saferstein), Jeremy M. Harris, Laura Humphrey (through CFC pledge), Karl Kurz, Candace Lang, Jim Pennington, Ric Sayre, Stacey Schwingle, Harold Stephens, Michael Ware, Peter Wendel, Al Wendler and Jeffrey White (gift from Dr. Harold Saferstein).

Karl Kurz most generously sent in his Lifetime Membership to celebrate his 88th birthday!

FFRF's new After-Life Member (for a second time over) is Thomas R. Smith.

Represented are California, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachu-

setts, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington and British Columbia, Canada.

Individual Lifetime Members are \$1,000 designated as a membership or renewal, and mean never another renewal notice. After-Life Memberships of \$5,000 are the slightly tongue-in-cheek category for those who want their contribution "to live after them." Memberships and donations of any amount are deductible for income tax purposes.

Warmest appreciation to Hal Saferstein for gifting three Lifetime Memberships and welcome to his friends, Jeffrey, Susan and Mike. FFRF thanks Thomas, Al, Peter, Michael, Harold, Stacey, Ric, Jim, Candace, Karl, Laura, Jeremy, Carl, Duane, Guy, A.J., David, Aaron and Paul. (And many happy returns to Karl.)

## 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  
Madison WI 53701

*Freedom Depends on Freethinkers*

## 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.



FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION  
P.O. Box 750 • Madison WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • [ffrf.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:info@ffrf.org).

## 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

FFRF, PO Box 750, Madison WI 53701  
[ffrf.org/shop](http://ffrf.org/shop)



## Sample Copies For \$2

Send two dollars 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.)



# Heads Up

A Poetry Column by Philip Appleman

## Eulogy

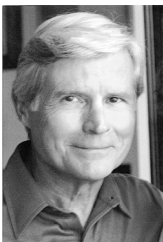
That swain in Shakespeare, penning ballads  
to his lady’s eyebrow: if just once  
he could have seen my sweetheart’s breasts,  
he would have written epics. Oh,  
they are so springtime sweet and summer-lilting,  
those twin blossoms, I should have found  
a painter intimate with tender shades  
of pink and cream  
to immortalize their harmony.

Because  
up there on the seventh floor  
they are cutting one of them away,  
the one we touched last week and felt  
the poisoned pearl.  
Now the knives are working, working,  
I feel them stabbing through my flesh.  
She will come back gray, remembering  
to smile, the bandages weeping blood,  
her beauty scarred,  
her life saved.

I will love her more  
than yesterday.



© 2011 Philip Appleman  
Freethought Today is honored to publish this new poem.  
Playwright Margie Appleman (above) pictured in Spain in 1961.



Philip Appleman is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Indiana University. His eight published volumes of poetry include *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 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 (five 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, *Karma, Dharma, Pudding & Pie*, \$27 and *Darwin’s Ark*, \$23 ([ffrf.org/shop/](http://ffrf.org/shop/)).

### YOUR WEEKLY ANTIDOTE TO THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

#### TUNE IN TO FREETHOUGHT RADIO

produced by the  
Freedom From Religion  
Foundation

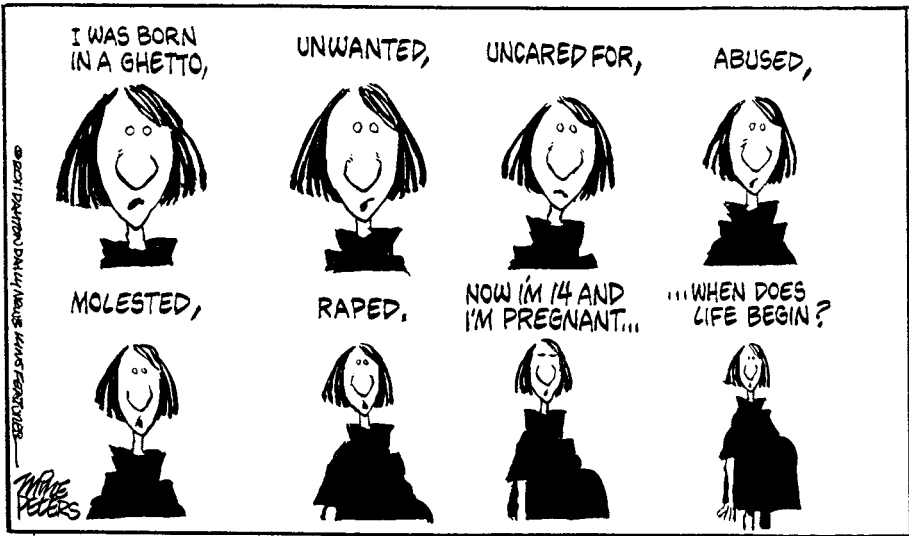


Hosted by Dan Barker and  
Annie Laurie Gaylor

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](http://ffrf.org/news/radio)

Slightly irreverent views,  
news, music & interviews



## Overheard



“I didn’t have a childhood,” she says, adding that her mother never read her any books except the bible, and that she wasn’t allowed to say

“deviled eggs” or “Dirt Devil.”  
**Profile of singer-songwriter Katy Perry, whose parents are born-again evangelists**

*Vanity Fair, May 2011*

He’s burning candles constantly, four or five burning at once. He said he sees God in the candles — and Bob Marley.  
**Arlene Johnson, mother of Lester Johnson Jr., 26, who said he was “delivering faith’s message” when he stabbed his parents several times.**

*Tampa Tribune, 5-2-11*

As with other national minority groups, atheism is enjoying rapid growth. Despite the bigotry, the number of American nontheists has tripled as a proportion of the general population since the 1960s. Younger generations’ tolerance for the endless disputes of religion is waning fast. Surveys designed to overcome the understandable reluctance to admit atheism have found that as many as 60 million Americans — a fifth of the population — are not believers. Our nonreligious compatriots should be accorded the same respect as other minorities.

**Researchers Gregory Paul and Phil Zuckerman**

*Washington Post, 4-30-11*

How can you be a saint if you fail to protect innocent children? For years after the Rev. Marcial Maciel Degollado, the founder of the Legion of Christ, was formally accused of pedophilia in a Vatican proceeding, he remained John Paul’s pet. The ultra-orthodox Legion of Christ and Opus Dei were the shock troops in John Paul’s war on Jesuits and other progressive theologians.

**Columnist Maureen Dowd, arguing in “Hold the Halo” against sainthood for Pope John Paul II**

*New York Times, 4-23-11*

Louisiana’s top priority must be to educate our children so they can compete for the high-paying jobs that we want to create. Louisiana’s job-killing creationism law undermines our education system and drives science- and technology-based companies away from Louisiana.

**State Sen. Karen Carter Peterson, D-New Orleans, on her bill to repeal a 2008 law allowing classroom discussion of “intelligent design” as an alternative theory to evolution**

*Lafayette Independent Weekly, 4-18-11*



Bring yourself back to life.

**Sign at a British pub advertising vodka and Red Bull for £2.50 on Easter Sunday**

*Freethinker.co.uk, 4-19-11*

People look at you differently if you say you’re an atheist in the Army. That’s extremely taboo. I get a lot of questions if I let it slip in conversation.

**Lt. Samantha Nicoll, a West Point graduate and member of Military Atheists and Secular Humanists**

*Associated Press, 4-1-11*

When people say God blessed me with a beautiful jump shot, it really pisses me off. I tell those people, don’t undermine the work I’ve put in every day. Not some days, every day. Ask anyone who has been on a team with me who shoots the most. Go back to Seattle and Milwaukee, and ask them. The answer is me, not because it’s a competition but because that’s how I prepare.

**Ray Allen, Boston Celtics guard who holds the NBA record for 3-point shots, on a sportscaster’s comment Allen was born to shoot a basketball**

*ESPN, 2-11-11*

Jumping jacks an affront to his God.  
**Statshot, “Why is our child excused from gym?”**

*The Onion, 4-21-11*

It may seem odd that an atheist would attend a Catholic university, but just as most people do, I love it here. The people are nice, the campus is beautiful and the classes are challenging. I have a family history here, and I have no regrets about coming to UD. Every person to whom I have revealed that I am an atheist has had positive reactions that usually resulted in long, meaningful conversations.

**Ryan Kleshinski, senior at the University of Dayton, a Marianist Catholic college in Ohio**

*Flyer News, 4-11-11*

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*

These are Sunday school teachers becoming politicians. Mike Huckabee? He’s [like] the guy that diddled you while holding the bible. He’s so soft-spoken, so Mister Rogers.

**Billie Joe Armstrong of the musical group Green Day**

*Wizbangpop.com, 4-19-11*



Freethought activism in ‘buckle of bible belt’

Sign up: Independence Weekend at Lake Hypatia

The 21st annual Independence Weekend Celebration at Lake Hypatia, Ala., is set for July 1-3, Friday through Sunday, at FFRF’s southern Freethought Hall and Freethought Advance near Talladega. Lake Hypatia’s motto is “No preaching, no praying, no walking on water.”

Hosted by the Alabama Freethought Society, an FFRF chapter and its director Patricia Cleveland, and co-sponsored by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the event this year will emphasize activism.

**Duncan Henderson**, an Auburn, Ala., teen, will receive the Catherine Fahringer Memorial Youth Activist Award of \$1,000. Duncan, the son of FFRF member Greg Henderson, was recently featured on “Nick News” in a segment about how his attempt to start a freethought club at school was thwarted.

Also joining the announced roster will be **Benjamin Burchall**, a Christian minister turned atheist. No longer “winning souls for Christ,” he now nurtures minds to accept reason. Burchall formerly led the Long Beach Freethought Society and now is executive director of Black Nonbelievers of

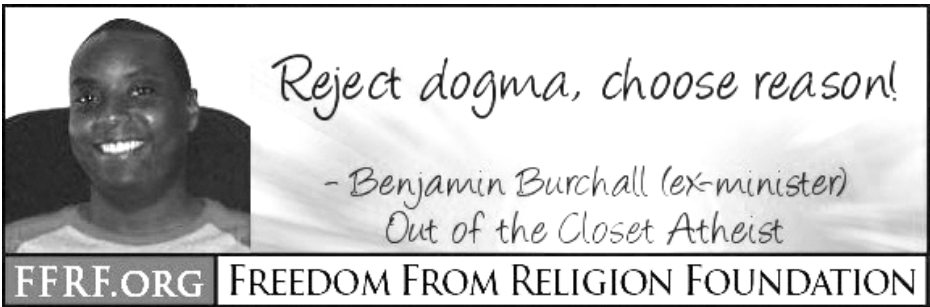


Duncan Henderson

Atlanta.

Events take place in FFRF’s southern Freethought Hall, an air-conditioned auditorium. The impressive granite Atheists in Foxholes monument is nestled amid pines adjoining the private Cleveland family grounds abutting a small lake and Talladega National Forest.

Announced speakers include **Jim McCollum**, whose mother, Vashti, on his behalf, brought the landmark Su-



preme Court case declaring religious instruction in public schools unconstitutional. Jim will air the new Peabody Award-winning documentary, “The Lord Was Not on Trial Here,” about his case. A Lifetime Member living in Arkansas, Jim is a retired attorney and educator. His wife, **Betty McCollum**, who teaches philosophy and religious studies, will join the roster to talk about women and religion.

Invited as “Atheist in Foxhole” awardee is **Justin Griffith**, who has exposed state-church violations at his Army base in Fort Bragg, N.C.. His attempt to organize “Rock Beyond Belief” to counter a Billy Graham event was canceled due to military nonsupport. Justin will attend, barring deployment. Vets will be asked to gather around the Atheists in Foxholes monument during the event.

Foundation Co-Presidents **Dan Barker** and **Annie Laurie Gaylor** will speak about current FFRF actions. Dan, a songwriter and piano player, will team up with ex-Mormon **Steve Benson**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the Arizona Republic, for a special reprise of **Tunes ’n ’Toons**, featuring Steve’s cartoons and Dan’s tunes.

Joining **Pat Cleveland** to speak about organizing in the bible belt will be **Mark Zumbach**, director of the Triangle Freethought Society, FFRF’s Raleigh-Durham, N.C., chapter, and **Bill Dusenberry**, an organizer of the new Oklahoma chapter in Tulsa.

The event includes the traditional Poetry in the Pines led by **Alice Cleveland**, a nature demonstration by retired zookeeper **Bob Truett**, the annual “Atheists vs. Agnostics” football match and a freethought trivia game. Tongue-in-cheek “debaptisms” can be performed by the lake.

The Cleveland family generously opens up their personal grounds for participants who reserve in advance for RVs or primitive camping. Showers and washrooms are available onsite. There are many motels in the area. To download a registration form, register online, get lodging information, map, get schedule updates, directions and more about Lake Hypatia, visit:



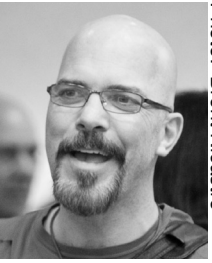
Jim McCollum



Pat Cleveland



Annie Laurie Gaylor



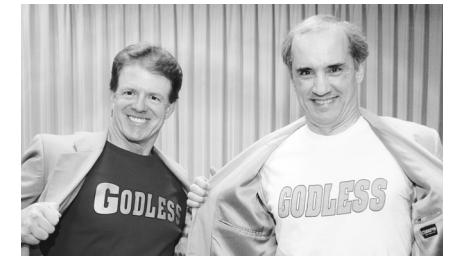
Mark Zumbach



Bill Dusenberry



Betty McCollum



Arizona Republic cartoonist Steve Benson (left) with Dan Barker.



Atheists in Foxholes Monument

Make check payable to “AFA”  
Mail to Alabama Freethought Association  
PO Box 571, Talladega AL 35161  
Phone (256) 761-1105, Fax (256) 761-1105  
Register online: [ffrf.org/outreach/lake-hypatia/](http://ffrf.org/outreach/lake-hypatia/)

Fourth of July Celebration  
Lake Hypatia Freethought Hall  
Friday, July 1 – Sunday, July 3, 2011  
Sponsored by Alabama Freethought Association  
A chapter of Freedom From Religion Foundation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Registration:  
\_\_\_\_ FFRF Member Registration(s)  
\$35 per person \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Non-Member Registration(s)  
\$40 per person \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ FFRF Student Registration(s)  
\$5 per person \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Non-FFRF Student Registration(s)  
\$10 per person \$\_\_\_\_\_

Food Order:  
\_\_\_\_ Friday Dinner(s)  
\$12 per adult \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\$6 per student or child under 12 \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Saturday Lunch(es)  
\$12 per adult \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\$6 per student or child under 12 \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Saturday Dinner(s)  
\$12 per adult \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\$6 per student or child under 12 \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Sunday Brunch(es)  
\$12 per adult \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\$6 per student or child under 12 \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Check if vegetarian.  
☐ Please check here if you plan to camp at Lake Hypatia.

Late registration at the door is an additional \$10 per person after June 22nd. No meal orders after June 22nd. Registration cannot be done via email. To register using a credit card, phone FFRF during work hours at 608/256-8900 or go online.

Overheard

This book, and its commercial success, remind us again of the effectiveness of religious indoctrination early in life. They recall the truth of the Jesuit saying, “Give me a child until he is 7, and I will show you the man.” Can there possibly be any child raised by devout Christian parents who does not, well before kindergarten, have images of winged beings and puffy clouds embedded in his or her brain? Small children believe in Santa Claus for the

same reason — because their parents, whom they love, teach them to believe in Santa. The difference is that, at an appropriate age, parents admit that the Santa story isn’t true. They never admit, however, that heaven is the same sort of story. “Spirited Atheist” columnist Susan Jacoby, on *Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy’s Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back* Washington Post, 3-30-11



FFRF legal victories — It pays to complain

Reflection replaces prayer in Eau Claire

The County Board in Eau Claire, Wis., voted 23-4 on May 3 to start meetings with a “moment of reflection” instead of an invocation. FFRF formally objected Feb. 25 to the prayer practice that’s long been in place, including regular invocations given by eight current board members.

“Government prayer is unnecessary, inappropriate and divisive,” wrote FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. “Calling upon board members and citizens to rise and pray (even silently) is coercive, embarrassing and beyond the scope of secular city government. Board members are free to pray privately or to worship on their own time in their own way. They do not need to worship on taxpayers’ time.”

In April, a board committee recommended replacing the prayer with the county’s mission statement. That became a moment of reflection in the measure approved May 3.

The Leader-Telegram reported that Supervisor Paul Lokken was sorry that the committee “knuckled under” to pressure from FFRF and local prayer opponents. “It’s time to say, ‘We’re going to do it our way,’ ” Lokken said.

Supervisor Sue Miller, one of those previously offering “nonreligious” invocations, recalled being asked once why her remarks didn’t mention God or Jesus. “Whose god should I represent?” Miller said she responded.

FFRF stops city prayer sponsorship

Since 2008 in Keizer, Ore., FFRF has been fighting city staff involvement with the annual Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast held in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer. The city’s website advertised the breakfast and had images of praying hands and a Christian cross.

Two days after FFRF’s first written complaint, the city responded by claiming that the Keizer Chamber of Commerce sponsored it and reimbursed the city for printing and mailing invitations. Fruits of FFRF’s open-records request showed that city staff were organizing the event. City Recorder Tracy Davis drafted an invitation (on a “From the Desk of the Mayor” letterhead with Psalm 33:22) to pastors, and the city printed invitations and NDP fliers, drafted the program and arranged for catering.

FFRF followed up with letters to Mayor Lore Christopher in 2009 and 2010 asking that the breakfast be canceled, as well as official participation in the national event.

This year, according to FFRF’s local complainant, it appears the city is not involved in planning or organizing the breakfast. All promotional materials make it clear that the Chamber of Commerce is managing it. Christopher is still attending the breakfast, however, and FFRF sent a letter May 3 requesting that she “refrain, as mayor of Keizer, from issuing a National Day of Prayer proclamation and from participating in [her] official capacity in National Day of Prayer events.”

FFRF gets freethought to Tulsa inmates

An FFRF letter launched a success-

ful investigation involving Tulsa County employees returning atheist books sent to an inmate at the David L. Moss Criminal Justice Center in Tulsa, Okla.

FFRF’s complainant attempted to send two atheist books to an inmate at the Justice Center via distributor Amazon.com. *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality* was “returned to sender” Feb. 14. A paperback copy of *The Atheist’s Way* was returned Feb. 17.

The facility’s policy allowed inmates to receive paperback copies of books that were religious in nature and sent directly from a distributor. The chaplain was in charge of determining which books met policy requirements.

Rebecca Markert, FFRF senior staff attorney, wrote to Sheriff Stanley Glanz on March 23: “A policy that allows for the acceptance of religious books while rejecting all others demonstrates an endorsement and preference for religion over nonreligion. In addition, allowing the chaplain to determine if books are of a religious nature also carries with it the risk that the Justice Center will endorse a preference for one religion over another, or religion over nonreligion.”

On April 11, Glanz acknowledged that the books were never signed for by employees, as they should have been. “I do not promote discrimination, of any kind, within this organization and investigate all allegations thoroughly. . . . After speaking with the employees I am comfortable stating that they misinterpreted the policy and in no way were they acting in a malicious, discriminatory manner.”

Glanz said the county has made “the appropriate changes to our policy and have ensured that all employees stationed at the front desk are made aware of the updated changes to our acceptance policy of inmate packages sent to the facility.

“[W]hile I sincerely apologize for the inadvertent offense to your claimant, these actions were not meant as interpreted,” Glanz wrote.

FFRF stops Conn. worship endorsement

A worship service was removed from the official schedule in New Britain, Conn., of the state-sponsored Civil War Commemoration Kickoff Weekend after FFRF’s timely letter of complaint April 4.

Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), one of the event’s organizers, had invited a Christian pastor from Asylum Hill Congregational Church to lead the worship service, planned for April 17. Other sponsors included the city of New Britain and two state-affiliated ad hoc entities.

In her letter, FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert reminded CCSU President Jack Miller and Matthew Warshauer, CCSU history professor and commemoration coordinator, that government can’t endorse religion.

“While it may be acceptable to teach about religion’s impact on the war from a scholarly perspective, the Establishment Clause prohibits the state from sponsoring a religious worship service, thus promoting religion over nonreligion,” commented Markert. “When multiple public institutions of-



Folsom’s folly

FFRF sent a letter of complaint April 14 to Melody Folsom, Cass County public administrator in Harrisonville, Mo., about this religious display on an office wall outside her administrator’s office. Another bible verse in the display, from Psalm 46:10, says “Be still, and know that I am God.” The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that “government has a greater interest in controlling what materials are posted on its property than it does in controlling the speech of the people who work for it.”

fer a worship service at a secular commemoration, the government itself expresses an establishment of religion and shows favoritism for the Christian religion.”

Markert also noted that Article 7 of the Connecticut Constitution states that “[N]o preference shall be given by law to any religious society or denomination in the state.”

FFRF received a response April 14 from CCSU: “Thank you for alerting us to the issue regarding the inclusion of a worship service in the agenda for the Civil War Commemoration which is scheduled for this coming weekend. Dr. Warshauer has removed the service from the agenda. Please note that the service will be held in a privately owned church on private property and is not being sponsored by Central Connecticut State University.”

Judge: County can bar nativity scene

In a case stemming from FFRF’s 2008 complaint on behalf of its Michigan members, a federal judge has dismissed a man’s lawsuit against the Macomb County Road Commission for barring a highway nativity scene.

U.S. District Judge Gerald Rosen ruled April 19 in Detroit against plaintiff John Satawa’s attempt to keep erecting a holiday crèche that stood almost 10 feet high in the median of Mound Road in Warren.

After FFRF’s complaint, written by Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert, the Road Commission investigated and found Satawa had no permit. The board refused to issue one on the grounds that the crèche was a traffic hazard and amounted to an unconstitutional endorsement of religion.

Satawa then sued the county in 2009, alleging an Establishment Clause violation and violation of his right to free speech. FFRF filed an amicus brief

supporting the commission. While the dispute has been litigated, the nativity scene has been displayed at St. Anne’s Catholic Church.

In his ruling, Rosen found no First Amendment violation. “Concern for public safety constitutes a reasonable, viewpoint neutral reason for excluding speakers from a nonpublic forum.” Rosen said he visited the site to confirm it was a potential traffic hazard.

The judge noted that the church lawn was a viable site, “since, as Mr. Satawa admitted in his deposition, St. Anne’s Church just a few hundred yards from the proposed median site offered to permit a prominent display of the crèche on Mound Road and with virtually no public safety implications, as it did in past years when it was not possible for plaintiff to display the crèche in this median.”

Rosen also dismissed the claim to an Establishment Clause violation. “A reasonable observer here would not find that the Road Commission’s policy of not permitting the placement of temporary structures in the medians of major roadways conveys a message of endorsement or disapproval of religion.”

Traffic counts at the site showed more than 82,000 vehicles a day used the road at speeds in excess of 50 mph at times.

Annie Laurie Gaylor, Foundation co-president, applauded the ruling. “This ruling appropriately ensures that our public highways should be free from religious displays which confer government endorsement of Christianity and those which pose a significant safety hazard!

“This was one of Rebecca’s early victories, and we’re pleased it has not been overturned,” Gaylor said. “FFRF is grateful to Danielle Hessell of Butzel Long law firm in Michigan for her pro bono assistance.”



# It Pays to Complain

## FFRF request gets prayer banner pulled

The City Council in Ligonier, Pa., revoked approval April 14 of a National Day of Prayer banner for the Ligonier Valley Association of Churches. It was scheduled to hang from the city bandstand May 1-5.

The action came after the Freedom From Religion Foundation requested to hang a banner saying "God & Government a Dangerous Mix — Keep State & Church Separate."

FFRF filled out a city application after a Foundation member in Ligonier asked for FFRF's help, which apparently set in motion the revocation. Council members said they heard from several residents who opposed any banner in the city-owned recreational area. FFRF received a telephone call April 18 from the city informing it that the National Day of Prayer banner would not be displayed on city property.

"I was all for this last month," council member Robert Helterbran Jr. told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. "But I've heard from several people saying that banners, of any kind, would take away from the beauty of the Diamond." Last year, a National Day of Prayer banner was approved after Mayor Ormond "Butch" Bellas broke a 3-3 tie vote.

## Prayer dead in Ohio after FFRF letter

The Minford [Ohio] Local School District stopped scheduling prayers at high school assemblies and graduations after FFRF notified the superintendent of the illegal practices in a Feb. 25 letter.

Prayer was scheduled and delivered by a student during the February National Honor Society assembly at Minford High School, and prayer had been scheduled for high school graduations in previous years. The assembly prayer had been approved by the NHS adviser and the principal.

Rebecca Markert, FFRF senior staff attorney, wrote the district: "Even if student-initiated, school officials may not invite a student, teacher, faculty member or clergy to give any type of prayer, invocation or benediction at a public high school-sponsored event."

"The Supreme Court has settled this matter — high school assemblies and graduations must be secular to protect the freedom of conscience of all students."

An attorney for the school district responded April 6: "With respect to the

assembly held to induct students into the National Honor Society, please be advised that the high school principal and NHS adviser have been advised that there should be no scheduled prayer in the future, in accordance with existing Board policy.

"With respect to the graduation, we have been informed that there was no scheduled prayer at the District graduation ceremony in 2010, nor is the Board aware that a prayer is scheduled as part of the program for this year's graduation ceremony," the letter said.

## FFRF letter axes creationist film

FFRF was contacted by several parents in March and April about creationism instruction in public schools. In handling one of those complaints, FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott sent a letter to Superintendent Trey Lawrence in Shiner, Texas (yes, beer drinkers, the same city renowned for Shiner Bock).

FFRF was informed that Christie Migl, a Shiner High biology teacher, made comments to her class supporting "intelligent design" and showed a film titled "Where Does the Evidence Lead?" The film's producers describe it as presenting "a comprehensive case for intelligent design based upon evidence from molecular biology and genetics."

The film has segments on "Molecular machines that defy Darwin's theory" and "The scientific evidence for intelligent design." In 2006, Texas Citizens for Science called it a "deceitful work of creationist pseudoscience; religious-political ideology masquerading as legitimate science."

After Elliott's March 24 letter, Lawrence responded:

To Whom It May Concern,

I believe the information you received from the "anonymous parent" was completely taken out of context. Mrs. Migl was simply presenting an example of another point of view. The issue of creationism is not taught nor promoted. However, presenting opposing viewpoints are deemed appropriate. As an example, the issue of global warming is also discussed with opposing viewpoints.

Mrs. Migl has taught Biology for Shiner High School for the past 8 years. Her service record is spotless, and neither her professionalism nor teaching techniques has ever been questioned.



Mrs. Migl has been questioned about this issue, and she is mortified by this accusation.

In the future I would encourage this parent to contact my office if he/she has any further complaints of this nature. In addition, I would encourage the parent to meet with the campus principal and Mrs. Migl to clarify any concerns he/she may have.

Thank you, and good day.

Trey Lawrence

Elliott replied with a letter that noted the instruction violated clear precedent in the 5th Circuit, adding, "District science teachers cannot undercut the teaching of evolution by presenting their own 'alternative' religion-based views."

Lawrence replied by e-mail: "Mrs. Migl will no longer be allowed to show this video, nor [sic] any other presenting such a view."

## Board chooses 0, not 10 Commandments

The Rapides Parish Police Jury, the governing body of Rapides Parish, La., ultimately voted against placing the Ten Commandments in courtrooms after a letter of complaint from FFRF. The proposal received committee approval against the advice of parish legal counsel.

FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott sent a letter of complaint on behalf of a parish resident, arguing that the display would violate the Establishment Clause. Anticipating legal problems with the original display, Juror John Lincecum proposed adding other documents to show the "role of faith in American history."

Elliott said in his letter that these efforts would not succeed, citing the Supreme Court's ruling in *McCreary Co. v. ACLU of Ky.*

The board voted 6-3 against the proposal April 11. Juror Oliver Overton was quoted as saying, "Like I said, when I was sworn in, I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and Louisiana. I will not make a decision to knowingly violate the law."

## FFRF complaint makes rapture fliers vanish

FFRF alerted the U.S. Post Office in Lothian, Md., about a stack of religious fliers placed in the lobby. The flier headline read, "God Gives Another Infallible Proof that Assures the Rapture Will Occur May 21, 2011."

Rebecca Markert, FFRF senior staff attorney, noted in an April 4 letter to Postmaster Derma Malden that the fliers violate postal regulations and the U.S. Constitution.

On April 28, Malden replied: "I want to personally apologize on behalf of the Postal Service. We regret this experience, which does not reflect our high standards of service. We do not

condone and are not impartial to any fliers being placed in the lobby of our post offices.

"These particular fliers could have been left after a check was completed. However, they were noticed later that afternoon and disposed of."

## Schools won't host baccalaureate

FFRF ended a serious state-church violation at Cedar Cliff High School in New Cumberland, Pa., involving a religious baccalaureate service.

On June 3, 2010, the school hosted the baccalaureate service under the direction of two teachers. The service included an invocation, religious message and benediction by Pastor Jeff Davidson and a performance of the religious "Anthem Dedication" by student members of the Chamber Singers.

Several days later, Red Land High School, also part of the West Shore School District, held a baccalaureate at the school. Students sang "A Closing Prayer" and "The Lord Bless You and Keep You." Cedar Cliff scheduled and transported students to an official baccalaureate practice after senior exams June 3. Both services used the district seal.

Rebecca Markert, FFRF senior staff attorney, sent a stern letter July 1, 2010, to Superintendent Jamry Small:

"As an inherently religious event, a baccalaureate service may not be held or financially supported by a public school. . . . School sponsorship, or even the appearance of sponsorship, of baccalaureate services is unconstitutional and any endorsement, participation, planning or promotion of the services must cease immediately."

"End-of-the-year celebrations mean a lot not only to Christian students but also to students practicing non-Christian religions and the 15% of your student population who are nonreligious," she added. "A secular, school-sponsored awards night may benefit from full school endorsement and has the added advantage of being entirely inclusive of students and families from all types of religious or nonreligious backgrounds."

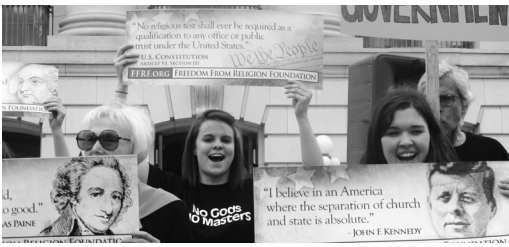
While the district hasn't officially responded, the Harrisburg Patriot-News reported April 6 that "Cedar Cliff High School no longer will host a baccalaureate service before graduation. According to a notice sent to parents and students, the West Shore School District received a complaint last summer that the program could cross constitutional boundaries separating church and state. . . . The note says most schools in Pennsylvania stopped hosting the service years ago because of constitutional questions regarding the separation of church and state, and 'we are now doing similarly.'"

Nick Pantalone, Cedar Cliff student body president, said a committee will look into alternative locations.





# FFRF seeks *en banc* review of National Day of Prayer suit



*Continued from page 1*  
rune magic.”

FFRF’s historic victory sent shockwaves around the nation last year. Foundation Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor said the appeals court panel had to throw the case out on standing, because had it ruled on the merits, FFRF would win.

“Our challenge is so strong, our claim is so correct,” Gaylor said. “The First Amendment says, ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establish-

ment of religion,’ and Congress made such a law when it enacted an annual National Day of Prayer. ‘No law’ should mean no law!”

The National Day of Prayer, “on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups and as individuals,” was adopted by Congress at the behest of Rev. Billy Graham. Giving a sermon on the capitol steps, Graham said, “What a thrilling, glorious thing it would be to see the leaders of

our country today kneeling before Almighty God in prayer.” Graham added that such a law was needed, because “We have dropped our pilot, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The floating National Day of Prayer was modified at the request of Christian evangelicals in 1988, and now takes place every first Thursday in May. The NDP Task Force, housed at Focus on the Family, issues an annual scriptural theme and prayer verse, and lobbies the president, all the governors and many other officials to issue proclamations, also organizing tens of thousands of local and regional events on government property, events that are hostile to nonevangelical Christians.

“Congress and the president of the United States have no business telling me or any other citizen to pray, ‘to turn to God in prayer’ at churches, much less setting aside an entire day for prayer every year and even telling us what to pray about,” said Gaylor.

She and Dan Barker, who co-direct FFRF, are two of six original FFRF officers and board members who are individual plaintiffs in the historic lawsuit. Other plaintiffs are Anne Nicol Gaylor, FFRF president emerita; FFRF Secretary Phyllis Rose; and Board Members Jill Dean and Paul Gaylor, who died after the appeals court decision.

“The 7th Circuit’s decision would

seemingly allow Congress to declare a national religion as long as no one is forced to participate directly in the religion’s practices,” Barker said.

“We are very troubled by the court’s conclusion that congressionally mandated endorsements of religion by the president amount to no more than ‘hurt feelings,’ ” commented Richard L. Bolton, FFRF’s litigation attorney.

“We were told recently by the Supreme Court in *Winn v. Arizona* that taxpayers cannot complain about the use of tax appropriations for alleged religious preferences. Now, the 7th Circuit closes the courthouse door to the intended audience of presidential proclamations exhorting religion. The courts are effectively eviscerating the Establishment Clause of any practical significance by making it unenforceable by anyone,” Bolton said.

“By making coercion the only touchstone for accountability under the Establishment Clause, the courts are saying outright governmental endorsement of religion is of no concern,” Bolton added.

FFRF is also challenging the NDP at the gubernatorial level in Colorado, and in a federal lawsuit filed last month is seeking an injunction ordering Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer not to issue the Arizona Day of Prayer on the first Thursday in May.

## Newdow ponders Protestant proclamation

Michael Newdow, who has litigated many state-church entanglements, wondered if a court would uphold President Obama’s prayer proclamation, with the minor change of adding “Protestant” in front of the word “prayer.” Newdow added some other historic facts which would tend to show early colonial preference for Protestantism to this mythical proclamation based on Obama’s 2011 day of prayer proclamation:

### Presidential Proclamation National Day of Protestant Prayer

Throughout our history, Americans have turned to Protestant prayer for strength, inspiration, and solidarity.

Protestant prayer has played an important role in the American story and in shaping our Nation’s leaders. The first permanent English-speaking settlement in North America was in Jamestown, Virginia, where Protestantism was deemed the true religion, and twice daily the captain of the guard led the settlers in a prayer that referred to Catholics as “the scum & dregs of the earth.” George Washington and John Adams signed the 1774 Articles of Association on behalf of the “free Protestant colonies,” and one of the grievances against King George III noted in the Declaration of Independence was his allowing Catholicism to thrive in neighboring Canada. In striving to perpetuate Protestantism, Samuel Adams (the “Father of the American Revolution”) noted that “much more is to be dreaded from the growth of popery in America, than from the Stamp Act or any other acts destructive of civil rights.” The first Chief Justice, John Jay, was a rabid anti-Catholic, and the sentiments he and others brought to bear allowed the Protestants’ (King James) version of the Bible to be the one used in the nation’s schools. There, too, could the New England Primer be found, exhorting the students to “abhor that arrant whore of Rome.”

It is thus fitting that, from the earliest years of our country’s history, Congress and Presidents have set aside days to recognize the role Protestantism has played in so many definitive moments in our history. On this National Day of Protestant Prayer,

let us follow the example of Chief Justice Jay, every president from 1952 on, and every chaplain of the House of Representatives through 2000. Let us be thankful for the liberty that allows people of all Protestant faiths to worship or not worship according to the dictates of their conscience, and let us be thankful for the many other freedoms and blessings that we often take for granted.

Let us engage in Protestant prayer for the men and women of our Armed Forces and the many selfless sacrifices they and their families make on behalf of our Nation. Let us engage in Protestant prayer for the police officers, firefighters, and other first responders who put themselves in harm’s way every day to protect their fellow citizens. And let us ask God for the sustenance and guidance for all of us to meet the great challenges we face as a Nation.

Let us remember in our thoughts and Protestant prayers those who have been affected by natural disasters at home and abroad in recent months, as well as those working tirelessly to render assistance. And, at a time when many around the world face uncertainty and unrest, but also hold resurgent hope for freedom and justice, let our Protestant prayers be with men and women everywhere who seek peace, human dignity, and the same rights we treasure here in America.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, as amended, has called on the President to issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a “National Day of Protestant Prayer.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 5, 2011, as a National Day of Protestant Prayer. I invite all citizens of our Nation, as their own faith or conscience directs them, to join me in giving thanks for the many blessings we enjoy, and I ask all people of faith to join me in asking God for guidance, mercy, and protection for our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

## NDP ‘standing’ decision critiqued

The three-judge panel threw out FFRF’s challenge on the issue of standing. Judge Frank Easterbrook, writing for panel, said the plaintiffs had not had to alter their conduct and hadn’t incurred any cost in time or money. (In fact, FFRF entered into the court record the substantial efforts, time, press releases, letter campaigns to mayors and governors over the past 30 years.) Easterbrook said “a feeling of alienation cannot suffice as injury in fact.”

Patrick Elliott, one of FFRF’s two staff attorneys, said, “The standing requirement is not intended to be a tool that judges can use to close the courthouse door to valid Establishment Clause challenges. The purpose of the standing inquiry in these cases is to ensure that the proper plaintiff has challenged the alleged unconstitutional law or conduct. The requirement that a plaintiff suffer ‘injury in fact’ assures that the plaintiff has been injured in a personal and individual way.”

Rebecca Markert, FFRF senior staff attorney, said, “Judge Easterbrook’s opinion suggests that plaintiffs can only have standing if they have been coerced into religious practices. This contradicts decades of Establishment Clause jurisprudence, including strong precedent from the 7th Circuit.

“His ruling raises serious concerns about if and when anyone can bring a challenge under the Establishment Clause — from prayer in school or at government meetings to nativity scenes and other religious displays on government property.”

Elliott pointed out that Judge Ann Claire Williams, while concurring, took Easterbrook to task for his incorrect

standing analysis. Williams noted that under 7th Circuit precedent, coercion is not required to prove a state-church violation, nor that plaintiffs needed to have altered their behavior.

Williams wrote, “The rule in every other circuit that has considered the question is that while an allegation of a change in behavior is sufficient to confer standing, it is not required.”

“It would appear to us,” said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor, “that the 7th Circuit is saying freedom of conscience under the First Amendment would only be abridged if citizens were marched into a church at gunpoint by government officials!”

Judge Crabb held that the plaintiffs felt excluded and believed that the National Day of Prayer sent a message to them that some citizens are better because they pray and that they are “un-American” because they do not pray. She wrote: “The primary injury plaintiffs allege is the feeling of unwelcomeness and exclusion they experience as nonreligious persons because of what they view as a message from the government that it favors Americans who pray. That injury is intangible, but it is no less concrete than the injuries in the many cases in which courts have recognized the standing of persons subjected to unwelcome religious speech.”

Elliott said, “Picture this: Congress passes a law requiring the president to declare every year that the United States will have an established religion and that it will be Roman Catholicism. Who can challenge this? Nobody. What meaning can the First Amendment have if citizens are not able to enforce it?”



# One Nation Under God: A Bible History

## Ain't I A Woman?

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) was a former slave who later became an advocate for abolition and women's rights. This speech was delivered at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio:

"Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

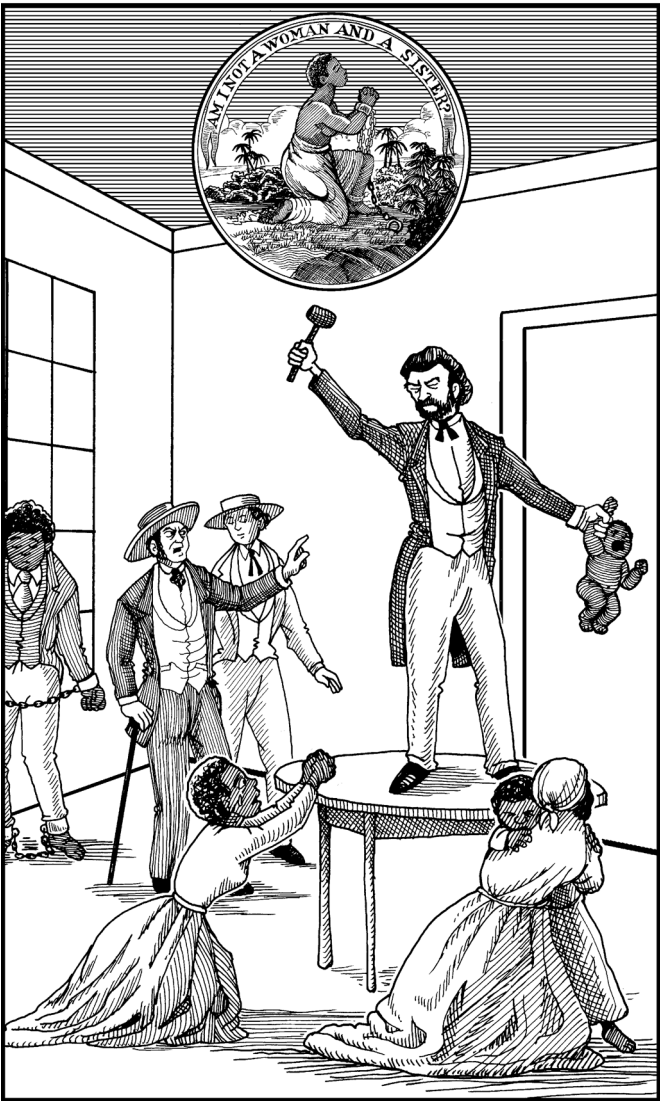
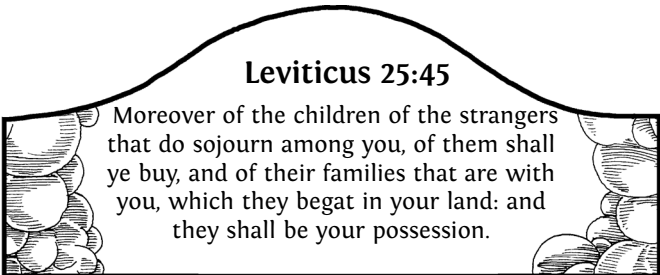
"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

"Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [Member of audience whispers, "intellect."] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or Negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

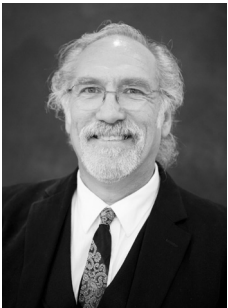
"Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

"Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say."



We are pleased to present the fifth installment of “One Nation Under God: A Bible History,” written and illustrated by Mike Konopacki. It was part of the coursework for his master of fine arts degree in 2010 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was also presented at FFRF’s convention in October.



## Alice Paul and Suffrage

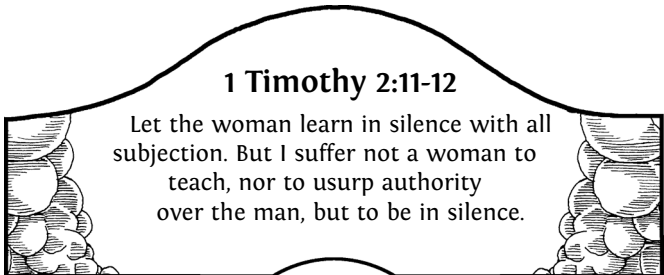
Alice Paul (1885-1977) was a suffragist who lived to see women win the right to vote and to watch the Equal Rights Amendment fail. Born to Quaker parents in New Jersey, Paul dedicated her life to fighting for the rights of women. In 1912 Paul joined the **National American Woman Suffrage Association** and fought for a constitutional amendment to secure a woman's right to vote. In 1916 Paul and other suffragists formed the **National Woman's Party** to campaign against President Woodrow Wilson and the Democrats for failing to support voting rights.

During World War I, Paul and the Woman's Party picketed the White House. Their quiet, nonviolent protest earned them the name of the “Silent Sentinels.” They considered Wilson a hypocrite for fighting a war “to make the world safe for democracy” while denying women the same at home.

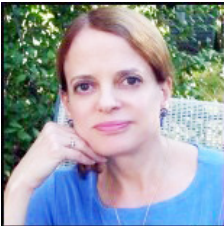
Wilson eventually lost patience with the protesters and ordered them arrested. Alice Paul was sentenced to seven months in jail and placed in solitary confinement. She had already served a prison term in Great Britain, where British suffragists had staged hunger strikes. After she began her strike, she was deemed insane and transferred to a psychiatric ward. There she was force fed through a plastic tube.

In solidarity, other suffragists joined her. Abuses accelerated, and press reports began to outrage the public. Support for their cause grew. Finally, in November of 1917, Alice and the other protesters were released from jail. In January of 1918, President Wilson announced his support for the **Woman Suffrage Amendment**.

In 1920, the Tennessee Legislature approved the 19th Amendment by one vote and it became law. After long last, the religious grip on women's rights in the United States was loosened.







Religion is the opiate of the masses -- and we all know you should never give drugs to kids  
- Natalie Angier, science writer  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

# Why I Am an Atheist

By Natalie Angier

Because I am a smug bastard who thinks she knows all the answers.

Because I am a smug bastard who thinks she knows only two or three of the answers, and one of those answers is almost certainly wrong.

Because I am hard-hearted and closed-minded.

Because I am hard-headed and weak-willed.

Because I have had nine root canals but have never had open-heart surgery.

Because the sky looks too big under every possible lighting condition.

Because when I looked at a head louse from my daughter's scalp under a microscope, I could see, through the parasite's translucent, rice-white abdomen, a dark column of my daughter's blood.

Because on a sunny day, the rose window at Chartres cathedral shines with the vividness of an image composed at night, by the brain's secondary visual cortex.

Because everything in life manages to make sense while still leaving room for perpetual misunderstanding.

Because the river of life has been flowing on Earth for almost 4 billion years

And here I am, dunking in a toe, a hand, splashing water on my face,

Complaining all the while, to anybody who might listen,

You know, I never learned how to swim.

Natalie Angier's latest book is *The Canon: A Whirligig Tour of the Beautiful Basics of Science*. She won a 1991 Pulitzer Prize for her stories in *The New York Times* on scientific topics and numerous other writing awards. She was a 2003 recipient of FFRF's Emperor Has No Clothes Award and titled her acceptance speech "Raising a Healthy God-free Child in a Hopelessly God-struck Nation."



## Overheard

Convinced republican that I am, and foe of the prince who talks to plants and wants to be crowned "head of all faiths" as well as the etiolated [weakened, stunted by lack of light] Church of England, I find myself pierced by a pang of sympathy. Not much of a life, is it, growing old and stale with no real job except waiting for the news of Mummy's death? Some British people claim actually to "love" their rather dumpy Hanoverian ruling house. This love takes the macabre form of demanding a regular human sacrifice whereby unexceptional people are condemned to lead wholly artificial and strained existences, and then punished or humiliated when they crack up.  
**Christopher Hitchens, "Does Kate Middleton really want to marry into a family like this?"**  
*Slate*, 4-18-11

I never thought about it, but as an atheist, maybe NASCAR is my church?  
**Columnist S.E. [Sarah Elizabeth] Cupp**  
*New York Times*, 5-1-11

When this case was argued last fall, the convolutions of the Arizona program seemed intended to mask its violation



of the Constitution. The court's ruling is another cynical sleight of hand, which will reduce access to federal courts while advancing endorsement of religion.  
**Editorial on the 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court ruling April 4 in Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn**  
*New York Times*, 4-9-11

With distance, I could see the mean-spirited nature of the anti-gay movement, and the naked way large Christian organizations used the "gay threat" to raise money. Free from the constraints of a congregation, I could spend more time actually looking at the biblical texts that deal with homosexuality, and I was surprised to find they were not as clear as I had supposed they were.  
**Murray Richmond, former Presbyterian minister, now a legislative aide in the Alaska Senate**  
*Salon.com*, 3-27-11

Rev. Jonathan Barton, head of the Virginia Council of Churches, told of a groom who wanted to keep his gun in its holster during his wedding ceremony.  
**Story on attorney general's opinion that state law allows guns in churches but individual churches may bar them**  
*Washington Post*, 4-17-11



Chuck Bauer's "Pumpkins by the Step" is an oil on panel. Go to [ctbauer.com](http://ctbauer.com) to see more of his story and art.

## Meet a Member

### Art is his infinity

**Name:** Chuck Bauer.  
**Where I live:** Madison, Wis.  
**Where and when I was born:** Philadelphia, Pa., Jan. 16, 1947.  
**Family:** My stepfather (1915-2008) was a Philadelphia Quaker and conscientious objector who served in combat in World War II. My mother (1916-) was a Lutheran, so I had the benefit of observing religious ritual and its polar opposite, a vivid contrast that helped me to see the range of possibilities in both private contemplation and formalized public display of professed belief.  
**Education:** Graduation from American High School in Frankfurt, Germany in 1965, followed by a summer pre-college program at the American College of Paris; bachelor of fine arts (*cum laude*) in 1969 from Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio; master of arts in painting, fine arts, 1970, University of Wisconsin-Madison; additional continuing education practically from the day of graduation.  
**Occupation:** Co-owner and co-founder in 1972 of The Soap Opera in Madison [[thesoapopera.com](http://thesoapopera.com)]. We offer retail and wholesale natural body care products, including soaps, aloe vera products, aromatherapy, perfumes, essential oils for perfume and much more.  
**Military service:** None personally, but my stepdad was career Army. I grew up living in Europe and the Far East, from a young age observing peoples and cultures very different from my own.  
**How I got where I am today:** After grad school, the timeless game of "buy it for one dollar and sell it for two" got my attention. On a whim, we started making crafts and selling them on the Library Mall. Artists make stuff, after all, and the regulated sales carts we see today were not required then. We simply spread out a blanket. Selling crafts was fun and an adventure, but winter came and so, again, like so many others who'd hit a wall, I went to California, the place D.H. Lawrence described so aptly as "filled with sunbaked people and half-baked ideas."

Soon, Chuck Beckwith followed me. He'd discovered a small startup company in Berkeley making natural body care products that were alternative but professionally formulated and manu-

factured, yet designed for people like us to repackage and relabel for retail sale.  
At a young age, I discovered art-making, and specifically painting, as a way to be quietly rebellious, since it's obvious that practically no one in mainstream society knows or cares anything much about art. Knowing I was different, and noticing the impracticalities and strangeness of art-making, we became a match. My parents, to their eternal credit and great wisdom, offered only positive comment, and I just ran with it. They continually gave me the great gift of simply not interfering. Now, half a century later, art enriches my life. It is the place where one touches infinity.  
**Where I'm headed:** At 64, a good day is one with a nap.  
**Person in history I admire and why:** Michel de Montaigne for his quiet, humane uncertainty and his ability to speak eloquently for what "Everyman" carries within.  
**A quotation I like:** "The philosopher has never killed any priests, whereas the priest has killed a great many philosophers." (Denis Diderot)  
**These are a few of my favorite things:** Peace and quiet, doubt, making art, asking questions, restoration and protection of rare ecosystems and at-risk species, and hiking.  
**These are not:** Certainty, ignorance, self-righteousness, arrogance, unkindness in any form.  
**My doubts about religion started:** At about the same time the Easter Bunny seemed ridiculous, age 7 or 8. Organized religion presented only unbearable boredom, and though it felt lethal at the time, it was not, of course, but later at puberty it was clear that as a closeted gay person, "believers" could indeed be lethal, and had been for centuries, to anyone found wanting or different from themselves. The nasty irony of professed love, but hateful behavior, simultaneously amused and terrified me and still does.  
**Why I'm a freethinker:** Self-preservation and cultivation of common sense and rationality in a world of ignorant, gullible fools making mischief.  
**Ways I promote freethought:** I do not promote. I avoid promotion, but I try to live in ways that set examples.





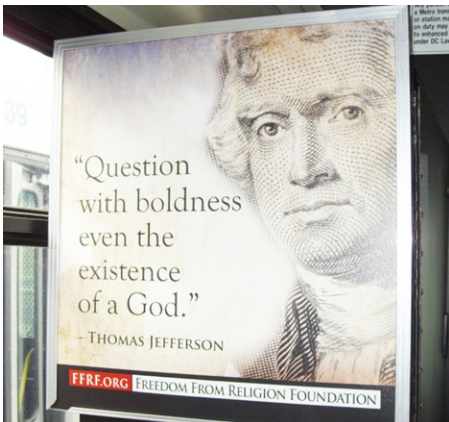
More than 180 D.C. Metro bus ads blanketed inside the beltway during FFRF’s anti-National Day of Prayer campaign.

# Via bus signs, metro dioramas

## FFRF takes ‘godless’ message to D.C.



Behind the driver seat bus ads.



The Freedom From Religion Foundation took its message that God and government are a “dangerous mix” to the heart of U.S. government, via bold bus signs and metro dioramas appearing from late April to late May.

FFRF, a state-church watchdog that also serves as the largest U.S. freethought membership association, timed its secular signs to be up during the National Day of Prayer on May 5.

FFRF has launched several legal challenges of the 1952 law requiring the president to issue a prayer proclamation on the first Thursday of every May exhorting citizens to “turn to God.”

FFRF is fighting back with reminders that the U.S. is based on a secular and godless Constitution. Twenty “king-sized” exterior ads quote John F. Kennedy’s sweeping secular endorsement (made in 1960 to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association): “I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute.”

Twenty “king” ads feature a red-white-and-blue injunction: “God & Government — A Dangerous Mix: Keep State & Church separate.” The tail of 40 buses bear the clever image of the Lincoln penny with the words “In Reason We Trust.”

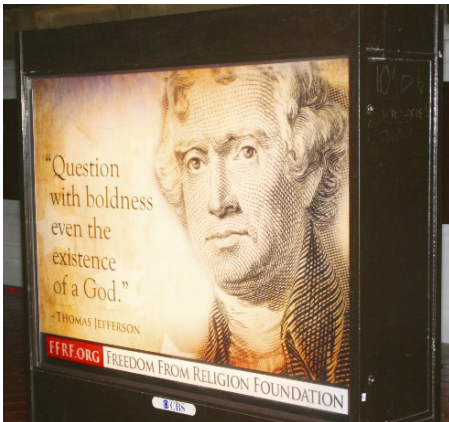
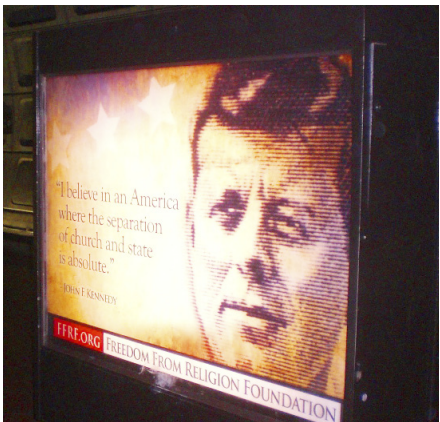
Passengers may view four different secular slogans in the prominent interior ad behind the driver’s seat in 100 buses. Joining ads espousing secular government, quoting Kennedy and depicting Lincoln, is an interior ad with the image of Thomas Jefferson and his well-known advice to his nephew, Peter Carr, in 1788: “Question with boldness even the existence of a God.”

A fourth interior ad bears the photograph and message of the late actress Butterfly McQueen (“Prissy” in “Gone with the Wind”), a Lifetime Member of FFRF who told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in 1989: “As my ancestors are free from slavery, I am free from the slavery of religion.”

McQueen, who had bristled at playing maids in the era of segregation, was manhandled by two guards at a Greyhound bus terminal in Washington in 1980. She sued for assault and received a settlement. “We take great pleasure in putting the image and wise words of Butterfly McQueen in the front of buses in metro Washington in her honor,” said FFRF Co-President Dan Barker, who twice had the great honor of accompanying McQueen at the piano when she sang for FFRF events.


In its multi-mass-media campaign in a city which bans billboards, FFRF posted dioramas — one each of McQueen, JFK, Jefferson and Lincoln’s altered penny — inside metro stations at Eastern Market, U Street–Cordozo, Judiciary Square and Waterfront.

“We are pleased that FFRF can enlighten with a patriotic secular theme at the same time we can lend some ‘patriotic’ support to mass transit,” said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor.



One of four metro dioramas.





Faith is one of the world's great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate

- Richard Dawkins  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

# Come out of the closet online!

*Continued from front page*

ment, FFRF notes. “Now it’s time for atheists and agnostics to come out of our closet. Many faces make Enlightenment work.”

The elegantly simple interactive application lets any nonbeliever upload their photo, coin a phrase about their nonbelief, identify themselves and choose from a dropdown list a label that most closely describes their philosophical position on religion. Choices include “atheist, agnostic, skeptic, infidel, humanist, secularist” or even the tongue-in-cheek “Pastafarian.” You may select a background screen color — purple, blue, green, yellow, orange or pink.

Once the submitted “cyberboard” gets FFRF’s approval, the personalized billboard, which looks just like FFRF’s billboard ads, will be posted at FFRF’s website. The image may then be used by the participant on Facebook, etc.

Gaylor says she hopes that the campaign will “go viral” because it’s “a fun, creative and satisfying way to express irreverent views.”

“But the main goal,” she adds, “is to make a difference in how atheists and agnostics are perceived by our religion-deferential society. We freethinkers are in really good company. The world needs to hear our message that humanity can and must solve its own problems and stop waiting for rescue from ‘above.’ Religious belief at best is a distraction, and at worst is the cause of more strife, bloodshed and war than any other factor. Freethought is a respectable intellectual position. We should not be expected to apologize for using reason in evaluating religious claims. It’s time to welcome atheists and agnostics and our message into the American mainstream.”

*Make your statement on a virtual billboard and invite friends to participate at: [ffrf.org/out/](http://ffrf.org/out/)*

*View “Out of the Closet Cyberboards,” including statements by well-known freethinkers and “Staff Picks” at: [ffrf.org/out/?stack/](http://ffrf.org/out/?stack/)*



Religion is the opiate of the masses -- and we all know you should never give drugs to kids

- Natalie Angier, science writer  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

Make your own billboard at: [ffrf.org/out](http://ffrf.org/out)

Your picture goes here

Your Godless quote goes here

Your name

Out of the Closet (Your Affiliation)

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

Refresh Preview

Upload Your Photo \*

Image will be cropped to a square

Photo location

Left

Right

Quote \*

Name \*

Affiliation \*

Atheist


Email \*

\* = required

Revert

Submit

You will have to agree to terms and conditions. [Click here for details.](#)



How come God talks only to Lunatics?

- Edward Sorel  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



If people are good only because they fear punishment or want a reward, we're doomed.


- Rebecca Goldstein  
Out of the Closet Humanist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION


If atheism is a religion, the difference between your religion and mine, is mine doesn't condemn you to an eternity of suffering if you disagree with it

- Nathan Phelps  
Out of the Closet Atheist



FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



God's not my co-pilot: in a prayer cult nation that parades religious dogma as true morality, coming out as an atheist may be the final frontier


- Sikivu Hutchinson  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION


Benjamin Franklin famously lamented, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes" Only religion claims exemption from both!

- Mitchell Kahle  
Out of the Closet Atheist



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I see no more reason, and I feel no more need, to believe in a god or gods than I do to believe in fairies.

- Peter Singer  
Out of the Closet Atheist

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Reality is far more important, and far more interesting, than anything we could make up about it

- Greta Christina  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION




It will be great looking back at this campaign in a few years and marveling that this was such a big deal! Here's to the end of Lip Service about God

- Daniel Dennett  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



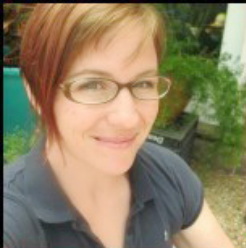
It is liberating to realize that my ideas, loves, and joys are neither programmed nor demanded by some god, but spring freely from my heart for however long it beats.

- Dan Everett  
Out of the Closet Atheist

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION






*Atheist and loving it!*  
- Alexis Lohse  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*In the beginning was... a big bang!*  
- Jenna DeFrei  
Out of the Closet Atheist



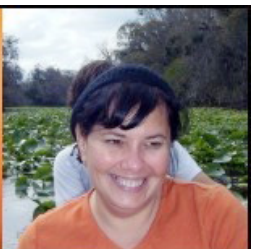
**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



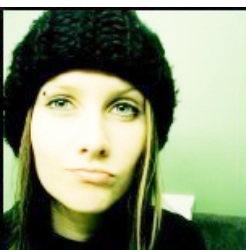
*Proud to have served our secular nation*  
- Matthew Smith  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*I don't base my moral choices on a book written by bronze age shepherds*  
- Cecilia Gomez  
Out of the Closet Atheist




**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION




*I just believe in one fewer God than you do.*  
- Katie Gruebele  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*So it wasn't a foxhole...*  
- Lisa Parks [Former US Navy]  
Out of the Closet Atheist



**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



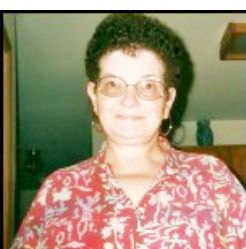
*Religion is Fairy Tales for grown ups*  
- Jacque L. Carter  
Out of the Closet Freethinker

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*Belief in god and service to country are not synonymous.*  
- Adam Bronner [Staff Sergeant, US Army]  
Out of the Closet Atheist



**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION




*I believe in love and kindness.*  
- Brenda Donoho  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*I believe in GOOD, not god.*  
- Malaika Belt  
Out of the Closet Humanist



**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION




*I never found solace and peace in religion just oppression and guilt. Being an atheist has set me free and now I am enjoying my one and only life.*  
- Janina A  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*I'm proud to be an American and a non-believer!*  
- Carmenata Valerio  
Out of the Closet Atheist




**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



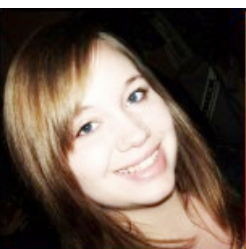
*I don't need higher meaning to make life meaningful*  
- Dylan Galos  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*My faith lies with science and reason.*  
- Shag Allen  
Out of the Closet Atheist



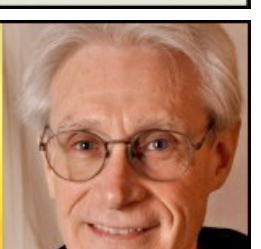
**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION




*I have no need for a savior. I saved myself!*  
- Kristine Gruns -- Mother, Abuse Survivor &  
Out of the Closet Atheist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*Faith in god(s) is simply ignorance elevated to a virtue.*  
- Tom Riddering, P.E.  
Out of the Closet Heretic



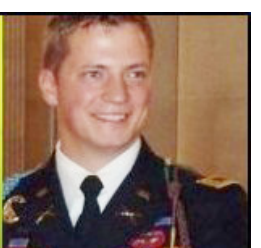
**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION



*I want to put a friendly face on Atheism*  
- Michelle Landrum  
Out of the Closet Humanist

**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

*Just because I fall from the sky doesn't mean I think someones up there*  
- Sean Tolliver  
Out of the Closet Atheist



**FFRF.ORG** FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION





Dan Barker spoke April 13 on “Losing Faith in Faith: How an evangelical preacher became a prominent atheist” at Ripon College, Ripon, Wis.. The event was sponsored by Ripon’s Secular Student Alliance. From left are Adam Meyers, Vicky Weber, Mariah Rogers, Nathan Held, Dan Barker, Jeremy Johnson and Erfan Taefi. (photo by Steve Martin)

# Freethought On The Road



FFRF Co-President Dan Barker spoke about his new book, *The Good Atheist*, at an April 24 Center for Inquiry event in Tucson, Ariz. Members of Tucson Atheists enjoyed a reception with Dan later. From left are Oliver Spires, Philip Olson, Dan Barker, David Foster, Kiera Topping and Russell Knox.

# Maine mayor gets it right on Day of Prayer

Last year, Mayor Joanne Twomey proclaimed May 6, 2010, as a “Day of Prayer” throughout Biddeford, Maine, an action that drew an FFRF letter of complaint on behalf of a local resident and the threat of a lawsuit.

This year, remembering that, Twomey refused to issue a prayer proclamation. “She learned from last year’s controversy that it is not the place of a government official to endorse such an overtly religious event,” noted the Biddeford Journal Tribune in a May 6 editorial.

The newspaper said Twomey made the right decision. “To do otherwise would result in an offense to all of those who do not share the beliefs of the evangelical Christians who organize the National Day of Prayer. The city government must represent and work for all of its citizens, from atheists to Jews, Muslims to Christians, Buddhists to Hindus. It is indeed a dangerous move when the government

endorses the faith of the majority and thereby makes those with other beliefs feel like second-class citizens. This year, Biddeford has sent the message that this city does not hold one group of citizens higher than the other.”

Regrettably, elected officials around the country didn’t follow Twomey’s lead. This year, FFRF sent letters of complaint to state and local governments to oppose their illegal participation in sectarian National Day of Prayer events. Included were Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn; Utah Gov. Gary Herbert; Mayor Duke Bennett, Terre Haute, Ind.; County Manager David Hankerson, Cobb County, Ga.; Mayor John Fouts, Warren, Mich.; and Mayor Glen Stewart, Ashland, Ohio.

Other letters went to various officials in Calvert City, Ky.; Mayfield, Ky.; Hernando County, Fla.; Redlands, Calif.; Paducah, Ky.; and the federal Bureau of Reclamation in Denver.



Dan Barker participated in ReasonFest at the University of Kansas in Lawrence on May 6-7. Members of Fred Phelps’ notorious Westboro Baptist Church showed up to protest. Dan (arms outstretched) introduced himself as the atheist debater, to which Phelps’ son (gray shirt, dark pants) replied, “Congratulations! The fool hath said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Dan turned quickly to quote Matthew 5:22: “[Jesus said] Whoever says ‘Thou Fool’ is in danger of hellfire.” Across the street, gay couples kissed enthusiastically to protest the protest. (photo by Michaelyn Everhart)



Dan Barker debated Catholic theologian Jon-Mark Miravalle at ReasonFest, which was sponsored by the university’s Society of Open-Minded Atheists & Agnostics, May 6-7. To the topic, “Does God Exist?” Dan gave a resounding “No!”

Standing behind Dan at far left (with upraised arms) is SOMA Vice President Conrad Hudson. FFRF members Brenda Frei and daughter Bailey are in the middle of the back row. SOMA organizer Adam Brown is standing in the far back in the red ReasonFest shirt. Seated in back at far right is Center For Inquiry skeptical speaker James Underdown, next to SOMA President Joey Ralph (with thumbs up). In the third row, left, is speaker Darrel Ray (author of *The God Virus*). Behind him is “Friendly Atheist” Hemant Mehta, who also spoke. The front rows contain some of the hardworking SOMA student volunteers. Almost 600 people attended the Friday debate, with dozens more regrettably turned away due to lack of space. (photo by Mark Frei)

## In the News

### Alabama college adds evolutionary studies

The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa has added a minor in evolutionary studies, the Tuscaloosa News reported April 9.

“We get kids that come to this program because they’ve heard of this ‘theory’ but they never heard anything about evolution in high school,” said Christopher Lynn, assistant professor of anthropology. “They see that the rest of the world seems to think evolution is a valuable theory, but it’s been kept from these students.”

The program is one of only 42 evolutionary studies programs worldwide under the Evolutionary Studies Consortium.

A 2009 study by the National Center for Science Education gave Alabama a grade of F for its treatment of evolution in science education standards and ranked it 50th nationally for its coverage of various aspects of evolution.

“Students in Alabama should be proud of the education they receive, and when the education you’re receiving in science is 50th in the country, that’s an embarrassment and it needs to change,” said associate biology professor Leslie Rissler.

The 18-credit minor is housed in the department of anthropology and

includes courses in biology, anthropology, geology, psychology, philosophy and history.

### Secularism major is first in nation

The first college department of secular studies in the U.S. will start offering a secularism major this fall at Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif. Professors from other departments, including history, philosophy, religion, science and sociology, will teach courses like “God, Darwin and Design in America,” “Anxiety in the Age of Reason” and “Bible as Literature.”

The department was proposed by Phil Zuckerman, a sociologist of religion, who describes himself as “culturally Jewish, but agnostic-atheist on questions of deep mystery,” according to a May 8 New York Times story. Zuckerman, a great friend and member of FFRF, spoke at its 2009 convention in Seattle.

“It’s not about arguing ‘Is there a God or not?’” Zuckerman said. “There are hundreds of millions of people who are nonreligious. I want to know who they are, what they believe, why they are nonreligious.”

Pitzer faculty members on the College Council voted unanimously April 28 to approve the secular studies major, subject to review in four years.



# Memoir of a good boy who got better



By Roger Rollin

**Y**ou can ask anyone — my childhood friends, my relatives — I was a good boy. I did as I was told, took school seriously, was polite and well-behaved, showed respect to my parents, other adults and persons of authority.

And, of course, I went to Sunday school and church every week and said my prayers nightly.

I wasn't perfect. The entry for April 1, 1940, in the only diary I've ever kept, reads, "Tonight mother and I well, you might say fighting." But I was capable of remorse (Jan. 28): "Grandma Kint is awful sick, and doesn't know anybody. I'm awful sorry." I was also sorry on Jan. 11, when I "got Mother mad." Doesn't it take a good boy to show remorse, even to himself?

Rereading this 70-year-old "text," I notice that although my diary often refers to the movies I saw almost every Saturday, it never mentions the church I attended every Sunday, the First Presbyterian Church of McKeesport, Pa. That's surprising, because for my family, attending church was a big deal.

One Sunday, the minister confidently told us that our loved ones who had "passed away" were forever looking down from heaven and watching not only what we did, but even tuning in to what we thought. Oh oh! That meant that my late Great-grandma Kint and Great-aunt Laura were privy to their good boy's occasional naughtiness and "wicked" thoughts.

It didn't occur to me that our pastor may have been wrong about the heavenly monitoring stuff, although I wasn't much given to theological speculation.

My parents, like most good Christians of the era, were not aggressively bigoted. I can't recall them saying much that was really vicious against Jews and Catholics. (We knew no "Negroes" except for "Amos and Andy" and Jack Benny's faithful Rochester.) But over time, I received from my parents and extended family the almost subliminal message that Jews and Catholics were different from us and not as good as us. (In their minds, Negroes were obviously inferior.)

This posed a problem. A Jewish family bought the little grocery just up the street, and their son, Irving, was my age. It was great to have a new friend. We had good times playing together. He really didn't seem any different from me. And his parents were "nice," the highest form of approbation in our

circle. So what was this "Jew-ness" then? The parents of my Catholic friends also were "nice," too, and in western Pennsylvania, very much in the majority. Catholic kids also went to church on Sunday and said their prayers.

One thing set my Protestant family apart and led to my first excursion into theology. My Catholic friends could go to Sunday afternoon movies, and I couldn't. Turned down once again after begging, I said, "But Dad, you go to baseball games on Sunday!" His answer set me firmly on the road to freethought: "Well, if Jesus were alive today, he would go to ballgames on Sunday, but not to the movies." The exquisite lameness of that rejoinder hung in the air between us.

In the innocent '40s, what seemed to be most sinful, most likely to turn a good boy bad, was, of course, S-E-X. Sex was simply not discussed at church, at home or at school, but was somehow in the air in all these places, and it worried good boys like me. But hormones will be hormones, and I actually found my first "true love" in church. Jean's piety, alas, had nothing to do with it.

## Off to college

When I turned 17, my parents said that I could either go to the University of Pittsburgh and live at home or attend a "small Christian college" 25 miles away and live on campus. Duh! At Washington & Jefferson College, which was only nominally Christian, the good boy discovered philosophy, a required two semesters in sophomore year, taught by a refugee German professor who I now realize was a thoroughgoing secularist.

Then there were two semesters of logic from a World War II conscientious objector, a *rara avis* in my God-and-country background. He would become a lifelong friend. Naturally, the good boy said nothing about these alarming persons to his parents.

The Christian life was something my family circle all understood, though practiced indifferently. The life of the mind, however, was *terra incognita* to them and to me, and as I gradually discovered it the experience became life-changing. I added a philosophy major to my existing English major. I did well enough to be invited to join the philosophy honor society.

Although I was not then familiar with the term, my freethinking was quietly roiling my familial life. Once or twice a month I would hitchhike home to go on Saturday night dates, borrowing my dad's car. The problem was that on Sunday morning I was expected to accompany them to church. To avoid a confrontation I dreaded, I did just that. In short, I faked it, just going through the holy motions.

In my imagination, I wore on my sport coat an "H" for hypocrite. It became extremely difficult to enter the gates of the Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church with thanksgiving. My father was an elder and church treasurer there. As I sat in the pew, I would have out-of-body experiences in which I saw the good boy in the similitude of piety and found him contemptible.

A few months away from college graduation in 1952, my hypocrisy had become almost unmanageable. Some-

## My father looked thunderstruck. My mother started to cry.

thing had to give. So like a good freethinker, I sat myself down and thought how I might best break to my parents the news that I would no longer attend church with them.

I knew that initially they'd be shocked and upset, but also fairly sure that the boy philosopher would be able to explain his thinking to them, maybe even reconcile them to his freethought. "After all," I mused, "we're adults. We can sit down and discuss this rationally."

Moreover, I was still a good boy, about to graduate *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, with honors in English and philosophy, with an acceptance to Harvard Law School. Surely all that should moderate the shock, perhaps mitigate their inevitable displeasure.

Wrong! There was to be no careful explanation, no extended discussion. (Indeed, there was never to be any further discussion of religion for the more than 40 years my parents would be with me.) All I managed to get out was that I would no longer in good conscience attend church because I no longer believed in the Christian religion.

My father looked thunderstruck. My mother started to cry. They left the room. The next day, my father came to me and said, "Your mother and I have decided that since education has turned you from God and the church, we're not going to support your education any further."

I had been a bad boy — no Harvard for me. So much for Christian charity.

I soon decided to enlist in the Army for three years and to use the G.I. Bill to help put myself through law school. A year later, on a troop ship in the mid-Atlantic, I decided to pursue a Ph.D. instead and become an English teacher. My parents, being really good and kind people at heart, eventually became reconciled to their heretic son and were usually there for him as he was building a family and a career.

But even in their old age, as they became somewhat less intense about their Christianity, I couldn't be sure that they were ever able to think of their only child as a good boy again.

*After 36 years of teaching and writing, FFRF member Dr. Roger Rollin, professor of literature emeritus at Clemson University, now enjoys raising a ruckus in the Carolina bible belt. He titled his Easter Sunday talk to the Tryon, [N.C.] Unitarian Universalists "That's Blasphemy, God Damn It!"*

*Rollin notes: "For public consumption, the UU's changed the title to 'That's Blasphemy, for Goodness Sake!' (which sends a strangely mixed message)."*



Roger says: Now he has three dogs, but maturity still eludes him.



# Appeal planned in S.C. released-time case

The Freedom From Religion Foundation will appeal a district court decision in South Carolina that upheld the Spartanburg County School District's policy granting academic credit for religious released-time classes held off-campus. The case now goes before the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

Although U.S. District Court Judge Henry Herlong found that FFRF had standing to sue, he granted summary judgment to the school district in his April 5 decision. FFRF and two district families with schoolchildren challenged the policy's constitutionality, arguing that close cooperation between the district and religious educators had the primary effect of advancing religion.

A central issue is whether the policy is constitutional under the Supreme Court's ruling in *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), which allows schools "to accommodate their schedules" to release students during the school day to receive outside religious instruction.

FFRF maintains that Spartanburg's practices go far beyond the court's ruling in *Zorach*. FFRF contends the machinery of the public schools is being

used to promote and not merely accommodate religion.

FFRF's lawsuit charges the school developed and implemented its policy "in concert" with bible instructors, who were allowed to promote the program in classrooms and at class registration. The district also agreed to handle student discipline for major behavioral issues. Grades were given and even factored into students' grade-point averages. FFRF maintains that under the circumstances, the district's involvement violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

"The court's decision is disappointing to those of us who support the separation between religion and government," said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president. "Public schools should not be allowed to grant school credit for devotional courses that couldn't constitutionally be taught in public schools."

"We thank the local parent plaintiffs — Robert Moss and Ellen Tillet — who made possible this lawsuit, and attorney George Daly for his pro bono legal work," said Co-President Dan Barker.

## Friend of FFRF gets Pulitzer



Denver Post editorial cartoonist Mike Keefe has won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for a distinguished cartoon or portfolio of cartoons.

Keefe's entry was a portfolio of 20 editorial cartoons. The judges cited him for his range of his work and a "loose, expressive style to send strong, witty



## In Memoriam

### Norma Howe, 1930–2011

Norma Howe, 81, Sacramento, Calif., died April 19, 2011, of thyroid cancer.

She was a Foundation member with her husband of 60 years, Robert, who survives her.

Norma Claire Nadeau was born Feb. 7, 1930, in San Jose. After earning an English degree at San Jose State University, she stayed home to raise seven children and began writing for True Story and Modern Romances magazines. She wrote eight published novels and two short stories for young adults.

Sacramento Bee reporter Robert Davila wrote that she was "a well-read, charming woman with a playful nature" and that her lighthearted stories "tackled age-old philosophical questions, such as whether free will exists and the conflict between faith and reason."

Her first novel, *God, the Universe and Hot Fudge Sundaes*, was about a teen questioning her religion after her sister was diagnosed with a terminal illness. It was adapted for an after-school

CBS-TV special in 1986. Her last novel, *Angel in Vegas: The Chronicles of Noah Sark*, was published in 2009. She recounted at [normahowe.com](http://normahowe.com) how the latter came about:

"I first got the idea for *Angel in Vegas* shortly after the tragic death of Princess Diana in August 1997, when an overwrought woman in the grocery store cried out to those of us in line, 'Where oh where was her guardian angel?' Where indeed, I thought! And I thought and I thought, and after almost 10 years of thought, the story finally surfaced."

She was preceded in death by a son, Douglas. Besides her husband, survivors include three daughters, Christine of Hamden, Conn.; Jeanne of Sacramento; and Patricia of Napa; three sons, Robert of Placerville; Ted of Sacramento; and Everett of San Diego; eight grandchildren; and two brothers, Wayne Nadeau of Stockton and Jack Nadeau of San Jose.

The Foundation offers its sincere condolences.

## In the News

### Arkansas school staff pushed religion

A teacher in Van Buren, Ark., who prayed over her class before tests, handed out pocket bible verses and posted bible verses in the classroom, was ordered to stop those practices.

Two parents complained to the district about Central Middle School teacher Jan Redden praying "for the Devil to be bound up and not to enter their brains" before the annual Benchmark exams, reported the Fort Smith Times Record on April 29. "I no more want her leading my child in prayer than I would want someone from a different faith leading a meditation," said one parent, adding that she's a Christian.

Earlier in the school year, Van Buren High School Principal Becky Guthrie sent a letter to 20 staff members,

whom she supervises, asking them to be prayer warriors with her. At least one staff member objected.

Both cases were handled as personnel matters, said Superintendent Merle Dickerson.

### State court to hear Ohio teacher's appeal

The appeal of an Ohio science teacher fired in January for classroom proselytizing and burning students' arms with the image of a cross has been moved back into state court.

The Mount Vernon School Board wanted the case heard in federal court because John Freshwater's appeal alleges his constitutional right to express a religious opinion was violated. But U.S. District Judge Gregory Frost said the issue could be decided in a Knox County court.

## More Fiction for Freethinkers, please

We had a fair number of readers recommend works of fiction of special interest to freethinkers. Now we want *even more* in our quest to compile an inclusive list of works with nonbelieving protagonists, freethought themes or secular points of view. The goal for Fiction for Freethinkers is to also list as many classics as possible, along with newer works.

Please include:

- The complete title of the novel or short story, author, date of publication or reissue and publisher, if possible. (Include enough information so readers can locate it. Sorry, please don't nominate unpublished or self-published works.)
- Include a one- or two-sentence synopsis of the "atheist" import. It may be as nominal as your favorite private eye's confession of nonbelief. It might involve the entire plot (such as *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood).

Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry* is obviously a freethought look at religion which may not have an atheist character, but clearly deserves mention.

- Optionally, you may briefly quote a relevant line or passage or include a one-paragraph summary of freethought plot, character or overall significance.
- Your name as the nominator will be included unless you prefer anonymity.

Mail your nomination to Freethought Today, Attn: Fiction for Freethinkers, PO Box 750, Madison WI 53701, and include your full name, address and phone number.

E-mail nominations to [fttoday@ffrf.org](mailto:fttoday@ffrf.org) with "Fiction for Freethinkers nomination" in the subject line. Include your full name and address.

Remember to be succinct because space is limited. Thank you!



## Hasa diga eebowai!

# 'The Book of Mormon' captivates on Broadway

By Annie Laurie Gaylor

If you've seen the Broadway hit musical, *The Book of Mormon*, you'll know what "Hasa diga eebowai" means! In case you haven't seen it yet, I won't spoil the surprise with a definition. But take it from me, the scene in which fresh-faced Mormon missionaries realize what they have been chanting with their Ugandan hosts has got to be one of the funniest ever played on Broadway.

"The Book of Mormon" is a creation of the famously potty-mouthed pair, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, who bring you "South Park," teamed with the songwriter Robert Lopez of "Avenue Q."

"The Book of Mormon" is not only a send-up of Mormonism and missionaries in general but of Broadway musicals ("The Lion King" in particular), with many oblique and not-so-oblique references to other musicals.

Knowing we would be in New York City shortly after the play opened, I bought tickets before it became a sell-out. But clearly, word had leaked out in the meantime. We arrived at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre on a Friday night in early April to find lines wrapping around the block and more lines of people waiting for cancellations. The excitement was palpable.

The laughter started as soon as the play opened with the sound of a doorbell. A group of young men had only to stand on stage in their Mormon uniforms of white shirts and black trousers to get a chuckle. The audience was in stitches by the time the actors formed into a chorus line of "elders" practicing their conversion patter.

I have never been in a theater that literally rocked with such explosions of continuous laughter. The over-the-top "Spooky Mormon Hell Dream" sequence manages to sustain its energy and silliness for what seemed like 10 minutes. (Our hapless Mormon missionary boy is lost amid whirling Starbucks coffees, Hitler and Jeffrey Dahmer.)

It's not for nothing that "The Book of Mormon" topped the nomination list for Tony Awards with 14, including best musical, best book of a musical, best original score, direction, choreography, orchestrations, scenic design, costume design, lighting design, sound design, as well as for leading actors Josh Gad and Andrew Rannells, featured actor Rory O'Malley and featured actress Nikki M. James.

### 'Chloroform in print'

The plot features the golden-haired boy missionary, Elder Price (Andrew Rannells), and odd-duck Elder Cunningham, who in times of stress makes up stories that seem no more ridiculous than those in the real Book of Mormon. Cunningham is played brashly and with a hysterical laugh by Josh Gad, a regular on "The Daily Show." Price's bright hopes of being sent to missionize Orlando, Fla., are blighted when he's paired with Cunningham

and sent instead to a nearly destroyed village in Uganda.

Think of the tall order the playwrights had in trying to explain Mormonism — not just in the storyline to the Ugandans in dire straits, but to theater audiences. This is *one* strange religion. They solved the dilemma with hilarious Mormon "diorama" scenes, one of which prefaces the play. While it might strike you as looking somewhat like a badly staged elementary school offering, the dioramas authentically capture the sickly sweet religious tableaux and bizarrely naive devotional paintings beloved by Mormons everywhere.

The hammy Jesus, whose laid-back Southern California accent sounds a lot like Trey Parker, is lit up like a Christmas tree with strings of lights on his robe. The intermittent scenes reenact key passages of Mormon doctrine, such as the notion that after his crucifixion and before his resurrection, Jesus appeared to native Americans in "Eden" (Missouri?!). God cursed them with dark skins for reasons incoherent to anyone but a faithful Mormon.

The more bizarre exploits of Joseph Smith get a similar reenactment for the benefit of Ugandan villagers, who are falling asleep as one of the missionaries reads from the book that Mark Twain summed up aptly as "chloroform in print." Elder Cunningham's desperation to connect Mormon theology with their lives ends in an X-rated parody of "The King and I."

Among the standout scenes is "Turn It Off," in which the theater lights go dark as the missionaries (including one who "used to be gay") counsel each other on how to separate their religion from their intellects and real feelings. "Baptize Me" is a double-entendre number in which Nabulungi (the comely village maiden) and Cunningham soulfully express how they feel about doing it "for the first time."

While the play has been hailed by Stone as "an atheist love song to organized religion," and thus hasn't ruffled as many feathers as it might have, the freethinking is there above and beyond the irreverency. Nabulungi sings a song about her newfound paradise, "Sal Tlay Ka Siti" (say it fast). When her hopes are dashed that the Mormon boys will rescue her village from poverty, AIDS, and a terrorist general bent on sexually mutilating the women, she's consoled by a wise older woman, who tells her "Sal Tlay Ka Siti" doesn't really exist. You have to make a paradise of the world you're in.

"Tomorrow Is a Latter Day" ends the play with a freethinking pun.

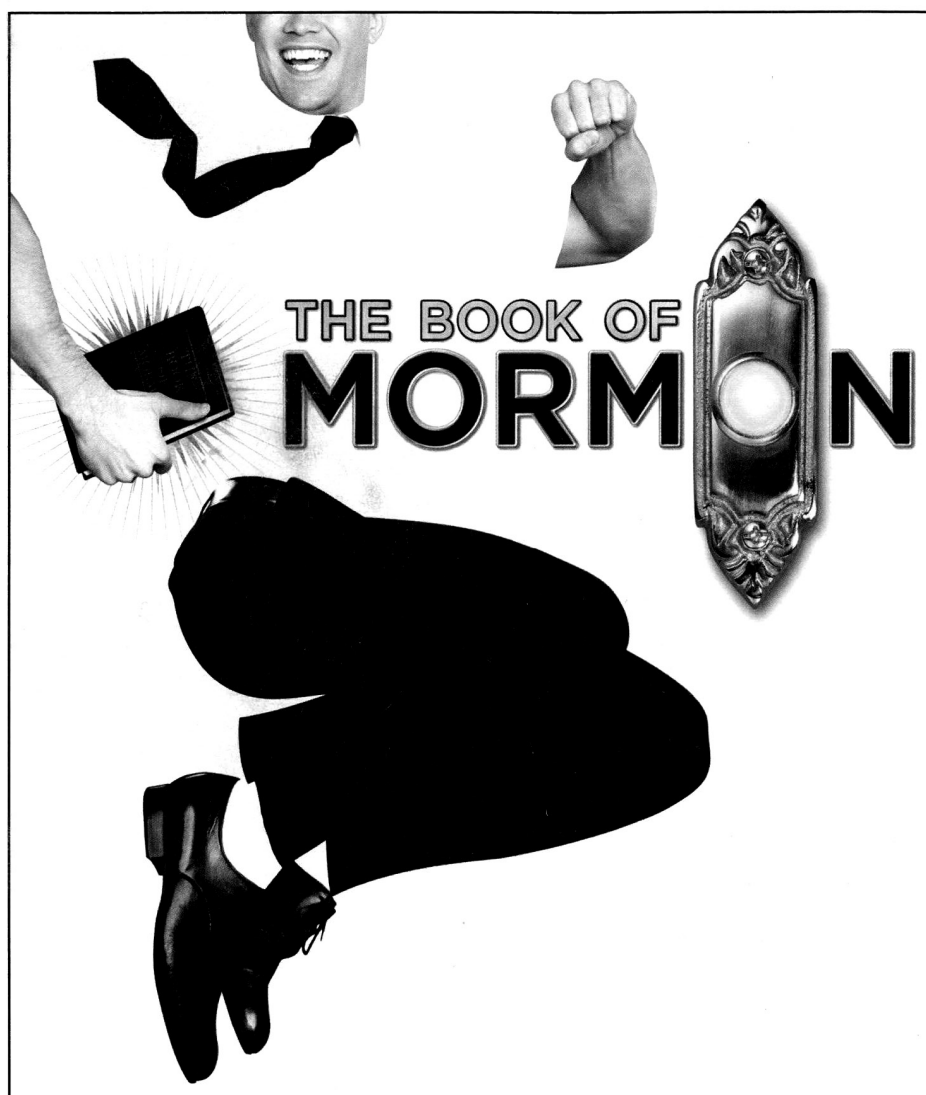
My advice: Go see it on Broadway now if you possibly can. Because, with its sweetly offered profanity and plot-lines in which the adjectives crude or gross are not too strong, I would prophesy (Why not? Mormons do it all the time) that this is not a play that will be coming any time soon to your local high school or community theater.

And here's to a new chant, "Hasa Diga Eebowai!"

Annie Laurie Gaylor is co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and co-host of Freethought Radio: [ffrf.org/news/radio/](http://ffrf.org/news/radio/)

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## In the News

### Atheist running for House from N.C.

Atheist Cecil Bothwell, a city councilman in Asheville, N.C., is running as an independent for Congress against incumbent Democratic Rep. Heath Shuler.

Bothwell made headlines in 2009 when he was elected and opponents seized on a provision in the state Constitution that bars atheists from holding office. However, the U.S. Constitution's "no religious test" provision prevailed.

### God not FFRF's Milwaukee copilot

The Foundation sent a letter April 18 to Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele and the Board of Supervisors on behalf of Wisconsin FFRF members, objecting to a proposal for a chapel inside the county-owned General Mitchell International Airport. An Action Alert also went to Milwaukee-area members.

Despite our efforts, the board and Abele have approved the plan to lease 900 square feet of space in the airport for \$1 a year for what the county is calling a "meditation room." The lessee is Interfaith Airport Chapel of Milwaukee Inc.

FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor noted the Catholic predominance of the group. As the county's press release said, the chapel is largely seen as a replacement for St. Stephen Catholic Church, which was torn down at its location near the airport and rebuilt in Oak Creek. The room will seat-

ing and an area for prayer rugs,

"Contrary to the claims of its sponsors, the chapel would not be open to persons of all belief and nonbelief," Gaylor said in her letter. "I am additionally concerned about the prospect that worship services would be held in the space."

Supervisor Peggy West brushed aside concerns. "This is a wonderful addition to the airport. Those who don't [agree], well, God bless you."

### Stem cell case back to district court

Religious forces opposing government financing of human embryonic stem cell research lost a round April 20 in federal appeals court. Abortion foes liken the research to murder.

Samuel Casey, a lawyer for two scientists who sued to stop federal funding of the research, said he was disappointed but also pleased that the appeals court kept the suit alive and that he was considering an appeal.

The ruling sends the case back to Chief Judge Royce Lamberth of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., who ruled in August that the Obama administration was so unlikely to win the case that he issued an immediate ban on federal spending.

The government appealed, and the appeals court stopped the ban from going into effect while it heard arguments. The April 20 ruling ends the first phase of litigation. Casey said that Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson's dissent might lead him to ask the full Court of Appeals to consider the case.



# Black Collar Crime Blotter

Compiled by Bill Dunn

## Arrested / Charged

**Rev. Edward McGuinness**, 55, Limavady, **N.IRE**: Driving a car while unfit. A defense lawyer told the court he didn't think McGuinness, a Catholic priest, would contest the drink-driving charge. *Source: BBC News, 4-27-11*

**Eight Sikhs** face charges of assault, criminal possession of a weapon and disruption of a religious service after a melee at Baba Makhan Shah Lobana Sikh Center in Queens, NY. A leadership dispute between followers of two factions, headed respectively by **Gurmej Singh** and **Jarnail Singh**, turned violent with men swinging swords and cricket bats.

"Everybody got bleeding, everybody got stitching, everybody got to hospital, but they arrest my side only," Jarnail Singh said, claiming 5 of the 8 arrested were his followers. *Source: Reuters, 4-26-11*

**Rev. Stephen Addy Powell**, 31, Omanjor, **GHA**: Indecent assault. Powell, a pastor with Crown Miracle International Ministries, allegedly invited himself into a woman's home to tell her God revealed to him that she was possessed by evil spirits and that they had to pray together to banish them.

The woman, 32, alleges that during the prayer, Powell undressed her and began licking her private parts. "He licked me for quite a long period before concluding the prayers," she told police, who said Powell is married with an 8-month-old child. *Source: Ghana to Ghana, 4-26-11*

**Timothy D. Miller**, 34, Crossville, **TN**: Aiding in the removal of a child from the U.S. and retaining a child with intent to obstruct parental rights. An FBI affidavit unsealed in Vermont accused Miller, a Mennonite missionary, of helping a woman take her 9-year-old daughter to Central America during a custody dispute with her former lesbian partner.

Miller works for Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries in Nicaragua. The woman and girl were allegedly housed before that at a beach house owned by a businessman with ties to Rev. Jerry Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA, the FBI said. *Source: AP, 4-25-11*

**Stephen L. Wakefield**, 24, Greenville, **SC**: Criminal solicitation of a minor. Wakefield, a youth leader at Truth Missionary Baptist Church, allegedly sent nude photos to a 13-year-old girl in his youth group over a period of several months. He was also director of an after-school YMCA program.

"We are deeply saddened by these events and are praying for God's perfect will in this situation," said Rev. Sammy Kay Jr. of Truth Missionary in a statement. *Source: Anderson Independent, 4-22-11*

**Jessica Lynn Tramel**, 32, Bristol, **TN**: 150 counts of forgery, theft of property over \$60,000 and identity theft. Tramel, secretary at Unaka Avenue Baptist Church, is accused of forging \$229,000 in checks from a church account, making them payable to herself. *Source: AP, 4-22-11*

**Gabriele DelBianco**, 54, Auburn, **ON**: 3 counts of sexual assault. DelBianco, who left the Catholic priesthood in 1996, is accused of molesting a woman in her teens in the 1980s. He turned himself in to the Ontario Provincial Police.

The Diocese of London has received allegations from 7 women about sexual abuse while they were teens. The diocese has apologized and has offered to pay for counseling. *Source: Petrolia Topic, 4-20-11*

**Rev. Stephen D. Berry**, 38, Union, **SC**: Lewd act on a child under 16. Berry, associate pastor at New Life Baptist Church, is accused of repeatedly rubbing a 13-year-old girl's upper thighs while giving her a ride home. He was charged in March with criminal sexual conduct with a minor for allegedly assaulting a different girl for about 6 months. *Source: WYFF News, 4-18-11*

**Rabbi Gavriel Bidany**, 47, Tel Aviv, **ISR**: Misdemeanor assault. A complaint sworn by FBI Agent Janet Ambrisco said about 90 minutes into a flight from Tel Aviv to New York City, Bidany allegedly reached over to the sleeping woman seated next to him and "placed his hand under her blanket, on her groin, and was groping her genital area."

"Jane Doe" told the FBI she then "pulled her blanket back over her head and body." But minutes later, Bidany allegedly again "reached under the passenger's blanket, this time groping the passenger's breasts."

"What are you doing, stop touching me," she told Bidany. He replied, "It's a mistake, I'm asleep," according to Ambrisco. *Source: The Smoking Gun, 4-14-11*

**Eric Caverly**, 37, Colorado Springs, **CO**:



Sexual assault on a child by a person in a position of trust. Caverly and his wife were lay volunteers at Springs Community Church, where Caverly met his alleged victim in his youth group when she was 16.

They had sex "200 to 400 times" over 3 years, court documents said. The girl babysat for the couple's 3 children. Most of the sex occurred in the basement of the Caverly home. The woman, now 19, told police the relationship ended due to Caverly's jealousy. *Source: KOAA News, 4-13-11*

**Keemonta Peterson**, 29, Portland, **OR**: 1st- and 2nd-degree assault and 1st-degree criminal mistreatment. Peterson, a mother of 4, tried to circumcise her 3-month-old son with a box cutter, using pliers as a tourniquet while another son, 13, looked on "in distress." She called 9-1-1 after 2 hours when the bleeding didn't stop.

Peterson told police she'd been inspired to circumcise her baby after reading the Old Testament, and that she follows the "Hebrew" religion. She watched a YouTube video to learn the procedure, including stitching the wound. The report didn't say what she used for stitches. The boy has recovered. *Source: The Oregonian, 4-8-11*

**Rev. Daniel Dahlberg**, 68, Superior, **WI**: Felony theft. Dahl, pastor at St. Patrick Catholic Church, is accused of stealing \$10,800 from a parish account used to help needy people and gambling it away. The Diocese of Superior accepted his resignation in March. He was formerly vicar general of the diocese, the next-highest position to the bishop. *Source: Duluth News Tribune, 4-7-11*

**Michael Sumulikowski**, 27, Elmwood Park, **NJ**, and **Artur Sopel**, 31, River Edge, **NJ**: Sopel, vice president of operations at Paramus Catholic High School, is charged with sexual assault, endangering the welfare of a child and hindering apprehension. Sumulikowski, a substitute teacher and football coach at the school, is charged with endangering the welfare of a child. They were suspended after being accused of having sex with female students on a 10-day field trip in February to Germany. Sumulikowski allegedly had sex with a girl in Germany, while Sopel is accused of having sex with 2 students in Germany and with another girl in 2010.

Sumulikowski's lawyer said he's investigating if New Jersey has jurisdiction over acts allegedly occurring in Germany. Both men attended the school and starred in athletics. *Source: WYFF News, 4-7-11*

**Rev. Tommy Joe Pitts**, 51, Fairview, **OK**: 15 counts of 1st-degree rape, 15 counts of rape by instrumentation, 20 counts of lewd acts with a child under 16, and 20 counts of forcible sodomy. Pitts, pastor at Midway Assembly of God, is accused of molesting his adopted daughters, who are sisters ages 8, 9 and 12.

Pitts' wife, Lorenda, reported her suspicions to the sheriff. The oldest girl told investigators he gave them a choice after they broke a rule: Either get spanked or touch his genitals. *Source: Enid News & Eagle, 4-7-11*

**Owen Davis**, Highland Village, **TX**: 1st-degree aggravated sexual assault. Davis, vicar at Faith Lutheran Church in Graham, is accused of intimidating an adult Hispanic cleaning woman who is in the U.S. illegally into having sex with him in August 2010.

Young County Sheriff's Capt. Tim Bay said Davis made her sign a confidentiality agreement. "He told her she had to comply with his demands because she had signed a contract. He then assaulted her, and he videotaped everything. It was force by intimidation," Bay said. Bay said the alleged victim claimed Davis

said he had to videotape their sexual encounter so he could send the tapes to a doctor. Bay said Davis admitted he belonged to a website where members trade sex tapes.

"My biggest fear is there are other victims that are afraid to come forward," Bay said. "He's probably done it to others who are here illegally or have other issues. It seems to me that's who he's preying on." *Source: Graham Leader, 4-6-11*

**Rev. Julio C. Perez**, 40, El Ranchito, **TX**: Capital murder. Perez, pastor of Ministerios Manantial de Vida, is accused of orchestrating a murder-for-hire plot that left his wife Sonia Perez, 39, shot dead in her vehicle. She taught third grade.

A woman reportedly told police Perez was looking for hit men. **Gabriel A. Escalante**, 20, and **Daniel Lopez**, 37, have also been charged with capital murder. Escalante turned himself in and allegedly told police Perez paid them \$1,300 in three payments, the last one in a Payless shoe store lot. *Source: San Antonio Express-News, 4-5-11*

**Rev. Samuel B. Slocum**, 59, Bradford, **PA**: Interference with the custody of children, concealment of the whereabouts of a child, corruption of minors, prowling at night and loitering. Slocum, who served the Catholic parishes Our Mother of Perpetual Help and St. Francis of Assisi, is charged with inappropriate conduct with a boy, 15, whose mother told Slocum to stay away.

Court documents allege Slocum gave the boy expensive gifts and that they met at both their residences. The mother gave police messages she found. "I always knew there was something special about you, but I never knew what it was. Majic," Slocum wrote. "I'm really trying not to say bad stuff, but you're pushing it."

He told police he took photos of the boy and other juveniles but denied sexual contact. The Diocese of Erie has suspended him. *Source: Erie Times-News, 4-5-11*

**Rev. Dan Duane**, 72, Mallow, **IRE**: Indecent assault. Duane, a retired Catholic priest in the Diocese of Cloyne, is accused of molesting 2 teen girls between 1980-82. *Source: Irish Times, 4-5-11*

**Rev. Phillip A. Ferrara**, 48, Little Meadows, **PA**: 3 counts each of indecent assault of a person under the age of 16 and corruption of a minor. An affidavit said Ferrara, a Melkite Greek Catholic priest, allegedly told a 14-year-old boy his sperm duct was blocked and that a massage would relieve the boy's back pain.

The boy was on retreat with his family at Our Lady of Solitude Monastery. The affidavit said the alleged victim told police he twice rubbed Ferrara's penis with his feet.

Archbishop Cyril Bustras of the Melkite Eparchy in Newton, MA, said in a statement that Ferrara was "placed in a treatment center for evaluation." *Source: Scranton Times Tribune, 4-5-11*

**Rev. Eddie Prince**, 63, Hernando, **TN**: Possession of child pornography. Prince, pastor at Oak Grove Baptist Church, allegedly downloaded porn from a computer at a public library, where employees reported him.

"Unfortunately, it appears this person was able to temporarily partially defeat the filtering system before being detected," said Catherine Nathan, First Regional Library director. The library's computers are all in the middle of the building in plain view.

"If you are doing something in public like this where you can be seen, you're yelling out 'I need to be caught,'" said District Attorney John Champion. *Source: Commercial Appeal, 4-4-11*

**Matthew Jones**, 31, Longview, **WA**: 3rd-degree rape of a child, 3rd-degree child molestation and 1st-degree sexual misconduct. Jones, a middle school science teacher pursuing a master's in Christian studies with a focus in theology, was arrested after police discovered him naked in the back seat of a Honda Civic with a former student in a Bellevue park.

Court documents said police described the relationship, which started when the girl was 15, as consensual. *Source: Seattle Times, 4-1-11*

**Rev. Joseph G. Clauder**, 64, Madison, **WI**: Sexual assault of a child under the age of 16. The alleged female victim was 14 or 15 at the time of incidents in Stevens Point and Monona in 2003-04. She didn't report them until 2009, she told authorities, due to her fear of Clauder, who was removed in 1999 as a priest by the Madison Diocese after a sexual misconduct allegation by an adult female.

The girl alleges Clauder told her if she told anyone she wouldn't go to heaven. She said she was afraid to go to heaven because Clauder might be there. "I never want to be near him," she told a nurse, her parish priest and family members in February 2009.

Diocesan spokesman Brent King said Clauder has assignment within the church but gets a retired priest's stipend. The diocese's sexual abuse review board found the girl's allegations "credible and probable." *Source: Wisconsin State Journal, 3-30-11*

## 'He licked me for quite a long period before concluding the prayers.'

**Rev. Paul B. Johnson**, 74, Dunn, **NC**: 4 counts of sexual battery. Johnson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church and a Board of Ministers member at Campbell University Divinity School, is accused of engaging in inappropriate sexual contact with a 64-year-old female nursing home patient with diminished mental capacity.

"Right now, everybody is just confused, upset," said church member James Norris. "Everybody is in tears." *Source: WRAL News, 3-27-11*

**Barry A. Cook**, 47, Montgomery, **AL**: Sexual torture and aggravated child abuse. Cook, leadership teacher and pastoral staff member at Christian Life Church, was arrested on an outstanding domestic violence warrant. The alleged victim is a boy younger than 12.

He has been fired from the church, a spokesperson said. *Source: WFSB News, 3-25-11*

**Rev. Patrick Edouard**, 41, Byron Center, **MI**: 3 counts each of 3rd-degree sexual abuse and sexual exploitation by a counselor, therapist or school employee (including clergy). Edouard, former pastor at Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, IA, allegedly coerced and in some cases forced 4 married women to have sex with him from 2003-10.

Edouard is a Haitian immigrant serving a conservative congregation of mostly Dutch ancestry. Counseling allegedly took place in Edouard's study in his home in Bos Landen. "Some people now wonder why the pastor wasn't given a proper study at the church building," reporter Dan Winters asked. *Source: WHO News, 3-25-11*

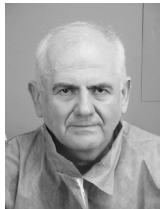
**Robert L. Stoner**, 38, Wilmington, **DE**: 6 counts of 3rd-degree rape. Stoner, youth pastor at Miracle Temple Holy Church, is accused of having sexual intercourse 6 times with a female member of the congregation, starting when she was 15. Sex allegedly took place several times in Stoner's home while his son was asleep. *Source: News Journal, 3-21-11*

**Rev. Albert Turnell Jr.**, 71, Smyrna, **GA**: Possession and distribution of child pornography. Turnell, a Methodist minister who retired in 2003, was arrested in a sting conducted by state and federal child protection task forces.

"He was highly regarded among his peers," said Tom Cook, chancellor of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church. *Source: Marietta Daily Journal, 2-25-11*

**Rev. Bohdan Borowec**, 56, Winnipeg, **MB**: Kidnapping and 2 counts of 4th-degree sexual assault. Borowec, a Ukrainian Catholic priest on vacation in Hawaii, was indicted by a grand jury. A 55-year-old member of St. Sophia Ukrainian Greek Catholic Mission alleges Borowec held her against her will and sexually assaulted her.

The Ukrainian Archeparchy of Winnipeg later listed Borowec as being on "administrative





leave.” *Source: Star-Advertiser, 2-23-11*

**Pleaded / Convicted**

**Rev. Alejandro Castillo**, 58, Ontario, **CA**: Pleaded guilty to committing a lewd act on a child. Castillo, former pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, agreed to plead guilty if 7 similar counts were dropped related to his assault of a boy, 12.

Castillo will serve a year in jail but could have faced more than 20 years if convicted on all charges. Prosecutor Karen Schmauss said the plea bargain was “in the best interest for both sides. The victim does not to have to relive this in front of the public. The victim is 15 years old now, in high school. He wants to live his life.” *Source: Contra Costa Times, 4-25-11*

**Rev. Christopher Settlemoir**, 27, Warren, **MI**: Pleaded no contest to 1st- and 2nd-degree criminal sexual conduct and accosting a minor for immoral purposes. Warren was pastor at Antioch Baptist Church and Antioch Baptist Academy, where he was accused of forcing a boy, 15, to engage in oral sex and of molesting 2 other boys between September 2009 and April 2010.

While his wife, with whom he has a 2-year-old daughter, didn’t attend the hearing, “She’s standing by her man,” said Settlemoir’s lawyer. *Source: Macomb Daily, 4-25-11*

**Rev. Jason Phillips**, 37, Canton, **IL**: Guilty of criminal sexual assault for sexual contact with a 15-year-old girl while he was associate pastor at Covenant Community Fellowship Church. A jury heard testimony that the girl and her sister became virtual daughters to the Phillips family and had their own rooms in Phillips’ home.

Prosecutor Susan Maxwell said Phillips groomed the girl. “He did so slowly.” The girl testified she didn’t try to stop Phillips the estimated 10 times he fondled her and, at least once, she sexually touched him. Text messages were also read in court. *Source: Peoria Journal Star, 4-21-11*

**Rev. Jody Dewain Lusk**, Auburn, **KY**: Pleaded guilty to taking a minor across state lines to engage in sex. The former pastor of Auburn Church of Christ is already serving 20 years after pleading guilty to 6 counts of 2nd-degree rape and 2nd-degree sodomy involving the 13-year-old girl at an Illinois campground in 2009.

In a jailhouse interview, Lusk said the devil “attacks your weaknesses.” *Source: AP, 4-19-11*

**Rev. Jerry L. Cannon**, 63, Dry Ridge, **KY**: Pleaded guilty to 2 counts of distribution of child pornography. Cannon, pastor of the Church of God, used at least 13 Facebook accounts, according to an FBI agent’s affidavit.

The agent said she saw more than 600 images of child porn on Jan. 26, including pre-pubescent girls with exposed private areas, on Cannon’s fake profile. He also had multiple videos, including those depicting adults raping toddlers, according to the affidavit.

“He was living a double life,” said head deacon Todd Cummins. “He knows the bible as well as anyone I’ve ever met.” *Source: Mobile Press-Register, 4-19-11*

**Rev. Donald W. Belcher**, 82, Yaak, **MT**: Pleaded guilty to 2 counts of child sexual abuse. Belcher, a retired Episcopal priest, was extradited to Maryland on charges he molested a 15-year-old girl in 2006 and an 8-year-old girl in 2010 in North East, Md.

He and his wife purchased the Dirty Shame Saloon in Yaak in 2006. *Source: AP, 4-11-11*

**Rabbi Mordchai Fish**, 58, Brooklyn, **NY**: Pleaded guilty to money laundering. Fish, principal rabbi at Congregation Sheves Achim, laundered about \$900,000 he believed to be criminal proceeds from an undercover informant posing as a businessman. The scheme used religious charities to hide the \$900,000. Fish was among 44 people, including 4 rabbis, charged in the 2009 sting.

**Rabbi Saul Kassir**, 89, Brooklyn, **NY**: Pleaded guilty to illegal cash transmission in the same sting. Kassir, chief rabbi at Shaare Zion, a Syrian congregation, admitted he accepted bank checks in exchange for checks of a lesser value from a charity he operated, the Magen Israel Society. *Source: Newark Star-Ledger, 4-9-11; CNN, 3-29-11*

**Rev. Paul Meeks**, Tatum, **NM**: Pleaded guilty to criminal sexual contact of a minor under age 13. Meeks, former pastor for an unidentified congregation, made the plea during opening statements at his trial in Lovington.

He pleaded guilty on condition the state drop 2 other sexual contact charges. He told the court he would plead guilty for his family.

According to court documents, Meeks earlier admitted he’d inappropriately touched his daughters. *Source: NewsWest 9, 4-8-11*

**William Howden**, 71, Rio Rancho, **NM**: Howden, a former Episcopal priest and mayor of Rio Rancho, pleaded guilty to kidnapping and sexual molestation of a 7-year-old girl who was a friend of the family.

The girl told her mother that Howden, who now operates a business called Marriage Makers, locked her in a storage shed and exposed himself and touched her. The mother found blood on the girl’s thighs. The girl told police Howden made her watch pornographic movies with him. *Source: KRQE News, 4-5-11*

**Jeremy Fulton**, 28, Baltimore, **MD**: Pleaded

**Pastor Belcher and his wife purchased the Dirty Shame Saloon in 2006.**

guilty to 1st-degree rape. Fulton, former youth pastor at Mariner’s Temple Baptist Church in New York City, was charged with sexually abusing 4 girls, ages 10 to 16, on church property. Allegations include sexual intercourse with a victim who was 12. He faces 22 years in prison. *Source: Washington Examiner, 4-4-11*

**Sentenced**

**Lidia DeLavio**, 47, Lincoln, **NE**: 6 months in jail after pleading no contest to obstructing government operations. DeLavio, a volunteer clergy member, was charged with performing oral sex on a state penitentiary inmate in September 2010. She was described in a 2007 Daily Nebraskan story as a nondenominational ordained minister.

Inmate Troy Hess said he’s in love with DeLavio. He’s serving life after a botched escape attempt in which he shot himself in the foot. *Source: Lincoln Journal Star, 4-26-11*

**Rev. Kevin Gray**, 65, Waterbury, **CT**: 3 years in prison and 3 years’ probation. Gray, former pastor at Sacred Heart/Sagrado Corazon Parish, pleaded no contest to 1st-degree larceny. He was accused of stealing more than \$1 million in church money and spending it on male escorts and a lavish lifestyle. He also told his parish he had cancer when he didn’t.

The Diocese of Hartford did not ask for restitution, a prosecutor said. *Source: AP, 4-28-11*

**Msgr. Patrick Brown**, 59, Long Hill, **NJ**: 5 months in jail, 5 months of home confinement with electronic monitoring and a \$30,000 fine after pleading guilty to filing a false tax return. Brown, pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church and chaplain at the Morris County jail, diverted \$63,000 from parish funds to personal accounts in 2004-09 and never reported it as income. Brown has repaid the \$63,000 to the parish and must pay \$12,400 to the IRS. He has resigned from St. Vincent. *Source: Newark Star-Ledger, 4-27-11*

**Adrian Estrada**, 27, Bexar County, **TX**: Estrada, former youth group leader at El Sendero Assembly of God Church, was resented to life in prison for the murder of Stephanie Sanchez, 17, and their unborn child in 2005. A jury sentenced him to death, but an appeals court overturned the sentence.

Estrada stabbed Sanchez 11 times with a butcher knife and strangled her. It was the third time he impregnated her. She had an abortion the first time and miscarried the second. Court documents show he didn’t tell her he was also having sex with another teen girl in his youth group. *Source: KWTX News, 4-21-11*

**Rev. Anthony D. Newton**, 51, Lexington, **TN**: After pleading guilty to 3 counts of sexual battery by an authority figure, Newton was sentenced to 4 years on each count, with the sentence suspended to time served, probation, \$500 fine and register as a sex offender. The former pastor of h2o Church was accused of forcing a 16-year-old girl to perform oral sex during a church lock-in on New Year’s Eve, an affidavit said.

He’s also charged with aggravated statutory rape and sexual battery by an authority figure for a similar incident with the same alleged victim Dec. 10 on a road in Decatur County. *Source: Jackson Sun, 4-20-11*

**Rev. Alonzo “Lonnie” McCowan**, 50, Ventura, **CA**: Pleaded guilty to grand theft, stealing from an elderly person, money laundering and grand theft and was sentenced to a year in jail with work-release privileges, at least 5 years’ probation and restitution of \$443,100. McCowan, pastor of Solid Rock Christian Center, was accused of duping an 88-year-old man out of his home equity and acquiring 2 other properties under false pretenses.

Prosecutors agreed to drop all felony

charges against his 47-year-old wife, **Kimberly Oglesby McCowan**. The work furlough means he can continue preaching at Solid Rock. *Source: Ventura County Star, 4-19-11*

**Rev. Efrain Umana**, 55, Lincoln, **NE**: 35 years in prison for 2nd-degree sexual abuse, 3rd-degree sexual abuse and assault with intent to commit sexual abuse. Umana, pastor of Templo Monte Horeb in Council Bluffs, IA, was convicted of molesting an 11-year-old girl in his church and making unwanted sexual advances to an adult female congregant.

Umana has never admitted guilt and stood mute at sentencing. His trial for 1st-degree sexual assault of a child is set for May in Omaha. *Source: Omaha World-Herald, 4-13-11*

**Rev. Trent J. Cole Sr.**, 53, Springboro, **OH**: 90 days in jail (suspended), attend Alcoholics Anonymous and anger management sessions. Cole, pastor of Grace Bible Church, pleaded guilty to 2nd-degree domestic violence for hitting his wife and keeping her from leaving their home afterward.

“Alcohol is causing a problem in your life,” Judge Robert Peeler said. “This story could end bad.”

His son, Trent Cole Jr., plays defensive end for the Philadelphia Eagles. *Source: Dayton Daily News, 4-12-11*

**Daniel Rogers**, 22, Melbourne, **AUS**: 8 months in jail and 20 months’ probation after pleading guilty to 2 counts of sexual penetration of a child, attempted sexual penetration of a child and committing an indecent act with a child. Rogers admitted molesting a 15-year-old boy in a bathroom at the Baptist church in 2009 where he was a youth leader. They’d communicated online earlier and the boy told Rogers he was confused about his sexuality.

Judge Joe Gullaci said Rogers he abused his position of trust. “You believed that you were . . . rescuing the victim from homosexuality,” Gullaci said. “I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that you were sexually aroused and received sexual gratification from your offending.” *Source: Brisbane Times, 4-12-11*

A **36-year-old Catholic priest**, name withheld, was sentenced in Adelaide, **AUS**, to 30 months in prison for kidnapping, assaulting and compelling an act of sexual manipulation on a female masseuse.

District Court Judge Michael Thomas Boylan said the priest “behaved despicably and took advantage of her vulnerability for your own gratification,” including slapping her and making her suck on the heel of her shoe.

“I want you to do me for free. I want to rape you,” the judge recounted the priest as saying. “She is now terrified of any man who resembles you.” *Source: Herald Sun, 4-5-11*

**Rev. Bob Crisp**, 62, Rowlett, **TX**: 6 months’ probation and \$650 fine after pleading no contest to misdemeanor assault. Crisp, pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, was accused of rubbing his bare foot on a 14-year-old girl’s leg while complimenting her pedicure and footwear in 2009. He is on leave from his priestly duties and likely won’t return to Sacred Heart, a diocesan spokesman said. *Source: AP, 3-30-11*

**Civil Lawsuits Filed**

The **Archdiocese of Miami** is accused in a suit filed by Alejandro Mora of failing to stop **Fr. Juan O’Farrill** from sexually abusing him as an altar boy in the late 1980s while O’Farrill was a priest at St. Michael the Archangel Church. O’Farrill, who died in 1994, allegedly molested the boy, a Nicaraguan immigrant, at the rectory after giving him orange juice spiked with liquor.

The suit alleges the archdiocese “knew or should have known” O’Farrill “sexually abused other boys” but “took no action against [him] and continued to give him unfettered access to young boys.” *Source: NBC News, 4-28-11*

Three brothers, now in their 50s, are suing **Rev. John E. Sullivan**, Montreal, **QU**, and the Catholic **Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie**, alleging sexual abuse by Sullivan in the late 1960s when he was priest at Canadian Forces Base Falconbridge. Sullivan, in his late 80s, lives with his sister and was convicted in 1992 of sexual assault against the brothers and other boys.

**Creep of the Month**



Belgian prosecutors are considering new charges against **Roger Vangheluwe**, 74, who resigned in 2010 as Catholic bishop of Bruges after admitting he molested his own nephew for 13 years starting when the boy was 5 in the 1970s. The statute of limitations bars criminal charges.

The allegations involve 2 altar boys at a church camp in the 1960s. The Flemish daily De Morgen reported an altar boy later committed suicide, but a prosecution spokesman declined comment.

In a Belgian TV interview April 14, Vangheluwe admitted molesting another nephew. Sometimes smiling, he called the abuse “a little piece of intimacy.

“I had the strong impression that my nephew didn’t mind at all. On the contrary. It was not brutal sex. I never used bodily, physical violence” and “was never naked.”

He was interviewed in Ferte-Imbault, France, where the Vatican has sent him for “spiritual and psychological treatment.” Vangheluwe said his first abuse of a nephew started as “a game.” The abuse of his other nephew lasted “merely a year. I don’t have the impression at all that I am a pedophile. I never felt the least attraction to a child.”

Vangheluwe complained about the church being unfairly targeted in abuse probes compared to other organizations. “Why is it different for priests than for other situations? Why should the church pay compensation and there is no compensation in other professions? The church should not be pushed in a special corner.” *Source: AP, 4-15-11; Reuters, 4-20-11*

The eldest of the brothers, now 57, lives in Nova Scotia. “PJJ” said he and his brothers were “pure as white snow” when the molesting started. He said about 20 years ago, when he was president of his church’s parish council, his wife suggested he speak with the priest, so he tried.

“I told him what happened. I was getting ready to pour my soul out to him. He just shook his head and said: ‘Why do people have to continually try to attack us?’ ” PJJ said he left the church at that moment. *Source: Sudbury Star, 4-24-11*

**Calvary Chapel**, Rathdrum, **ID**, and **North Country Chapel**, Post Falls, **ID**, are being sued by Alex McIntosh and Nicholas Rutler, both 22, who allege the churches protected a youth group employee who molested them when they were under 16. **Anthony L. Iglesias** is in prison for sexually abusing 14-year-old twin brothers in a separate case in 2004.

The plaintiffs allege the churches acted in concert with Iglesias to hide his history of pedophilia.

The twins, Kyle and Kory Larabee, have a civil suit pending against Calvary Chapel and Iglesias. *Source: Spokesman-Review, 4-16-11*

An unnamed Maryland man is his early 40s alleges **Fr. Philip DeRea**, Aurora, **IL**, sexually abused him for 8 years, starting at age 11. DeRea is a “celebrity priest” and chaplain for the Indy 500. The suit seeks \$75,000 in damages from DeRea and his religious order, the **Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart**.

According to the claims, DeRea initiated a friendship with the boy, who lived a few blocks from the priest’s home, in 1980 when the child was 11 years old. The abuse started a few months later, when DeRea began fondling the plaintiff during car rides, rubbing the boy’s leg until he was aroused and then saying, “Look who’s happy to see me,” the suit states, alleging DeRea sodomized him and gave him pornographic movies, mainly in his chapel/home but also on a racing trip to Ohio.

Staff, including nuns, were in DeRea’s home during the abuse and witnessed the priest taking the boy to his bedroom, but never questioned the behavior, the suit alleges. *Source: Chicago Sun-Times, 4-15-11*

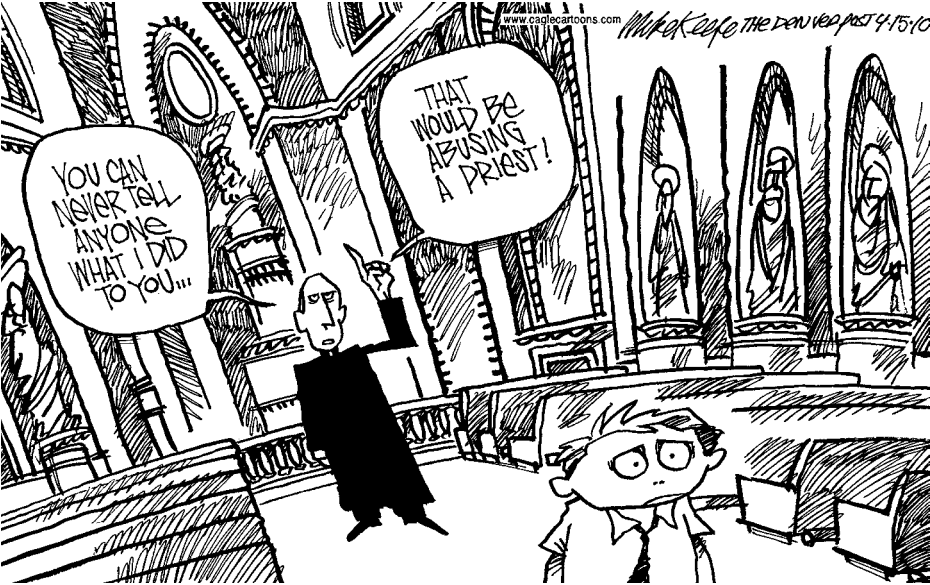
An Arkansas woman has filed a \$5 million lawsuit against **Fr. Charles Kanu**, a suspended priest at St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church in Mountain Home, **AR**. Also named are the **Diocese of Little Rock** and **Bishop Anthony Taylor**.

“Jane Doe” alleges Kanu pressured her into sexual acts during counseling and that other priests knew of the relationship.

Mountain Home Police Chief Carry Manuel said an investigation was completed. “From our standpoint, no criminal activity took place. The bulk of the relationship took place when he was in Little Rock.” *Source: Baxter Bulletin, 4-19-11; Ozarks First, 4-15-11*

A Randall County, **TX**, family is suing **Kanakuk Kamp**, a Christian camp near Branson, **MO**, and an imprisoned former employee for repeated sexual abuse of their son, starting

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when he was 10.

Former Director **Peter Newman** is serving 2 life sentences plus 30 years for 7 felonies, including sodomy and enticement of a child. His convictions are for abusing 6 campers, but Newman has admitted to molesting 13 others.

The suit alleges camp **President Joe White** kept Newman on staff, even though he knew he was a threat after putting him on probation as an employee.

The suit was filed in Texas primarily because the victim's father learned about Kanakuk at a Promise Keepers event at Texas Stadium in Irving. The suit says Kanakuk recruits heavily in Texas and transports children to Missouri from a Dallas mall parking lot.

The camp's revenues were \$13.5 million in 2008, when White was paid \$352,000. *Source: Myhighplains.com, 4-1-11*

**Civil Lawsuits Settled**

The identities of **at least 17 men** who have faced "credible allegations of sexual abuse" or other misconduct were made public by **St. John's Abbey**, Collegeville, MN, as part of a settlement announced by St. Paul attorney Jeff Anderson. The clergy taught at St. John's Preparatory School or were assigned to parishes in the Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud.

Anderson declined to say how much money the 9 plaintiffs who alleged abuse by priests and brothers at the abbey will get. The naming of accused clergy who have not been charged with a crime is a change in the approach to cases in Minnesota. Abbot John Klassen said a letter will be sent to people who attended the prep school and the names are posted on the abbey's web-site.

Of the 17, 4 are dead, 3 are no longer at St. John's and 10 live at the abbey "with the constraints of a safety plan and supervision," the letter said.

Plaintiff Jeremiah McCarthy, 55, spoke at a press conference. He said the late **Rev. Bruce Wollmering** "attacked me in his office" when McCarthy was 15. Anderson said victims in the settlement ranged in age from 9 to 16 at the time of their alleged abuse. *Source: Minneapolis Star Tribune, 3-30-11*

**Finances**

The bankrupt Catholic **Diocese of Wilmington, DE**, will cut 19 full-time and 3 part-time jobs. The diocese has to pay \$77.4 million in claims from 150 sex abuse suits against clergy. About half the jobs are at The Dialog, a weekly paper printed since 1965, and another 8 are at Catholic Charities. *Source: News Journal, 4-15-11*

**Legal Developments**

**Christopher deMorrow**, 38, Ludington, MI: Waived a preliminary hearing on 2 counts of 2nd-degree criminal sexual conduct and misdemeanor domestic violence. DeMorrow, who teaches seventh and eighth grades at **St. Michael Parish School** in Grand Ledge, was arrested in January on charges of having sexual contact with males under age 13 at his home in separate incidents. Neither was his student.

The domestic violence charge stems from an alleged incident with his ex-wife. They divorced in 2008. Heather deMorrow testified at a hearing about the defendant's bizarre behavior, saying she once saw him masturbate in front of children. *Source: Lansing State Journal, 4-27-11*

A federal judge in **Oregon** ruled the **Vatican** must respond to requests for information from a man who says he was molested by **Fr. Andrew Ronan** in the 1960s. "John V. Doe" filed suit 8 years ago and seeks to hold the Vatican responsible for his alleged abuse. Ronan died in 1992. U.S. District Judge Michael Mosman ruled Doe is entitled to limited discovery related to whether the priest was an employee of the Vatican.

The groundbreaking ruling addresses similar issues raised in a Wisconsin case involving the late **Fr. Lawrence Murphy**, a serial pedophile believed to have molested hundreds of deaf boys.

"It's huge. That's the very claim we're making in Milwaukee, and it's a door that's never been opened before," said St. Paul, Minn., attorney Jeffrey Anderson. *Source: AP, 4-22-11*

**Four Catholic clergy and a teacher** accused of sexually abusing or allowing abuse of altar boys pleaded not guilty in court in **Philadelphia**. Appearing were **Rev. Charles Engelhardt**, 64; defrocked priest **Edward Avery**, 68; and former Catholic school teacher **Bernard Shero**, 48. All are charged with raping a boy from 1998 to 2000, starting when he was 10.

**Msgr. William Lynn**, 60, the first Catholic official in the U.S. to be charged with child endangerment for transferring accused priests instead of removing them from the ministry, also pleaded not guilty.

**Rev. James Brennan**, 47, charged with raping a 14-year-old boy in 1996, previously pleaded not guilty.

Dan Bartley, president of Voice of the Faithful, a church reform group, had harsh words for Lynn. "Any person, Catholic or non-Catholic, who reads the grand jury report cannot be other than absolutely appalled by his behavior and the fact that he knew that this was going on."

*Source: Philadelphia Inquirer, 4-17-11*

**The Vatican** has been served with court papers through diplomatic channels in a **Wisconsin** lawsuit. Terry Kohut, now of Chicago, alleges the pope and other top officials knew about claims of sexual abuse at St. John's School for the Deaf outside Milwaukee and called off internal punishment of the accused priest, **Rev. Lawrence Murphy**. Murphy later admitted he molested boys at the school for 22 years.

A January attempt to serve the papers through the common practice of shipment by Federal Express was rejected by the Vatican Secretariat of State. **Msgr. Brian Wells** refused service, saying the suit was "undesired and unwanted." *Source: AP, 4-13-11*

A **Utah** Mormon bishop, **Alejandro de Santiago**, was ordered to testify in a case in which a man he allegedly recommended to church members for marriage counseling was charged with 2 counts of forcible sex abuse.

**Arturo Tenorio**, 57, Kearns, UT, is accused by 2 women of grabbing their breasts, spanking and simulating sex during sessions. He charged \$280 for 40-minute sessions. Both alleged victims noted in court that Tenorio was also recommended by **Octaviano Tenorio**, a member of the LDS Church's First Quorum of the Seventy and Arturo Tenorio's brother.

Judge Charlene Barlow ruled the clergy-penitent privilege didn't apply and that de Santiago could testify on some aspects of the case. *Source: Salt Lake Tribune, 3-24-11*

**Allegations**

A **Finnish Christian sect** called the **Conservative Laestadian Congregations** acknowledged up to 100 incidents of pedophilia since the 1980s. About 30 cases have ended in court and several more are under investigation.

Laestadians in Finland number about 35,000 and are part of a Lutheran revival movement dating to the 19th century. About 80% of Finland's 5.3 million people belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. *Source: Winnipeg Free Press, 4-7-11*

**The Vatican** admitted in confidential documents it's aware that priests from **at least 23 countries**, mostly in Africa, have sexually abused nuns. The National Catholic Reporter obtained the documents, some of which are recent and some as old as 7 years, which said priests who had previously sought out prostitutes started preying on nuns to avoid getting AIDS.

Some priests allegedly demanded sex in exchange for favors such as permission to work in a certain location. One case cited a nun who died after an abortion, with the priest who allegedly sired the child saying her funeral Mass. Another document detailed 29 nuns getting pregnant in a single diocese. *Source: The U.K. Independent, 3-21-11*

**Removed / Resigned**

**Fr. Michael Pflieger**, pastor of St. Sabina Catholic Church, Chicago, IL, was suspended by the Archdiocese of Chicago. In a letter, Cardinal Francis George said, "If you now formally leave the Catholic Church and her priesthood, it's your choice and no one else's. You are not a victim of anyone or anything other than your own statements."

Pflieger, who is white, has recently resisted transferring from the largely black parish he's served in for 30 years to head a Catholic high school. *Source: Chicago Tribune, 4-28-11*

**Rev. Joseph LeClair**, 53, resigned as pastor of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Ottawa, ON. LeClair, the subject of an internal audit by the Archdiocese of Ottawa, said he is "transitioning" and may decide to leave the priesthood.

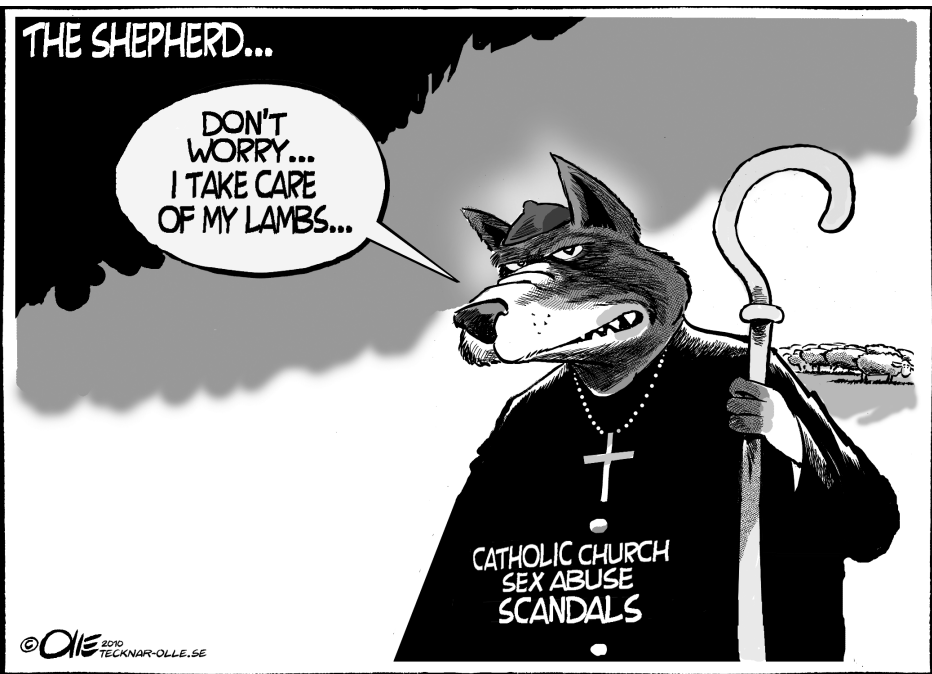
A newspaper investigation revealed LeClair received more than \$137,000 in cash advances on his credit card at Casino du Lac-Leamy in 2009-10 and showed he had personal credit card bills of more than \$490,000 in those years, all while receiving an annual salary of \$24,400. That doesn't include money he got for weddings, funerals, baptisms and marriage preparation courses. *Source: Ottawa Citizen, 4-25-11*

**Rev. Edward R. D'Andrea**, Blue Point, NY: D'Andrea, pastor of Our Lady of the Snow Catholic Church, was placed on administrative leave after the Diocese of Rockville Centre received allegations of abuse. Spokesman Sean Dolan said the diocese has also notified law enforcement. *Source: Bayport-Blue Point Patch, 4-20-11*

**Ellis Harsham**, Dayton, OH: Harsham, a former Catholic priest who was part of a child sex abuse lawsuit involving the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in 1994, resigned as a "Eucharistic Presider" at Living Beattitudes Community, a group of mostly gay Catholics who meet in rented space at Christ Episcopal Church.

Laura Grimes, who served as a minister with the group last year, pressured community leaders to suspend Harsham after she learned of his 1994 removal from priestly duties by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and his 2006 laicization by Pope Benedict. Grimes confronted the community about Harsham at its Palm Sunday service, then contacted news media. *Source: Dayton Daily News, 4-19-11*

**Rev. Steven R. Rule**, Richmond, VA: Rule,



pastor of the Church of the Epiphany, was placed on administrative leave. Diocese of Richmond Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo read a statement to the parish: "This past week, I received a report of inappropriate behavior by your pastor. This report did not involve a minor."

Rule, who was ordained in 1975, was put on leave in 2002 while he was pastor at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Roanoke. The diocese investigated a claim he sexually abused a student at St. John Vianney Seminary in 1976. The diocese determined Rule's behavior "was inappropriate and exceeded the boundaries under the circumstances," but he was reinstated and later assigned to Epiphany. *Source: Richmond Times-Dispatch, 4-13-11*

**Rev. Jacob Oravanamthadthil**, Winchester, KY: Oravanamthadthil was removed as pastor at 2 Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Lexington after confirmation he'd been having consensual sex with an adult woman for several years. He's expected to return to his native India, where he belongs to a religious order called the Heralds of the Good News.

The diocese got a report of the relationship April 1. The woman is "well beyond the legal age of majority" and does not fall under the legal reporting criteria for a "vulnerable adult," a statement said. *Source: Lexington Herald-Leader, 4-11-11*

**Fr. Mike Manning**, San Bernadino, CA, a priest with the Catholic Society of the Divine Word, will take a leave of absence as a televangelist in the wake of revelations he had a long-term sexual affair with his second cousin, Nancy Kotowski, who is Monterey County superintendent of schools. Manning's weekly program "The Word in the World" airs on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

Manning claims he broke off the affair at least 2 years before its public disclosure in the San Bernardino Sun. "The sexuality was secondary," he told the Sun. "It's very hard when you care for someone, but I love my priesthood more." *Source: L.A. Times, 4-8-11*

**Rev. Vincent Panepinto**, a priest in the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, NY, was placed on administrative leave while the diocese investigates a claim he sexually abused a minor in the late 1960s. Panepinto, ordained in 1967, most recently served at St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Parish. *Source: Catholic Courier, 3-28-11*

**Other**

**Rev. Nicholas W. Minerva**, 52, Tempe, AZ, pastor at Trinity Baptist Fellowship in Phoenix, shot himself fatally after being served a search warrant by the Chandler Police Department.

Minerva was being investigated on suspicion of luring a 14-year-old girl after communicating with her in an Internet chat room since last July, said Chandler police Detective Frank Mendoza. Contact included use of a webcam to expose his genitals, Mendoza said.

An eyewitness who lives next to the church said she heard police trying to get Minerva to come out for at least half an hour. "[T]hen I hear, like, two smoke things, and the last one was the loudest, and then they started putting tape up around the property," said Jennifer Gene.

Minerva was married with 4 children. Mendoza said there may be other victims. *Source: KPHO News, 4-22-11*

In an open letter, Msgr. John Conway of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Catholic Church in North Wales, PA, asked **Cardinal Justin Rigali** to "assure us that our children will be safe as clergy are reassigned to our parishes."

Conway met with parishioners in March to explain his inclusion in a 2005 Philadelphia grand jury report on sex abuse by clergy. From the April 4 letter: "I called the meeting to assure them that, though my name appeared in the 2005 Grand Jury Report in my role as regional vicar, I did not contribute in any way to the shameful and sinful cover-up of child sexual abuse by priests. I explained that we regional vicars, along with many others, were kept in the

dark about such crimes.

"I told them, too, that the fact that I was asked to help in the placement of priests into new assignments without being informed of their history of sexual abuse makes me 'angry as hell.' I feel that I was duped." *Source: Philly-burbs.com, 4-20-11*

**Daniel Fischer**, 43, Hershey, NE: 9 counts of 1st-degree assault of a child. Fischer, a farmer and youth minister who taught Sunday school at Hope Baptist Church in Sutherland, was arrested April 1. The 3 alleged female victims were between ages 7 and 15. A call to a Health and Human Services hotline led to his arrest. He was released on bail April 4.

An affidavit said Fischer hired girls to help him irrigate corn and would get them alone at his home or in a corn field and sexually assault them. After 2 more potential victims and other information surfaced, deputies went to the farm April 13 to rearrest him and his wife, Deanna Fischer, 38, for child abuse and cruelty toward a child. Daniel Fischer was nowhere to be found.

A search warrant affidavit said Deanna Fischer photographed some assaults, including one alleged to have occurred May 22, 2010, in the living room: "At one point, Daniel Fischer took one victim to this spare bed, and while the second victim and Deanna Fischer watched, Daniel Fischer raped the victim on the bed. The second victim was forced to watch and Deanna Fischer was sitting in a chair not three feet from the bed watching 'CSI' on television when the first rape occurred."

As the alleged victim cried and said "No," Deanna Fischer turned up the volume, the affidavit said. Then, her husband of 15 years allegedly took the second girl to a bedroom to rape her, with his wife taking photos with a black cellphone and silver camera, the affidavit said. The affidavit added that the mother of several of the alleged victims saw photos of Daniel Fischer and the girls posing naked or in their underwear.

On April 19, the search for Daniel Fischer ended when his body was found in an irrigation canal on the farm. "As a child he asked Jesus to be his Lord and Savior," said his obituary for closed-casket services at Hope Baptist. "He had an infectious smile and was a kind and loving man." *Source: North Platte Bulletin, 4-14-11; North Platte Telegraph, 4-19-11*

E-mail: blackcollar@ffrf.org

*In the News*

**U.S. DOJ intervenes in bible-only case**

The U.S. Department of Justice has intervened in a 2010 lawsuit against the Berkeley County [S.C.] Detention Center'a for barring prisoners from getting reading materials other than the bible. The ACLU sued the jail on behalf of Prison Legal News, a Vermont monthly.

Prison Legal News editor Paul Wright claimed 1st Sgt. K. Habersham sent him an e-mail stating that detainees are allowed to order from a publisher and receive by mail a soft-cover bible, but no other books, magazines or newspapers are allowed. Among the books rejected was *Protecting Your Health & Safety*, which explains inmates' legal rights.

**High court upholds children's removal**

The Arkansas Supreme Court ruled April 28 that the seizure of 16 children from seven followers of evangelist Tony Alamo was legal and based on concerns about the children's safety.

The state Department of Human Services took the children in 2008 and insisted that parents had to break their financial dependence on Alamo to get them back. The parents refused. Alamo was convicted on multiple sexual abuse charges in 2009 for "marrying" underage girls.





## Letterbox

### Day of Prayer ruling beyond the pale

I have just donated additional funds on top of my annual membership to aid in appealing the 7th Circuit Court's ruling upholding the National Day of Prayer. I'm deeply concerned about the recent spate of court decisions which claim that people who seek to defend the Establishment Clause have no legal recourse. The logic that people somehow have to experience a form of physical discrimination to have legal standing is beyond the pale.

Based on this decision, it seems as if not a single citizen in the country has the ability to challenge this law. What if once a year the president were to declare by law that the U.S. is a Catholic nation? Technically, no one is being forced to become a Catholic or attend Mass, but it would still be unconstitutional, because the weight and reputation of the government would be used to proselytize for a particular faith.

Thomas Jefferson said it best:

"All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression."

Thank you for your hard work, and keep up the good fight.

**Dennis Keane**  
New Hampshire

• • •

The "logic" used by the appeals court to throw out FFRF's Day of Prayer suit is disturbing. In stating that exclusion doesn't equal injury, the court has opened the door for every form of state-sponsored religious activity to be continued or reintroduced. If we see a law being broken, is it not our duty to report it even though we are suffering no injury?

This is a battle that must be won. The stakes are huge. My membership is up for renewal soon, and I will attach an extra \$100 to buy ammunition.

**Alan Hurlbut**  
Kansas

• • •

The sooner the National Day of Prayer is abolished, the better. Not only is this meaningless "tradition" unconstitutional, it's a despicable way to single out and kiss up to the evangelicals for political gain.

Imagine if the passengers on United Flight 93 on 9/11 had prayed instead of taking action. Praying would have done nothing to prevent an even great-

er disaster than crashing in an open field in Pennsylvania. Nor did the terrorists' cries for Allah's assistance help during the passenger uprising.

For our government to promote praying is silly and superstitious. It also lulls people into believing that it can help when only real action can.

**Jorg Aadahl**  
California

• • •

I got a robo-call from Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law & Justice about the National Day of Prayer. It was an infinite loop that only let you "Press 1 to join the fight. . ." There was no way to register disagreement. If you didn't press 1, it just repeated ad nauseam.

I have no idea how they got my number, so I called their Washington office. They couldn't tell me how they got it. They said they "share" information with similar organizations. I belong to no such organizations and told them that. They had *no* idea where they got my number, at least their staff did not.

I was so incensed that I joined FFRF (sorry, I should have long ago). I listen to your podcast weekly and look forward to it.

I told ACLJ that due to that call I'd be making a donation to FFRF. It's a pity there is no hell for Mr. Sekulow and his idiot minions.

**David McCreary**  
Virginia

[Editor's note: The American Center for Law & Justice was founded in 1990 by Rev. Marion "Pat" Robertson.]

• • •

I received a phone call that played a recorded message warning me of FFRF's attack on the National Day of Prayer. It asked me to stay on the line, so I did. Then a live person picked up and mentioned FFRF's "powerful lobbyists." I asked, "How powerful are they?!" He answered that Americans' right to pray for their country was under assault.

I asked him to repeat the name of his organization, which I wrote down [the ACLJ]. "Can we count on your support?" he asked. I said, "No, I'm an atheist. I've never heard of FFRF, but I'm excited to call them and join their efforts." He said "OK" and hung up.

I joined your group today. I believe every American has the right to pray for their country anytime they want — except that when they are on the job being paid public funds, they should do it quietly, privately and then please get back to work.

**Samuel Spencer**  
Maryland

• • •

On May 5, on the "National Day of Wishful Thinking," President Obama and nearly all of our nation's governors encourage people to temporarily abandon our natural intelligence to solve our country's problems and instead have a conversation with a more-than-likely nonexistent supernatural intelligence in the hope that it will solve all our problems for us.

While some may argue that at least they won't be governing and making our lives worse, I'd much rather they

use the prayer time to address the many economic and social issues we face today. With this in mind, I'm contacting all the rationalist/freethought organizations in my area to see if we might establish a special day of our own to coincide with the same date as the National Day of Prayer.

This will be our "National Get Your Sorry Asses Back To Work Day."

**David Vangsness**  
Florida

• • •

Is prayer the ultimate form of chiseling? Apart from his or her expression of fealty to a god, the pray-er expects to get a great deal for virtually no expenditure of effort or resources.

The act of praying, therefore, may be the ultimate form of goldbricking or chiseling.

**Eric A. Stone**  
New York

• • •

Please accept this donation for Colorado and nationwide legal expenses. We love Freethought Today.

Thank you.  
**Greg and Vicki McCoy**  
Colorado

### Military, religion have close ties

I disagree that non-Christians in the military ["spiritual fitness" survey, Jan/Feb11] are free from harassment. The American Legion, and other service organizations as well, all have ministers and pray before their meetings.

Even when a person is on their death bed, as I was in the early '70s in a VA hospital, the ministers will not leave you alone. It is one thing to preach to a healthy person and a very different thing when a person is dying.

They will do anything to convert you and they never give up. Thanks for all your help.

**Larry Reiter**  
Wisconsin

### Godless oath fine in Michigan, too

In reference to FFRF's victory getting Wisconsin jurors the affirmation option, I have a similar story from two years ago when I was called for jury duty in Detroit.

I wrote the jury selection authority to inform them that I could be a thoughtful and attentive juror, but that I wanted to be excused if I was required to swear on a bible. I wrote that I regarded the bible as a book full of inaccuracies, contradictions and barbaric punishments, and that I was an agnostic. (Later on, I changed my designation to atheist after reading Dan Barker's fine definition of "a lack of belief in God or gods.")

I got a phone call about a week later from an official who said I could indeed affirm to tell the truth. I showed up on the assigned day but wasn't empaneled. I'm over 70 now and can ask for an age exemption, so I may never find out how an affirmation would have been received by a judge or attorney.

**John Oman**  
Michigan

### You're the love of a Lifetime

Please accept my money order for Lifetime Membership. Now I won't have to worry about renewal dates and miss out on your excellent newspaper. As always, I'll be eagerly looking forward to reading it from cover to cover.

When I was young and impression-

able, I believed what I was told about religion. As I got older, I was able to step back and see it for what it was: crap that shackles minds.

I view what you do as extremely important.

**A.J. Bushnell, atheist**  
Louisiana

• • •

Thank you for allowing me to pay my Life Membership over the past several months. That was my only option with the economy the way it is.

I look forward to each Freethought Today and usually read it all the way through before stopping. I love being free of the chains of religion more and more each day.

Thank you for the good work you do on our behalf to keep religion out of schools and government. If the religious had their way, we would not have the freedoms we now enjoy.

**Jim Pennington**  
South Carolina

### 'Out of the Closet' out of this world

I am loving your "Out of the Closet" billboard campaign. It is so wonderful to see the faces of other happy atheists and freethinkers. And it feels great to be a part of it. We should send President Obama the link!

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your hard work.

**Laura Robichaux**  
Louisiana

• • •

Thanks to the staff for the FFRF "Out of the Closet" campaign. Good work. Nicely done.

**Gary McIntyre**  
Kentucky

### Wishing to revoke more than baptism

The April story about Katie Daniel and her debaptismal certificate leads me to ask, "Why not a *bris* revocation, too?"

On Feb. 4, 1932, eight days after my birth, without my consent, I was subjected to a violent ceremony where people celebrated with a small feast and drank schnapps. I was the only unhappy person in the room. I'm sure I cried a lot but to no avail. For all these years, I have suffered this indignity and this loss. Restoration is out of the question.

How about a certificate signed by a former rabbi that would *de-bris* me?

**Arthur J. Katz**  
California

[Editor's note: *De-bris* or *debris*?]

• • •

I absolutely love the very creative debaptismal certificate! I ordered four with seals and Dan's signature but couldn't wait and downloaded a free one, too.

Now it's proudly displayed in my home until the real ones get here. Have a great day!

**Jeannie Cartisser**  
California

### For Christians, 'no tell' is living hell

[The March issue had this, attributed to Annie Dillard: ESKIMO: "If I did not know about God and sin, would I go to Hell?" PRIEST: "Not if you did not know." ESKIMO: "Then why did you tell me?"]

Fifty years ago in Washington state, I was a young man working on an Indian reservation fishing boat that went all

*Continued on next page*



### Show Me state

Anna Gaw, Missouri, writes: "I live in a small town smack in the middle of bible belt America, but there is also a university, which adds diversity to the community. I am part of a secular humanist meet-up group here, and they all like my plate!"





*Continued from previous page*  
the way to Alaska. We had some trouble and had to pull into Ketchikan. My Indian friend took me hunting with some of his relatives while the boat was getting repaired. He warned me about two things: not to talk about God or to ask if they were American or Canadian. They would always thank the “spirit” of whatever they hunted. What a thrill for me!

In the village I saw a wooden sign hanging up that said, “Then don’t tell me.” The story is a preacher had come to hunt and, of course, he could not stand anyone *not* believing in his god. The last thing the chief said as he kicked the preacher out was, “Then why did you tell me?”

When I came home, I took a look down the street at all the Christmas crap and had a friend make *my* sign, which I put above my walk: “Then why did you tell me?” The story eventually ended up in the Seattle Times. When the good Christians found out what it meant, my trouble began.

If FFRF ever has a slogan, I think that would fit perfectly. It’s the answer to all those religious questions. Did god tell you? No, *you* did. That’s my answer.

I look forward to every Freethought Today. (Feel pity for me, for I moved to southern Missouri.)

**Tom Gogan**  
**Missouri**

We’re glad to be on your side

I just finished reading every word of the Jan/Feb Freethought Today and cannot fully elaborate to you how much pure joy, sympathy, brotherly/sisterly love, empathy and camaraderie I felt as I read it.

I’ve been an atheist since I was a child. I can recall asking my mother in 1975 at age 6, after seeing several reports or articles claiming “God” was either black, or female, to clarify this for me. With my grandparents looking on from their dining room table, my mother told me, “Son, this is a question I can’t answer for you. You will have to figure this one out for yourself. You just take the time to listen to all sides of the issue and make up your own mind.”

By the time I was 8, I felt offended by the Pledge of Allegiance. I was paddled many times in school in the Oklahoma bible belt for my refusal to recite this ridiculous refrain.

Now, with an 18-year-old freethinking daughter, a 15-year-old son “on the fence” and a wife who used Mom and Dad’s Internet access to receive that complimentary FFRF issue from what I now consider “our side,” I still have to display a copy of that sci-fi story to placate a landlord who’d have us evicted if she knew our real, reality-based, beliefs.

Wish we could afford to join as a household, but we are on your side, believe that. We love you, brothers and sisters.

**Justin Gwyn and Jennifer Hubler**  
**Oklahoma**

Praise for radio, print and freethinkers

I’m going through the podcasts of FFRF’s excellent Freethought Radio program. Thank you very much for all you do to stem the tide of ignorance which threatens to storm forth from the good old USA to take over the world.

In listening to your interview with Ed

Buckner a year or so ago, I was struck by his comment that FFRF’s fight matters to the whole world. It really does. My office here in Langley, B.C., is next to a Focus on the Family office, so every day I’m reminded of the danger.

I love your musical interludes as well, especially when Dan’s putting Yip Harburg’s poetry to music.

**Ullrich Fischer**  
**British Columbia**

• • •

I really appreciate the collection of articles on freethinkers “born on this day in history” [Freethought of the Day: [ffrf.org/news/day](http://ffrf.org/news/day)]. They are all inspiring.

Let’s hope that the communicative power of the Internet will keep free thoughts rolling like a giant snowball at this time in history, so that one day freethinking humans will be the norm on this planet.

**John Draeger**  
**Wisconsin**

• • •

Freethought Today is my favorite reading material. It’s the best thing that comes in the mail. There’s always something that informs or excites me and gives me ammunition for my letters to the editor, which I write mostly to the Rapid City [S.D.] Journal. I’m the most outspoken, radical, anti-god feminist in the area, at least who writes to the newspaper.

To my joy, I read [Jan/Feb11] that the eminent neurologist Oliver Sacks is writing a book about “nonpsychotic hallucinations.” I’ll be first in line to get this book and can only encourage him to “hurry along.”

Our brains are like our universe — we’re still in kindergarten.

**Margaret Minkel**  
**South Dakota**

Keep it simple when defining atheist

A recent letter writer expressed surprise at the high percentage of surveyed FFRF members who self-described as atheists and wondered how many took the designation all the way, i.e., to the point of denying all gods that ever have been (or ever could be) proposed.

I think most of us have wrestled with such a question at one time or another, and in my own case it was a matter of years before I could comfortably call myself an atheist and be prepared to defend the choice when necessary. Dictionaries are not altogether helpful because they list multiple meanings and may even be mildly contradictory in their definitions of “deist” versus “theist.”

In the end, I decided to keep it simple. By its very structure, atheist means “not a theist,” and hence can be taken as a synonym for “nontheist.” Theists believe in a personal god who interacts with people and influences worldly events, which perfectly describes the Yahweh/Allah figure who dominates the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. That is one character we know a fair amount about, and I have no difficulty classifying him as entirely fictional. So in that sense, I’m definitely an atheist.

Regarding the larger issue — taking an ultra-strong position such as a blanket denial of all godlike influences or entities which might exist inside or outside the presently known universe — would require one to be deliberately unscientific, and in my experience, that’s never a good idea.

**Jeremy M. Harris**  
**Ohio**

Skip honorifics in Black Collar Crime

I’m reading my Freethought Today while watching a 2007 “Law and Order” episode TV. I’ve thought for 20 that this drama is the most rational/secular presentation ever produced for network viewing.

Jack McCoy, played by Sam Waterston, is grilling a murder suspect in a case that is clearly based on uber-hypocrite Ted Haggard, the evangelical clergyman who condemned homosexuals while secretly pursuing intimate contact with the condemned. District Attorney McCoy chooses to address the TV Haggard character as “Mister” and is admonished to address him as “Reverend,” a demand he ignores.

It’s been over 10 years since I last wrote to FFRF on this subject. I argued then, as I am now, that this common acceptance of addressing clergy confers automatic superiority and should not be used by nontheists. Secular courtesy, to my thinking, is sufficient when referring to the theist professionals.

Would any thinking atheist today address the pope as “Your Holiness” or a priest as “Father”? We’ve moved beyond calling the plutocrat class as “Your Lordship,” “Your Highness,” “Sire,” etc., but often extend this undeserved homage to the clergy.

We’re playing their game and giving them a huge semantic advantage by continuing this outmoded formality. The monthly Black Collar Crime stating “Rev. So and So” was convicted of rape of a 7-year-old seems incredibly ironic to me. Why not just write a “priest, rabbi, bishop” and leave out the exalted title?

If we secularists don’t do it, who will? If the writers of “Law and Order” have the sense (courage?) to do this, can’t committed nontheists and our organization do the same?

**Floyd LeBouton**  
**Michigan**

*[Editor’s note: We use the designation to make it clear when perpetrators and alleged perpetrators are ordained clergy, as opposed to Sunday school teachers, etc. Mr. LeBouton is right. “Rev.” is a relatively new honorific. If you read Jane Austen, you may remember her clergy caricature was named Mr. Collins, not Rev. Collins.]*

‘Prayers’ with you at Hartford convention



**Marge and Alton Eliason have been married 74 years.**

Having just received and read Freethought Today, I thought this old man’s life as an atheist might interest you. The Norwegian-Danish Free Church in which I was raised, despite its worthy attributes of opposing smoking and drinking, also forbade movies and dancing. Despite being “free,” the minister never forgot to remind everyone that “The Lord loveth a cheerful giver” before the plate was passed.

I have always openly pronounced myself as an atheist in personal conversations or correspondence, but as a freelance writer (still being published) on various topics, I refer to myself as a nonbeliever. This seems not to arouse the animosity that saying “atheist” does,

although when employed I was often called a communist by those learning I didn’t attend their Sunday Merchant Toll Stations.

After having neglected my subscriptions to freethought publications for many years (feeling they were only interested in reaching the higher echelon), I was introduced by a friend to FFRF, a blessing that rekindled the fire smoldering in this old fogey’s heart. To think that your convention is going to be held in Hartford, 35 miles from here, creates the wish we could attend. But at 94 and 96, and married 74 years, while still able to maintain all our household duties, walking long distances forbids our attendance. But our “prayers” will be with you.

Thank you for your wonderful work. There is no question that FFRF is most responsible for the increase in the percentages of freethinkers in the U.S.

**Alton Eliason**  
**Connecticut**

Why are they praying for us?

Reading the “I’ll pray for you” Crank Mail messages reminds me that whenever someone learns I’m an atheist, they invariably say, “I’ll pray for you.”

Like most atheists, I think of religion as an individual choice, like a preference in music or art or food. For example, my favorite musical instrument is the violin. If someone prefers the piano, it never occurs to me to say, “I’ll pray for you!”

How odd that people want to pray for me because I don’t believe in the supernatural. Why should they even care? It all has to do with salvation. You see, nonbelievers are damned for all eternity, but believers are saved. It’s as simple as that.

Mark 16:16 says: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” And John 3:18 says: “Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only son.”

Thus, I learned that those people who say to me, “I’ll pray for you,” are only looking after my welfare. They want to save me from eternal damnation. They hope I’ll convert and become a good Christian like them, and maybe even use the same profanity they use to insult nonbelievers — like the Crank Mail letter writers.

**David Quintero**  
**California**

On the occasion of the beatification of Pope John Paul II

*(based on Emily Dickinson’s “Hope is the thing with feathers”)*

Faith is a thing with talons  
That feeds on bits of brain  
And spreads holy lies — with  
soulful cries  
And a dark refrain.

A saint with mutant powers  
To save a life or two —  
You wonder in your blackest hour  
If it will choose you.

Its shadow dims sweet reason’s light  
And casts a subtle pall  
On acts of kindness, valor, might  
Done knowing Now is all.

**Nancy Eichelberger**  
**Illinois**



# Michigan truth seekers



Freethinkers from the Petoskey area held an organizational meeting in April to lay the groundwork to form an FFRF chapter in northern Michigan. From left (front) are Tom McHale, Harry Farr, Roy Tassava, (back) Christine Taylor and Kendal Taylor. It’s becoming increasingly important, said Kendal Taylor, “to establish a public presence and take a stand for truth and constitutional liberty.” Another meeting was scheduled for May 22.

# The Rapture, before and after



Joe Perez from New York writes: “My wife and I were traveling through Atlantic City and right in front of us was this van announcing the End of Days. Actually, there was a van and an RV both, from Delaware. ”



## Wear your birthday suit

Al Kvanli, Texas, saw this on I-35 north of Dallas. “My birthday is May 22, so if I make it to my 69th year, the doomsdayers will have to make up another date.”

Just in case May 21 is the end, I’m not going to be watching my cholesterol on May 20. I won’t be mowing my lawn, cleaning my refrigerator or doing the laundry. My doctor has been after me to get a colonoscopy. I have scheduled it for June.  
**Brett Younger, associate professor of preaching, McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta**  
*Associated Baptist Press, 4-11-11*



Rob Navrotski spotted this wreck car bedecked with bible verses in Canonsburg, Pa. Is this what five months’ of “Left Behind tribulations” will look like?

# Marquee Madness



## Christian cross(hairs)?

Craig Meyer writes from Georgia: “This is a MEGA Southern Baptist church around the corner from where I live in Cumming (north Atlanta). What happened to the commandment ‘Thou shall not kill’ ”?



## Raptureless flight

“By choosing this word from John Lennon’s lyrics, I expressed my wish for humanity to embrace religious skepticism and concern about the Vatican Bank.” — Danilo Balsamo, North Carolina



## Fully evolved

Imagining no religion with his shirt and license plate holder is former minister of the gospel Peter Henan-White, California, who tops it all off with a Born-Again Atheist cap.

# They Said What?

And God, would you please bless our Dallas Cowboys with another Super Bowl championship? And we thank you in the authority and awesome name of Jesus Christ. Amen.  
**Rev. Ben Dailey, Irving Calvary Church, prayer opening Texas House session May 3**  
*Dallas Morning News, 5-3-11*

His first miracle has been to rid the world of this incarnation of evil, this demon of hatred and criminality.  
**Peru’s President Alan Garcia, attributing Osama bin Laden’s death to heavenly intervention by Pope John Paul II, who was beatified on the day bin Laden died**  
*Agence France-Presse, 5-2-11*

How much would I give to be one of the 72 Virginians [sic] Osama is “hanging out” with since Sunday?  
**Tweet by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli**  
*Center for American Progress, 5-4-11*

I thank God for slavery. If it wasn’t for slavery, I might be somewhere in Africa worshipping a tree.  
**Apostle Kimberly Daniels, Democratic candidate in a City Council runoff election in Jacksonville, Fla.**  
*Truthwinsout.org, 4-19-11*

There’s just the eight of us, and two of us voted for it [in committee]. I think the others are Roman Catholic men, so I don’t think they would have a problem, but I don’t know for sure.  
**Missouri Sen. Robin Wright-Jones, D-St. Louis, hoping no Democratic senators oppose a bill to allow prayer in public schools and government buildings**  
*KMOX News, 4-20-11*

Language matters. Calling an animal “it” denies them something. They are beloved by God. They glorify God.  
**Bruce Friedrich, PETA vice president for policy, asking translators of the New International Version bible to remove “speciesist” language and refer to animals as “he” or “she”**  
*CNN, 4-19-11*

What we’re doing with the pastor meetings is spiritual, but the end result is political. From my perspective, our country is going to hell because pastors won’t lead from the pulpits.  
**David Lane, “Born-again” Christian and Iowa Renewal Project organizer, on the two-day Pastors’ Policy Briefing in West Des Moines**  
*New York Times, 4-2-11*





Rebecca Newberger Goldstein



Jerry Coyne

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

# Godless squad readies to meet on East Coast

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.

**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.

Goldstein has written five novels, a book of short stories and nonfiction, including *Betraying Spinoza: The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity*. She has taught at Barnard, the Columbia MFA writing program, the department of philosophy at Rutgers, been a visiting scholar at Brandeis and at Trinity College in Hartford. She is research associate at Harvard’s department of psychology and is married to scientist Steven Pinker, a previous FFRF honoree and Honorary Board member.

Other honorees include:

- **Professor Jerry Coyne**, receiving FFRF’s Emperor Has No Clothes Award. Coyne, who is a professor in the department of ecology and evolution at the University of Chicago, is author of *Why Evolution is True*.

- **Steve Trunk**, a military veteran, FFRF Board Member and Lifetime Member, receiving 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, to 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 the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 7, before the convention opens, if enough FFRF convention-goers express interest. (The Twain home is not accessible via Hartford’s free shuttle.)

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.

FFRF convention rates at the Marriott Hartford Downtown are \$159 plus tax, single, double, triple or quadruple. Reserve your rooms directly by requesting “Freedom From Religion Foundation” Group Block by calling toll-free (866)373-9806. You may make reservations online at [www.Marriott.com](http://www.Marriott.com).

Rooms are held until Sept. 6 unless filled before. Plan ahead and share a one-way taxi (\$36-\$44) from the airport. Hotel parking is \$19 daily/\$23

Yip Harburg

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FFRF  
PO Box 750  
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A Nose Is A Nose Is A Nose

Mother, Mother,  
Tell me please,  
Did God who gave us flowers and trees,  
Also provide the allergies?

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 .....

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Vegetarian option \_\_\_\_\_ no. of vegetarian

☐ Vegan option \_\_\_\_\_ no. of vegan

\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday Night Dinner @ \$45\* per person .....

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Vegetarian option \_\_\_\_\_ no. of vegetarian

☐ Vegan option \_\_\_\_\_ no. of vegan

☐ Gluten-free dinners required on above selections

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Meal prices include 21% gratuity and 6% sales tax

☐ Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) to tour Mark Twain home, afternoon of Fri., Oct. 7.

(FFRF will bill you later. Tour will take place if enough members respond.)

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)