

Freethought Today

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Vol. 30 No. 5

Published by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.

June/July 2013

FFRF sues over Florida lit censorship

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit June 13 in U.S. District Court in Florida against the Orange County School Board in Orlando for censoring distribution of freethought materials while allowing unfettered distribution of the Christian bible.

Plaintiffs are FFRF, its Co-Presidents Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker, and David Williamson, who heads the Central Florida Freethought Community, a new FFRF chapter. Distribution of limited freethought literature was allowed on May 2, the National Day of Prayer.

The distribution was organized in response to a so-called "passive" bible distribution in January, when World Changers of Florida evangelists in 11 public schools were permitted to hawk bibles and promote religion.

FFRF asserts violation of its rights under the First Amendment (viewpoint discrimination and prior restraint) and 14th Amendment (equal protection).

Orange County Public Schools insisted on vetting the freethought literature from FFRF and other secular groups. It censored many of the materials, including *Letter to a Christian Nation*, Sam Harris' book; "The Truth," an essay by Robert G. Ingersoll; *Jesus Is Dead*, a book by Robert Price, professor of philosophy and religion; Madalyn Murray O'Hair's book *What on Earth Is an Atheist?; Why I am Not a Muslim*, a book by Ibn Warraq, and several FFRF "nontracts," including "Dear Believer," "Why Jesus?" "What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?" and "An X-Rated



A reporter interviews David Williamson, director of FFRF's chapter the Central Florida Freethought Community, during the literature distribution.

Book."

Plaintiffs Barker and Gaylor wrote several of the censored pamphlets.

The school district prohibited one book because its message that Jesus was not crucified or resurrected "is age inappropriate for the maturity levels of many of the students in high school." However, the bible that the school approved for distribution claims that Jesus was crucified and resurrected. "Permitting one viewpoint (the crucifixion and resurrection occurred) and censoring the opposing viewpoint (the crucifixion and resurrection did

not occur) is unconstitutional," FFRF's complaint states.

FFRF seeks a permanent injunction barring future viewpoint discrimination and prior restraint of its speech. The plaintiffs intend to repeat the distribution every school year, unless the school prohibits all such distributions, including bibles.

Christian favoritism

On Jan. 16, World Changers distribute New International Version bibles to students. WCF "support[s] the biblical

account of creation, including having creation theory taught in our public schools" and "speak[s] out against humanistic views contrary to the biblically based founding fathers' constitutional vision."

The complaint asserts that the district "did not object to a single word in [the WCF] Bible, but approved it fully and without comment."

The plaintiffs contend that public schools shouldn't allow literature distributions by any outside group and told the school district that by letter before the World Changers event. Williamson reiterated that position at a Jan. 29 pre-agenda meeting of the school board.

FFRF encouraged the district to adopt a policy that "prohibits outside groups from turning schools into religious battlegrounds while preserving the distribution system for the benefit of the school" and suggested model language.

After the district refused, FFRF asked for permission to distribute secular materials. Williamson submitted the secular groups' literature Jan. 29 for approval. Included were nine "nontracts," five brochures, eight books, one essay and one sticker. Three books were voluntarily withdrawn in order to speed the approval process after stonewalling by the district.

The district prohibited four of FFRF's five books, leaving part of one (Part III of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*) and several small pamphlets. "Good Without God" stickers were prohibited.

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FFRF helps atheist become U.S. citizen

FFRF stood up for equal rights for the nonreligious by forcing the U.S. Office of Customs and Immigration Services to strike an unconstitutional requirement for religious documentation that would have barred an atheist from becoming a citizen.

Margaret Doughty, 64, an atheist and 30-year U.S. resident who was born in Great Britain, applied to the Houston customs office to become a citizen. She has permanent resident status while running nonprofit adult literacy organizations. All citizenship applicants must take an oath to bear arms for this country before full citizenship is granted. Exemptions are permitted for those who object to war based on "religious training and belief."

FFRF Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel wrote USCIS in a June 14 letter noting that U.S. Supreme Court precedent does not require any religious test to re-



Margaret Doughty

ceive an exemption to bear arms. "This exemption requires only a deeply held belief in not bearing arms or serving in

the armed forces. Anything more, such as a requirement to document the belief with a particular church, is a gross violation of the law and the Constitution," Seidel wrote.

Doughty asked for an exemption to the oath: "I am sure the law would never require a 64-year-old woman like myself to bear arms, but if I am required to answer this question, I cannot lie. I must be honest. The truth is that I would not be willing to bear arms. Since my youth I have had a firm, fixed and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or in the bearing of arms. I deeply and sincerely believe that it is not moral or ethical to take another person's life."

The Houston office admitted the sincerity of Doughty's belief, but required her to submit religious documentation, including a letter from her

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Meet a Member

Golden Rule plenty good for Uhl

Name: Diane Uhl.
Where I live: Oro Valley, Ariz.
Where and when I was born: Milwaukee in 1937 (the town that beer kept happy). I was raised in the small town of Evansville, Wis., where we drank beer but didn't tell anyone.
Education: I survived high school in a small Wisconsin town where there were no divorces and the only ethnic groups were Germans, Swedes and Norwegians. I received my B.A. from Ripon College. Teaching became my goal when I found out a nurse had to be able to tolerate the sight of blood.
I received my M.A. from Northwestern University in speech correction/special education, which equipped me (I thought) to save all those children with special needs. Those children taught me more about life than I ever imagined.
Occupation: I taught people of all ages, from preschool to adults with special needs. The adults were always the toughest due to the usual adult prejudices and hang-ups. Thirty-three years in public schools provided me with untold opportunities to encourage students to always be free to say "show me" or "prove it."
How I got where I am today: My parents taught me the rewards of hard work. The one action item I took from my Lutheran upbringing that seemed to make sense was the Golden Rule. I always say they should put "She Tried" on my tombstone (which I won't have).
During college summers, I worked for a couple (both totally blind) who gave me a real perspective on what "vision" really is. I freely moved forward to prepare myself to teach others and to enjoy a successful, happy independent life. Along the way, I met and married my best friend, Steve. We retired in 1993, sold it all, bought an RV and traveled full time to all 49 continental states. Geography lessons and people opportunities were boundless

and furthered my education and vision of a world where we should all be able to accept and live comfortably with our differences while not forcing our choices on others.
Where I'm headed: To dust, but I like to think of it as my personal sunset.
Persons I admire: Arizona state Rep. Juan Mendez, who in May as a nonbeliever offered up a nonprayer in the House to open a session, and Rebecca Vitsmun, the Oklahoma tornado survivor. Rebecca, when asked by Wolf Blitzer on national TV "You've gotta thank the Lord, right?" replied, "I'm actually an atheist."
These are real people stepping up, not just a number in the "nones" column of a Pew Research report. More power to them and to us.
A quotation I like: "I respect people for their deeds not their creeds." (See my FFRF billboard that went up in Tucson.) "Facts are true whether or not you believe them." (Neil deGrasse Tyson)
"Live a good life. If there are gods and they are just, then they will not care how devout you have been, but will welcome you based on the virtues you have lived by. If there are gods but unjust, then you should not want to worship them. If there are no gods, then you will be gone but will have lived a noble life that will live on in the memories of your loved ones." (Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor)
These are a few of my favorite things: Chocolate, my best friend, positive people, Kermit the frog, laughter, more chocolate, the First Amendment, secular humanist actions, Frank Sinatra singing "I Did It My Way."



Diane and Steve Uhl [pronounced yule] visit the Bill of Rights monument (consisting of 10 monoliths) in Tucson on the Arizona Capitol mall. It was dedicated in December and joined several veterans' memorials, one to crime victims and the Ten Commandments.

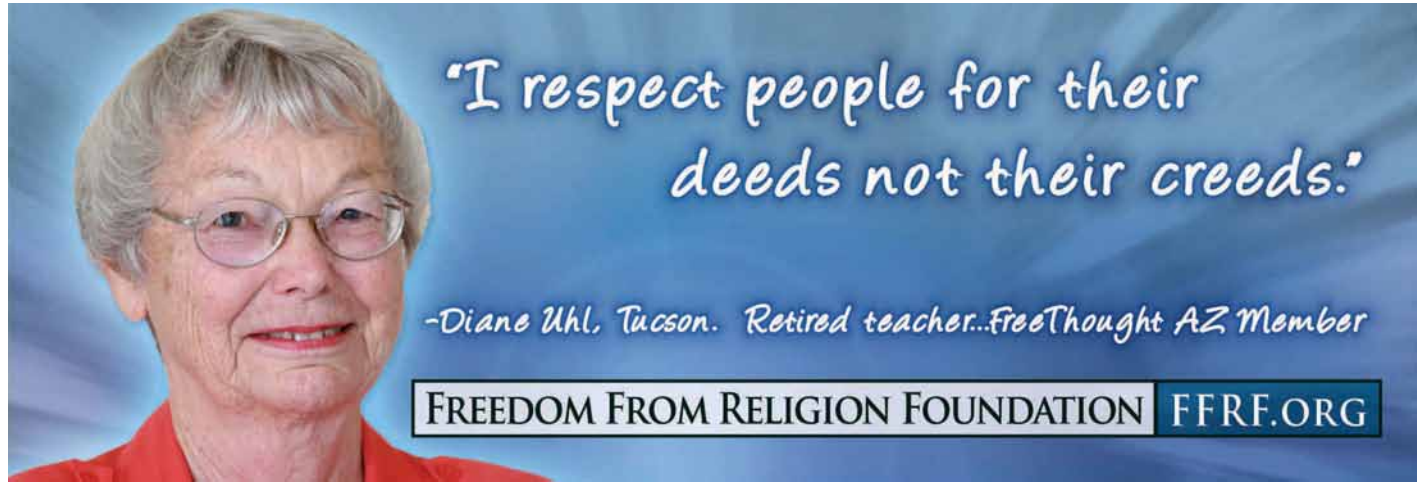
These are not: People who are takers, not givers, spam email messages, promises not kept.
My doubts about religion started: Religion in my childhood home was not a big thing. I enjoyed singing in choir with my friends. In college I was reading more philosophy. Bertrand Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian* started me seeking the answer to "Who am I?" I soon found I could not find satisfactory answers to "Why religion?"
By my sophomore year, I made the conscientious decision that since I did not know and it couldn't seem to be proven whether there was or wasn't a god, that I would live my life as I thought moral and right, and if there was a god he would forgive me if I didn't get it correct. This life stance served me well for many years.
Many birthdays provided me with time, and I felt challenged to learn more as science and technology advanced. I learned more about evolution and gained more insight into myself and others in regard to our needs and fears and how that related to life and death and gods. I could see more clearly that I had to apply the lessons I taught to my students in regard to a

god: "Show me, prove it!"
What I wished (prayed) for as a child: I used to wish and pray for peace on Earth. As an adult, I've learned that reason, science, critical thinking and acceptance of others' views and perceptions are what would bring peace. Deeds, not creeds.
Ways I promote freethought: Steve and I share a comfortable lifestyle. We now have the freedom to contribute more time and money to those organizations and institutions that represent our philosophy of the need for a more secular and humanistic worldview.
We continue to support reason, science, critical thinking and state-church separation in our work with our local FreeThought Arizona group, as well as with state and national organizations. Above all we try to live and support the Golden Rule: Treat others as you want to be treated.

Editor's note: Diane very modestly doesn't mention her and Steve's totally tremendous \$250,000 donation to FFRF's building fund. Thanks to the Uhls, FFRF's new addition will include the Diane Uhl legal wing and the Stephen Uhl "Out of God's Closet" recording studio. A \$50,000 "medium grand" piano "of Dan Barker's choice" will bear a plaque with Diane's name.
See list of new donors to FFRF's building fund on page 17.



Steve Uhl was a Catholic priest from 1956-67 after 12 years of seminary studies starting at age 14.



Diane's billboard greeted thousands of passersby in the Tucson, Ariz., area.

A Note to Members

Your address label shows the expiration date of your membership in FFRF, which includes your subscription to Freethought Today and "Private Line." If it says June/July 2013 or earlier please renew! Your prompt renewal (\$40-single membership; \$50-household; \$100 sustaining; \$25-student) saves us time and postage, and is tax-deductible. 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, ffrf.org/donate

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Freethought Today

published by Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc.

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June/July 2013

The only freethought newspaper in the United States



Hands too busy digging to pray

“Before,” “during” and “after” photos of versatile FFRF Bookkeeper-Staff Gardener Katie Daniel beautifying Freethought Hall by planting a bed of annuals. The “patriotic” planting includes red salvia, red-eyed white vinca, red and white geraniums and (not yet blooming) blue salvia. That’s summer office worker/journalism intern Sarah Eucalano supplying Katie with some iced tea. Katie’s planting last year garnered many compliments from passersby (and FFRF staff).

FFRF calls out South Carolina school district

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is placing the blame for a string of problematic religious violations in Pickens County Schools, Pickens, S.C., on its prayerful Board of Education.

Valedictorian Roy Costner IV’s open defiance of a nonprayer policy at his June 3 graduation at Liberty High School, in which he ripped up his pre-approved speech and led the crowd in the Lord’s Prayer, has focused attention on the religious fervor in the district.

FFRF started corresponding with the school board late last year after receiving complaints it was opening meetings with students leading Christian prayers. Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott sent letters to the board on Nov. 26 and Feb. 25.

The board responded by adopting a policy March 13 to continue prayer but keep it “nondenominational” and have it led by an adult. FFRF said that’s not good enough and doesn’t comply with Supreme Court rulings.

Elliott also wrote an April 4 complaint letter after three individuals contacted FFRF about other religious violations. Complaints allege discriminatory hiring at Easley High School, religious promotion through posters and praise music sung in classrooms at West End Elementary School.

One violation involved EHS Athletic Director Chris Carter’s comments on the decision to hire Grayson Howell for head football coach. The Easley Patch reported:

“There were certain characteristics

about Howell that were obvious when Carter spoke to him. ‘Number one, our coach is a Christian,’ Carter said. ‘To me, that’s the most important quality, simply because the devil’s after our children and the more quality people we can surround our children with, the better chance they have.’ ”

Elliott commented: “It is well-settled that treating an employee or job applicant favorably or with disfavor because of his/her race, color, religion, sex or national origin is illegal. Discriminatory hiring practices violate not only federal law, but also state law and Board of Trustees policies. Were Carter to have referenced the race or sex of an applicant, the district very likely would have received an immediate employment discrimination lawsuit.”

Another complaint involves a West End Elementary teacher using Christian praise music in a second-grade classroom. “The songs are not part of a secular music program, nor are they songs with educational merit,” Elliott said. “Rather, they are adaptations of popular music altered to be all about Jesus. One of the songs is called ‘Party Praise Anthem.’ The adapted songs include such lyrics as, ‘Jesus Christ you are my Savior’ and ‘Jesus Jesus Jesus.’ ”

“The valedictorian who so insensitively inflicted Christian prayer on a captive audience at a secular graduation ceremony is a product of a school district which itself has set an unconstitutional example by hosting school board prayer,” said Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president.

Wisconsin voucher expansion scheme alarming

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker was poised, as of press time, to sign into law on June 30 the most radical expansion of vouchers for private (mostly religious) schools in the nation.

The scheme would increase voucher payments by nearly 12% for K-8 enrollees and 22% for high school enrollees, as well as creating hefty tax deductions for private (that’s mostly parochial) school parents.

Republican voucher backers say they

want “a voucher in every backpack.” Education experts across the state have opposed creating what amounts to a second publicly funded education system. In the first and second year of the new scheme, vouchers would be limited to low-income families and to 500 students and 1,000 students respectively. After that, the caps are sure to be expanded or removed. Milwaukee’s voucher program started with 341 students in 1990 and now has nearly 25,000 students, with over 21,000 of them attending religious schools.

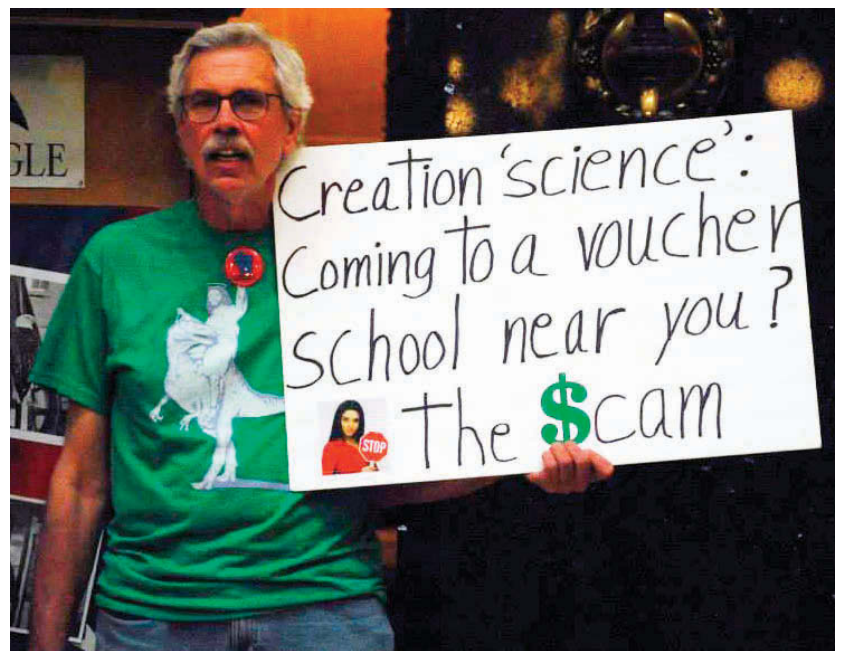
Of the current 112 voucher schools in Milwaukee, only 16 are not religiously affiliated.

State Education Superintendent Tony Evers strongly opposes voucher expansion and warns: “Let’s be clear, no cap on voucher enrollment or income limits has ever stayed in place over the past 20 years. History shows, and I predict, these caps are tempo-

rary. And, the result will be more and more funding pulled out of public school classrooms and put into private and religious schools.”

Publicly funded voucher schools lack accountability measures. Voucher schools do not have to have licensed teachers, empirically based curricu-

lum, maintain their accreditation status or abide by public meeting and open records laws. While public schools are governed by locally elected school boards, taxpayers have no say in how voucher schools are run.



FFRF staffer Bill Dunn takes part on his lunch hour in a voucher protest at the Wisconsin Capitol.

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*



FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

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What is the Freedom From Religion Foundation?

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

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

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

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.

Heads Up

A Poetry Column by Philip Appleman

Kites on a Windy Day: Replay to a Farewell

Were I to tell you how I know regret—
It is like brown leaves blowing past wet
Window panes, or like torn kites in trees.

But why should we mourn losses, small or great,
Those early sketches, metaphors for all
That stings sweet into life? Let's praise the Fall
That made us brief, intact as circles, more
Than merely infinite. The play of kites
Is joy with strings attached; but let our flights
Be integral and sovereign as we soar

Above the ties our weakness clings to yet,
Secure as chains. We ride a fitful breeze
Where change is life and habit is disease.

© Philip Appleman 1996
New and Selected Poems, 1956—1996



Philip Appleman is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Indiana University. His published volumes of poetry include *Perfidious Proverbs and Other Poems: A Satirical Look at the Bible* (2012), *Darwin's Ark* (new 2009 edition) and *Karma, Dharma, Pudding & Pie* (2009). His nonfiction work includes the widely used *Norton Critical Edition, Darwin*, and the *Norton Critical Edition of Malthus' Essay on Population*. His poetry and fiction have won many awards, including a fellowship in poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Castagnola Award from the Poetry Society of America, the Humanist Arts Award from the American Humanist Association and the Friend of Darwin Award from the National Center for Science Education. His work has appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review*, *Partisan Review*, *Poetry*, and *The Yale Review*.

He and his playwright wife, Marjorie Appleman, are both "Afterlife" Members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. They recorded an excerpt of "Noah," *New and Selected Poems*, which is available for sale from FFRF for \$23 ppd, *The Norton Critical Edition, Darwin*, is \$22 ppd., *Karma, Dharma, Pudding & Pie*, \$27 ppd., *Darwin's Ark*, \$23 ppd., and *Perfidious Proverbs*, \$20 ppd. (ffrf.org/shop/).

YOUR WEEKLY ANTIDOTE TO THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT TUNE IN TO FREETHOUGHT RADIO

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Hosted by Dan Barker and
Annie Laurie Gaylor

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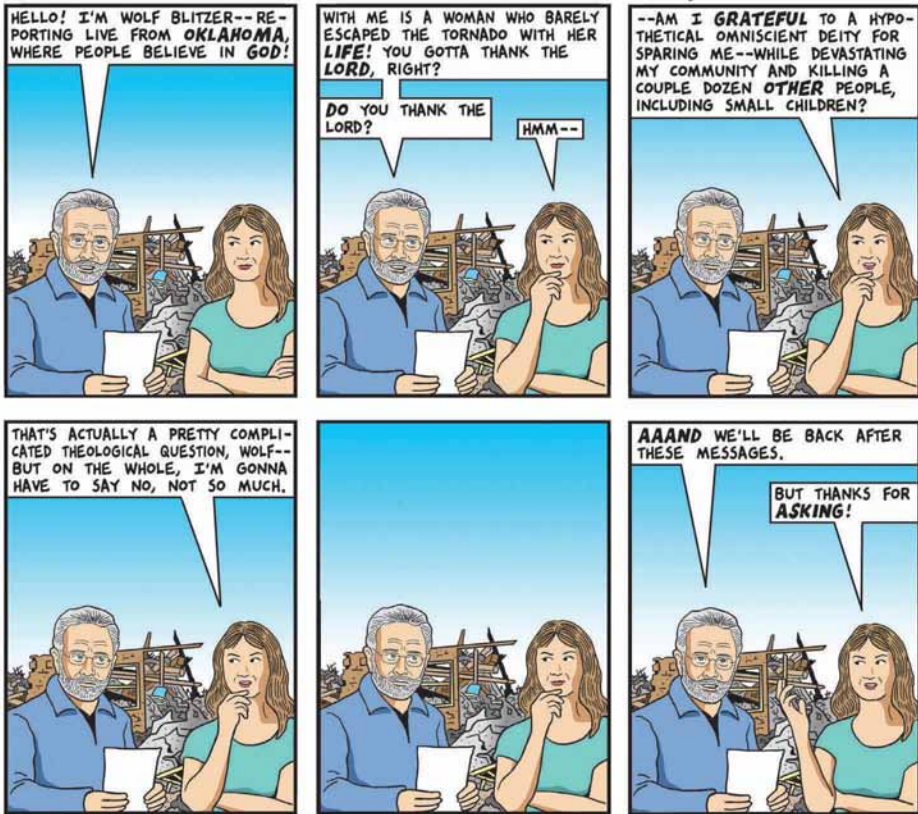
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Freedom depends upon freethinkers
(Please specify whether the individual is a freethinker.)

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Overheard

I'm guessing the Rockingham County school board's decision to end the practice of opening meetings with a prayer was a tough call politically. But it was one of two sure ways to avoid mixing religious faith with government. The other was to open meetings with a moment of silence.

As we've written before, God will hear you. Isn't that the point? Nobody else has to. Unless the idea is to pander for votes rather than a sincere expression of faith, one's thoughtful and respectful silence can speak volumes.

Allen Johnson, editorial page editor, urging Guilford County, N.C., to forgo prayer

Greensboro News & Record of Greensboro. 5-19-13

These classes too often promote religious values that aren't appropriate academically. Public funds are being used to promote some religious views over others.

Mark Chancey, religious studies professor at Southern Methodist University, author of a report on how Texas public schools' elective bible classes violate the Constitution

Bloomberg News, 5-29-13

I feel like an idiot now. I only sent money.

Atheist author/entertainer Ricky Gervais, tweet responding to @MTVNews: Beyonce, Rihanna & Katy Perry send prayers to #Oklahoma after the devastating tornado.

twitter.com, 5-21-13

I — I'm actually an atheist. We are here and, you know, I don't blame anybody for thanking the lord.

Rebecca Vitsmun, Moore, Okla., holding her son by their tornado-leveled home, answering CNN host Wolf Blitzer's question "I guess you've got to thank the lord, right?"

"The Situation Room," 5-21-13

Moore Public Schools adamantly denies that any teacher was fired for praying with their students. We find this accusation offensive and insulting. During this extremely difficult time, when we are trying to heal our community, we are dealing with angry and threatening messages from individuals

who have chosen to believe this fabricated story without checking on its accuracy.

Superintendent Susan Susie Pierce, addressing an online rumor

KOCO, 5-26-13

Having a visible disability is like shark bait for ignorant people lacking scruples. I swear, the mere sight of crutches is like blood in the water. Having lived with a disability all my life, I've learned to accustom myself to the inevitable stares or occasional questions, but the days I dread are the ones in which I've accidentally crossed paths with someone who's decided that I am the perfect opportunity to exemplify God's power to heal. On the spot. I've been taught to handle it with grace with a polite smile and nod and move about business as usual. However, there's no manners guidebook for actually being prayed on. I don't mean for. I mean on. **Blog post entitled "Please Don't Pray with Me (In Airports)" by Megan, 22, a Duke University graduate who has epidermolysis bullosa, a connective tissue disease**

thematterwithmegan.wordpress.com, 5-28-13

I had a very special occasion to have dinner with Governor Walker and his lovely wife, Tonette, about a year ago and I can testify that they are strong conservative Christians with "Alabama Values" and not ashamed of it.

Evan Heckman, Alabama GOP, press release detailing Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's Aug. 23 speech in Montgomery

algop.org, 5-27-13

Ingersoll was the perfect humanist. He was very engaging as a speaker because he used humor and he was outrageous in that he would speak against religion with such fervor. All of that was very titillating, and people would go to hear him whether they agreed with him or not. He did not respect religion, but he respected people who were religious.

Steve Lowe, founder of the annual Robert Ingersoll Oratory Contest, "Meet Robert Ingersoll, America's most famous forgotten atheist"

Washington Post, 5-29-13

Colorado appeals FFRF's Day of Prayer victory

The Colorado Supreme Court announced May 10 that it will hear an appeal by Gov. John Hickenlooper of the Freedom From Religion Foundation's solid appeals court victory declaring unconstitutional the governor's annual Colorado Day of Prayer proclamations.

Hickenlooper and his predecessors, including Gov. Bill Ritter, annually issue proclamations encouraging Coloradans to pray on the first Thursday in May in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer. A unanimous three-judge panel of the Colorado Court of Appeals ruled last year that FFRF and four of its Colorado members have standing to sue over the proclamations and that the proclamations violate the Colorado Constitution.

On May 10, 2012, Colorado Appel-

late Judge Steve Bernard, with Judges Alan Loeb and Nancy Lichtenstein concurring, ruled in favor of FFRF, overturning a lower court decision. Bernard wrote: "A reasonable observer would conclude that these proclamations send the message that those who pray are favored members of Colorado's political community, and that those who do not pray do not enjoy that favored status."

The 74-page decision examined proclamations from 2004 to 2009, finding that they showed religious preference and endorsed religion. The decision noted that the proclamations conveyed a religious message, included "biblical verses and religious themes," referenced uniting in prayer and have the governor's imprimatur through



use of his signature and seal.

Gubernatorial proclamations of a Colorado Day of Prayer have often embraced the biblical themes of the Colorado Springs-based National Day of Prayer Task Force, including this year's proclamation which said in part, "The 2013 National Day of Prayer theme is 'pray for America' supported by Matthew 12:21 which reminds us that 'in His name nations will put their hope.'"

FFRF, a state/church watchdog based in Madison, Wis., is a national association of more than 19,000 free-thinkers (atheists and agnostics), including nearly 600 members in Colorado. FFRF won a significant fed-

eral court victory in 2010 declaring the National Day of Prayer unconstitutional, which was overturned on other grounds. U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb had ruled, "The same law that prohibits the government from declaring a National Day of Prayer also prohibits it from declaring a National Day of Blasphemy."

FFRF warmly thanks its Colorado plaintiffs: Mike Smith, Timothy G. Bailey, Lifetime Member Jeff Bay-singer and David Habecker. The case is brought on behalf of FFRF by Dan Boniface, local counsel, and attorney Richard L. Bolton, Boardman Law Firm, Madison.

Arizona slams courthouse doors on nonbelievers

The Arizona Court of Appeals on June 12 refused to declare unconstitutional the annual Arizona Day of Prayer proclamations by Gov. Jan Brewer.

FFRF had sued in January 2012 on behalf of its 500 Arizona members, its Valley of the Sun chapter, several named Arizona FFRF members and Maricopa County citizens of diverse religious beliefs. The superior court threw it out on standing in August 2012.

The appeals court decision by Judge Donn Kessler, while confirming that psychological injury from government action can provide standing for someone to sue, rejected FFRF's claim of injury. FFRF contended that nonbelievers are sent a message that they are not welcome to fully participate in government processes.

"Can you imagine how the court would have ruled had Brewer issued a proclamation stating that prayer was futile and encouraged all citizens to take a day to refrain from prayer?" asked FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. "Slamming shut the courthouse door to prevent citizens from challenging government violations is the legal trend today, and it's a trend everyone should decry. The Religious

Right should take heed: The same rulings that bar atheists and nonbelievers from courthouse challenges will apply equally to aggrieved believers."

Brewer has issued annual Arizona proclamations coinciding with the Christian-based National Day of Prayer on the first Thursday in May. She also had issued a Day of Prayer for Arizona's Economy and State Budget in 2010, encouraging "all citizens to pray for God's blessings on our State and our Nation."

"The ruling emphasizes an invented and heightened requirement for standing," said FFRF Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott. "It says that plaintiffs must demonstrate behavior of avoidance of the violative conduct, or 'that the alleged violation is so pervasive and continuing that it of necessity affects on a practical level how the plaintiffs interact with government.' Challenges in religion cases have not required such a high hurdle to protect constitutional rights."

Elliott added, "With the court's view on standing, Arizona citizens are unable to challenge religious endorsements at the highest levels of state government."

The challenge was brought by pro bono Arizona attorneys Richard Morris and Marc Victor.

FFRF helps atheist become U.S. citizen

Continued from front page

church stating when she joined and was baptized and how the congregation's teaching bar members from taking the Oath of Allegiance.

As an atheist, Doughty could not produce official documentation or her religious beliefs, so she got in touch with FFRF.

FFRF requested Doughty be granted an exemption and also asked for a full investigation into the illegal requirements for her and other nonreligious applicants. On June 20, Doughty was informed that her case was "escalated to the highest level at USCIS" and the "request for evidence" (the religious documentation) was withdrawn. In a phone conversation with Seidel, Doughty expressed her gratitude for FFRF's prompt action in defense of atheists.

FFRF still has concerns, noted Seidel. "How many other applicants without Ms. Doughty's experience, level of cultural immersion and grasp of Eng-

lish have had, or will have, a similar burden imposed on them? We intend to pursue this matter with USCIS until the ineptitude or discrimination is rooted out of that office. Nonbelievers are welcome in America."

Doughty received this notice from the government:

"This Service has carefully and thoroughly reviewed your naturalization case and the documentation received from the office of [Texas] Congressman Blake Farenthold. In light of the full explanation in support for your request for an exemption from bearing arms as it relates to the naturalization oath, this Service hereby withdraws the request for evidence issued on June 7, 2013. This Service accepts your detailed statement in satisfaction of the information requested by the RFE. Your application for naturalization has been approved. Attached is a notice informing you that you have been scheduled to be naturalized on Wednesday, June 26, 2013. Please follow the instructions on the notice. Congratulations."

FFRF sues over Florida lit censorship

Continued from front page

The complaint lists dozens of factual examples of how secular materials and secular volunteers were treated differently from the World Changers and the biblical material:

- The district objected to the Harris book for describing "the sacrifice of virgins, killing and eating of children in order to ensure the future fertility of mothers, feeding infants to sharks, and the burning of widows so they can follow their husbands into the next

world." FFRF's complaint notes that the concepts flagged as age inappropriate all appear in the bible.

- WCF put up interactive whiteboards, had volunteers staffing tables and talking with students and passed out invitations to worship at the Orlando Wesleyan Church. Plaintiffs attempted to pass out a pizza party invitation but were censored at several schools. Freethought volunteers had to wait up to an hour at some schools to set up.

FFRF Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel, who negotiated the distribution with the district, noted that it's not merely the number of books and materials — it's the volume. He calculated that while the average bible has about 1,950 pages, the secular books totaled 1,184 pages.

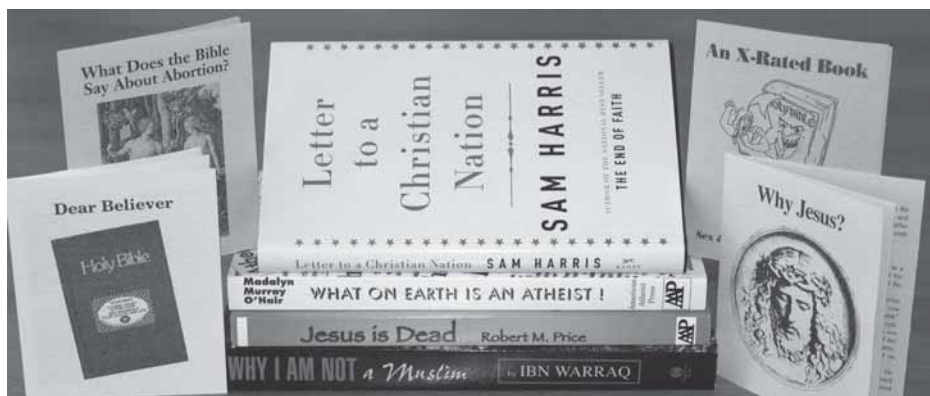
Seidel added, "Moreover, there

are actually 66 books in bible (give or take depending on your particular religion). Either way you look at it, the bible is more massive than all the materials we are asking to distribute put together."

Plaintiffs' attorneys are Jerry Jeffreys, trial counsel; Steven Brady, co-counsel; and Seidel, pro hac vice co-counsel. Jeffreys and Brady are working pro bono.

FFRF thanks chapter director David Williamson for serving as principal plaintiff and for his diligence in coordinating the literature distribution with FFRF, Secular Student Alliance, American Humanist Association and Florida Atheists, Secular Humanists and American Atheists.

Read the legal complaint at: ffrf.org/uploads/legal/OCSchools-Distribution-Complaint.pdf



Freethought items that were censored by the school district as inappropriate.

The real IRS scandal

Politicking churches get free pass

By FFRF Co-Presidents Dan Barker and Annie Laurie Gaylor

Lost in the political outrage over the Internal Revenue Service’s alleged targeting of the tea party for scrutiny is the IRS’s failure to go after church politicking, most of it by Christian Right pastors. Where’s the congressional fury over the fact that the IRS has not been enforcing restrictions against partisan politicking by churches since at least 2009, despite blatant violations on a massive and organized level?

The electioneering prohibition is not limited to churches. No 501(c)(3) organization may politick or endorse political candidates. Nor should any 501(c)(3) be permitted to electioneer, which amounts to taxpayer subsidization of political speech. More than \$100 billion is given annually in tax-free contributions to churches and religious groups. Imagine that kind of money flowing with no accountability to political candidates.

As many as 1,500 clergy reportedly violated the electioneering restrictions

on Sunday, Oct. 7, 2012, as FFRF’s legal complaint noted when we filed our historic federal lawsuit to enforce the church electioneering ban last fall. A widely circulated Bloomberg news article last fall quoted an IRS official saying the IRS has suspended tax audits of churches.

IRS officials have admitted they’re not enforcing the law against partisan politicking by churches. But no political backlash has resulted. No consternation against the IRS’s selective application has been voiced by Congress or the president, as it has been in the recent tea party scandals, nor have any heads rolled.

In 2009, a federal court ruling required the IRS to indicate which high-ranking official could authorize audits over the tax code’s political rules. All FFRF is asking of the IRS is to name such an employee and demonstrate some evidence it’s enforcing its own policies.

The IRS, in seeking to dismiss FFRF’s federal challenge of its preferential treatment toward churches, is actually arguing for the right to have unfettered and unreviewable discre-

tion in deciding how to enforce tax code restrictions.

According to the IRS, in statements filed in court on April 8, the IRS “is uniquely qualified to make decisions regarding the enforcement decisions that are most important to taxpayers and tax administration.” The IRS has stated: “Even if FFRF were correct that the IRS systematically refuses to enforce political activity restrictions against churches and religious organizations,” FFRF and other tax-exempt organizations should not be allowed to challenge the agency’s discriminatory actions.

What an admission!

The loudest offenders, pastors who have “turned themselves in” and bragged about endorsing candidates from the pulpit, are typically connected to the Christian Right. They have been openly organized, for instance, by the well-heeled Alliance Defending Freedom (formerly the Alliance Defense Fund). Its Pulpit Initiative, typically organized before major elections, is known as “Pulpit Freedom Sunday.” ADF claims one of its main goals is to overturn prohibitions against church

electioneering.

What ADF and rogue churches want to achieve would make Citizens United look like peanuts. Congregations could be turned into political machines. Tax-exempt donations could be funneled to politicians and campaigns with no accountability, no sunlight, no reporting, no limits. Politicians would be forced to openly pander in order to curry votes. Our democratic republic would be imperiled, and we would be at the mercy of a religious shadow government.

Restrictions for tax-exempt status must be neutrally applied to ALL tax-exempt organizations. Anything falling short of that is indeed preferential treatment.

FFRF currently has three separate lawsuits against the IRS in federal court: its challenge of the parish exemption, its challenge on non-enforcement of church electioneering and its lawsuit challenging the fact that churches, unlike all other 501(c)(3)s, need not file for tax exemption or file annual reports to the government to maintain tax-exempt status.

FFRF welcomes 20 Lifers, one ‘After-Lifer’

The Freedom From Religion Foundation gratefully reports it has received one new After-Life Membership, from Chuck Berry, who directs Nittany Freethought, FFRF’s chapter in State College, Pa.

We’re also delighted to welcome 20 new Lifetime Members:

Paula Barmaper, Barbara Colley, Bill and Loraine Davis, Betty Ann Haggard, Lee Katz, Heidi Loutzenhiser, Mailey McLaughlin, Heidi Moon, Denise and Mark Mosbrucker, Edward Nol, MD, Steve Pinski, Thomas Reke, Anthony Tennis, Michael Tower, David Vanicek, Alan Wagner, Michael Weber and Lauren Whitiker.

States represented include Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Washington.

Mark and Denise Mosbrucker each became “Lifers” through Microsoft’s matching employee gift program and have been giving for years.

Edward A Nol, M.D., notes, “Although a Lifetime Membership will not have long to run when one has lived almost 88 years, here is my application. Just in case, I have attached my history for your morgue:

“I was born in Amsterdam, Holland, raised in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and spent 3½ years in a prison camp during the Japanese occupation. Returning to Holland, I completed medical studies and emigrated to Canada with my family to work as a family physician and anesthesiologist, completing my training in psychiatry in Pontiac, Mich.”

Individual Lifetime Memberships are \$1,000 designated as a membership or membership renewal. After-Life Memberships are \$5,000 for those who want their contribution to “life after.” All dues and donations to FFRF are deductible for income-tax purposes.

FFRF warmly thanks its new Lifetime and After-Life supporters!

According to a photo of Brownback’s desk shot by the AP, the words “JESUS + Mary” are scrawled across the top of the governor’s notes on the bill, like two lovers’ names carved into a tree.

News story on Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback signing one of the nation’s most restrictive abortion bills

gawker.com 4-20-13

As Christians, my family and I remember the incredible sacrifice Jesus made for each and every one of us — how He took on the sins of the world and extended the gift of salvation. And we recommit ourselves to following His example here on Earth. To loving our Lord and Savior. To loving our neigh-

bors. And to seeing in everyone, especially “the least of these,” as a child of God.

President Barack Obama, “President Obama Offers Easter and Passover Greetings”

whitehouse.gov, 3-29-13


The only way this is going to stop is if God’s people get together and pray.

Mayor Donald Kile, Kemp, Texas, also an elder at River of Life Church, on God telling him to start a prayer group outside the office of slain Kaufman County District Attorney Mike McLelland and his wife Cynthia

Dallas Morning News, 4-1-13

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Why is it OK to discriminate against atheists?



WHY is it socially acceptable to discriminate against atheists? We congratulate the Boy Scouts of America for lifting its longstanding, hurtful ban against gay membership. But why hasn't BSA stopped excluding nonreligious boys, too?

BSA advertises, "Any boy may join," yet explicitly bans atheists, nonbelievers and youngsters from nonreligious homes. BSA proudly excludes and stigmatizes the one in three young persons today who now identifies as nonreligious (*Pew Survey, Oct. 9, 2012*).

BSA's membership form contains a religious litmus test that defames freethinkers: "The Boy Scouts of America maintain that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his obligation to God."

No one can grow into the best kind of citizen who discriminates against the nonreligious. It's what you do — not what you believe — that makes you a good person and a good citizen. BSA's vaunted "duty to God" has led it to cruelly place dogma over its duty to children.

The intellectual rejection of claims for which there is no evidence is not only respectable, but vital to progress. What should not be respectable is treating any American, whether young or old, as a second-class citizen.

Join FFRF, educating about nontheism, and keeping religion out of government.
Phone 1-800-335-4021 for a free copy of our newspaper, *Freethought Today*!

Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. • P.O. Box 750-H • Madison WI 53701 • ffrf.org/membership

☐ I would like to become a member. (Dues & donations are tax-deductible. Membership includes 10 issues of *Freethought Today*.)

☐ I would like to give a tax-deductible gift to the Freedom From Religion Foundation's Legal Fund.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/Email

Make check to "FFRF" (U.S. \$5 only). FFRF protects membership confidentiality and does not divulge, rent, sell, or give away its mailing list.

Freedom From Religion Foundation is a 501(c)(3) educational charity.

Annual Membership Dues:

☐ Life Member: \$1,000

☐ Sustaining: \$100

☐ Household: \$50

☐ Individual: \$40

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

FFRF.ORG

This quarter-page ad (reduced here) ran prominently in the heavily read Sunday opinion section of The New York Times on June 23. “Something is very wrong that lifting BSA’s other longstanding ban wasn’t even debated, much less considered this spring by BSA,” said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. “We’re really glad BSA is moving forward on gay rights, but discrimination against any class of boys is wrong.” The cartoon, by the late Don Addis of the St. Petersburg Times, was penned just for FFRF.

UW volunteer receives FFRF student activist award

Calli Miller, a University of Wisconsin-Madison student, is the recipient of a \$1,000 Catherine Fahringer Memorial Student Activist Award from the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

The scholarship recognizes Calli's extraordinary contributions to FFRF and state/church separation as an legal intern volunteer during two semesters.

Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert says Calli has been a "stand out" intern. "Because of our small staff and voluminous caseload, we expect interns to be self-starters with the ability to work independently. Calli's research and writing abilities contributed greatly to our work, and she was able to assist FFRF staff attorneys in obtaining several key nonlitigation victories, including egregious prayer violations in schools and before local board meetings.

"Calli always conducted herself in a professional manner and contributed to lively discussions in the office and at staff social functions. I know that the legal staff, and the rest of the crew at FFRF, will agree that she truly will be missed," Markert added.

By Calli Miller

Ever since I was in early middle school, freethinking was something into which I fell naturally, but I wasn't really educated on the subject, nor was I an activist.

In fact, I didn't even know that freethought activism existed until I began at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the fall of 2011. It was then that I attended my very first Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics (AHA) at UW-Madison meeting at the urging of my friend. I've been a member (and an officer) ever since.



Calli Miller

Although fairly new to the freethought movement, I have had the luck of meeting a large number of awesome freethinkers. Through AHA, I have made some great friends, especially among the other officers. Together, we've held debates against one of the on-campus Catholic groups, hosted many weekly meetings centered around freethinking discussion topics

and, most notably, founded the now-annual Freethought Fest held every year on campus.

Freethought Fest is a 100% free three-day conference with many speakers from all over the country. I feel very fortunate to be a part of the student group resourceful and innovative enough to bring the "large atheist conference" feeling directly to UW-Madi-

son students.

It was at the urging of AHA Executive Director Chris Calvey that I applied to be a legal intern at FFRF. I am currently double majoring in sociology and legal studies at UW and have always wanted to go to law school.

Chris (correctly) thought that an internship at a nonprofit that paired my nonbelief and my love of law would be right up my alley. Thank god (pun intended) that he encouraged me to go for it — my time at FFRF was one of the coolest things I've ever done. Quite literally, every single person who works at FFRF is a quality human.

Being surrounded by people who were always cheerful, passionate and incredibly kind made for a great internship experience. Of course, I also learned a lot: My writing skills improved, I gained a far more comprehensive knowledge of constitutional law as it relates to the separation of state and church and I discovered just how badly America needs organizations such as FFRF.

It seems trite to say that "I will never forget my time at FFRF," because that seems obvious. But I do know that the lessons I learned there won't fade throughout the years.

I would like to thank FFRF for generously granting me their Catherine Fahringer Memorial Student Activist Award. More importantly, I would like to thank everyone at Freethought Hall for their time and the knowledge they've imparted to me.

When I (hopefully — cross your fingers!) go to law school, I will carry my time at FFRF with me every step of the way and beyond. Thank you so much!

Oklahoman wins 'Strong Backbone' student activist award

On May 13, a public school district in Muldrow, Okla., confirmed it had permanently removed Ten Commandments plaques posted in classrooms. The whistleblower was 16-year-old student Gage Pulliam, who is the recipient of FFRF's new "Strong Backbone Student Activist Award," a cash scholarship of \$1,000.

After Gage contacted FFRF about this major constitutional violation, FFRF sent a letter demanding they be taken down. FFRF did not identify the complainant, following its usual policy to protect identities. But after students began fingering peers they suspected of contacting FFRF, Gage bravely came forward.

He and his family subsequently faced a strong backlash from the overwhelmingly Christian community of about 3,500 residents, including bullying of his younger sister and threats against him by other students. He and his family attended a school board meeting packed with angry Ten Commandments supporters.

"I want people to know this isn't me trying to attack religion," Gage told a TV reporter. "This is my trying to create an environment for kids where they can feel equal."

A New York FFRF member who prefers not to be named endowed the "Strong Backbone" award. The donor sent the \$1,000 contribution as his own "80th birthday present," specifying

the award should go to a high school student who has "showed uncommon strength in standing up for his or her freethought sentiments."

FFRF offers several other annual youth awards to recognize student activism.

Gage writes:

I was born in the Arkansas/Oklahoma region and have lived there all my life. My parents took me to church frequently when I was small, but I began questioning my faith when I was about 9.

I was allowed to ask questions and seek out answers, encouraged to think for myself and make my own decisions, and I am supported in what I choose. I now consider myself an open atheist and a firm supporter of equality for all people. I hope to continue fighting for the rights of all people and encourage others to do the same.

In the eighth grade I moved to Muldrow. I had noticed the Ten Commandments immediately, but was still very secretive about my atheism. I always had a problem with displaying them because it showed complete disregard for the law.

It wasn't until recently that I got the courage to say something. I wanted to remain anonymous, but after fingers



Gage Pulliam

were pointed and threats were made to the wrong people, I told people it was me.

The community's reaction was terrible. The kids at school no longer spoke to me, and people who used to be my friends just frowned when I looked their way. All anyone would do was point and stare at me like I was a monster.

People asked my friends how they could laugh or smile around me. I received several threats from kids but always indirectly. As a result, these students have made my last days as a junior the worst of my life.

The parents were different in that they would look at me with disgust and not even try to hide it. The students did not scare me very much, but the parents scared me more than I have ever been scared in my life.

At a school board meeting which my family attended, my father overheard a man sitting behind me say he would like to walk up and punch me in the face. While I was doing a television interview, I could barely concentrate because of the mass of people staring at me.

There has been an overwhelming amount of support from people around the world, and that support is what helped me through this entire ordeal. The hate mail has all been the same — they tell me I am going to hell and ask me if I am happy about what I've done.

My close friends have all supported me and have told me that even though they don't believe the way I do, they support me in what I did.

I am proud of what I did, no matter how many people hate me. The only thing I want is for people in this world to all be treated equally. And no matter if it takes my entire life, I will continue to do what is necessary to achieve that goal.

Catch an interview with Gage on Freethought Radio, ffrf.org/news/radio/shows, May 25, 2013.

FFRF Legal Victories

'Tis the season for school religious intrusion

FFRF's busy legal staff sent more than 50 letters of complaint stemming from state/church violations at the end of the school year. Of those, 39 were about prayer at high school or college graduations, three were letters about graduations in churches or religious facilities and four were due to baccalaureate services.

One of the most blatant attempts to violate the Constitution was in Fostoria, Ohio. FFRF received a tip that Ten Commandments plaques were going to be given to Fostoria High graduates June 2 and that the plaques had a note tied to them that read "Jesus will save you."

Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert wrote Superintendent Andrew Sprang on May 31, "It is unfortunate that some educators feel it is their place to instruct other people's children on religious edicts."

Sprang responded the same day that "an outside organization" had asked for the plaques to be made available for graduates. "I have consulted with the high school principal and these items will not be available at the graduation ceremony," Sprang wrote.

Students stop prayer with FFRF help

Luis Lucas-Tzun and Michael Thorpe, students at Jordan-Matthews High School in Siler City, N.C., contacted FFRF and spoke at a board meeting of Chatham County Schools in opposition to plans to include prayers at their graduation.

Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott sent a May 23 letter to Superintendent Robert Logan to report that the scheduled prayers were unconstitutional. After receiving no response, Elliott sent a follow-up June 5 that FFRF had filed a 2012 graduation day lawsuit for a similar violation in South Carolina.

Lucas-Tzun told the Ashboro Courier-Tribune that he and other students continued to oppose the prayers even when they were bullied and harassed by other students with epithets like "homosexual tree hugger."

Lucas-Tzun said, "A public school is not to be made into a recruiting ground for any religion. Prayer has no place in a secular event such as a graduation ceremony."

District legal counsel responded to Elliott on June 6 that prayer had been removed from the program. The graduation was held June 8 without any school-sponsored prayer. But in a show of opposition, some students recited the Lord's Prayer during what was to have been moment of silence.

FFRF thanks Luis and Michael and two other Jordan-Matthews students, Shannon Dwyer and Josue Turcios, for their efforts to bring their school into compliance with the U.S. Constitution. More on that next month.

No extra credit for baccalaureate

Students at Stilwell High School in Stilwell, Okla., weren't required to do extra work if they chose not to attend baccalaureate, thanks to FFRF. A con-

cerned parent reached out to FFRF after her child's teacher required the student to do extra homework because she chose not to attend. Teachers also gave extra credit to students who did attend the baccalaureate, which was privately arranged and not hosted by Stilwell Public Schools.

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel told Superintendent Geri Gilstrap on May 15 that no student should receive extra work or credit for participation or non-participation in a religious event.

Legal counsel responded May 17 letter that the district will not be involved in promoting the baccalaureate or in coercing attendance in the future.

Oklahoma graduates keep caps on

Nonreligious students at Tahlequah [Okla.] High School became alarmed when instructions for the 2013 graduation ceremony asked male students to remove their graduate's caps for prayer. FFRF had contacted the school after the 2012 graduation included unlawful, student-led prayer. The school's administration had responded then that future graduations would not include prayer.

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel wrote Superintendent Lisa Presley on May 13: "The district cannot instruct any students on how to worship or whether to revere another's worship. The student who contacted us is understandably upset that their school is so steeped in religion and so unwilling to adhere to the First Amendment."

Presley responded May 15 that the instructions had been changed and redistributed. The graduation did not include prayer.

Silence will replace Texas prayer

A concerned parent in Texas contacted FFRF about Schulenburg High School's intention to include a student-led invocation and benediction and invocation at graduation.

Staff Attorney Elizabeth Cavell contacted Superintendent Walter Padgett on June 7 to urge that the school remove the divisive prayers and citing Supreme Court precedents.

FFRF received a response from the district June 11 that future graduations will substitute moments of silence for prayer.

Georgia prayer 'circles' down the drain

Lowndes County Public Schools in Valdosta, Ga., agreed with FFRF that schools cannot promote religion. A concerned parent contacted FFRF after her child was ostracized by classmates and teachers for refusing to participate in a prayer circle at Hahira Elementary School.

Several middle school teachers led the prayer circle to "prepare students for upcoming standardized testing."

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel sent a May 29 letter: "This flagrant violation will only exacerbate the bullying of non-Christian students. Teachers should strive to be inclusive, not inject religion, a divisive force, into their classes."

District legal counsel responded



FFRF legal staff

FFRF Staff Attorney Liz Cavell (front, center) is surrounded by summer legal interns, (left) Charles Roslof (Harvard), Josh Glasgow (Drake), Aaron Loundenslager and Ryan Dwyer (both University of Wisconsin). Intern Maddy Ziegler (back, left) joins Staff Attorneys Patrick Elliott, Rebecca Markert and Andrew Seidel.

June 12 that "the principal has counseled with his staff as it relates to the Lowndes County School System's prohibition against employee-directed prayer."

(FFRF recommends a good night of sleep, a healthy breakfast and studying as the best way to prepare for standardized tests.)

School will ban religious handouts

Members of a local church came to Newman Middle School in Skiatook, Okla., at lunchtime to hand out pamphlets that contained bible quotes and the church's address. They also reportedly asked students to attend their church.

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel wrote Superintendent Rick Thomas on June 3, outlining the legal and ethical problems with allowing a religious group to prey on a captive audience of minors.

Thomas responded June 11 that the school's administrators "were not aware" that the church was given access to students. "Visitors are not allowed to hand out information and should not be recruiting for any religious group," Thomas said. "We will do our best to make sure this type of thing does not happen in the future."

County board drops prayer proposal

The Island County Board of Commissioners in Coupeville, Wash., chose not to start scheduling prayer at meetings after getting an FFRF letter. Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel sent a letter to the board June 4 about its prayer plans, advising leaving religion to individual consciences.

The Whidbey News Times reported June 10 that the board dropped a prayer proposal put forth by Chairperson Kelly Emerson. Commissioner Jill Johnson, who previously favored a prayer, said she changed her mind because she prays to Jesus Christ and realized she wasn't willing to sit through a non-Christian prayer or one to a "watered-down God."

Johnson and Seidel had exchanged several emails about the proposal. Johnson wrote, "If I have no intentions of compromising my deeply held beliefs, I would never be able to ask someone else to compromise their beliefs on my behalf."

Seidel responded, "I admire your refusal to ask citizens to compromise

their beliefs and wish more politicians had the integrity to do the same. The separation of state and church is meant to protect both the state from religion and religion from the state."

Emerson said she might revisit the issue in the future. FFRF will continue to monitor the situation.

'Singing Churchmen' stilled in school

FFRF resolved a complaint over a choral worship performance held at Choctaw [Okla.] High School. The worship service, which was called a "concert" during the announcement over the PA system, lasted until the end of the school day.

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel sent a May 21 letter detailing the violation to Superintendent Jim McCharen: "The Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, an all-male choir, performed during school hours, on school property to public school students. According to their website, this is part of the Baptist Church's 'ministry.' Not only is the choir composed of 'ministers,' the stated 'purpose of this unique group is to spread the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the vehicle of music.'"

Songs performed included "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" and "Your Great Name" and this lyric, "Jesus, worthy is the Lamb that was slain for us, Son of God and Man, you are high and lifted up; and all the world will praise your great name."

Seidel wrote, "This was not simply religious music, it was worship music. The SCO exhorted students to join the choir in worship. The event began with a prayer and was punctuated with religious rhetoric like 'All hail the power of Jesus name!'"

McCharen responded that the central administration had had no advance notice of arrangements for the presentation but promptly investigated. "[We] stressed with [the principal] the importance of avoiding reasonably perceived district endorsement of religious beliefs, scheduled a meeting of all school administrators within the district to discuss the constitutional concerns related to presentations of a religious nature, and has adopted an administrative procedural whereby any request to a local school administrator for a presentation by a nondistrict individual or group during the school day, whether having a secular or sectarian emphasis, will be referred to the central office for a decision at that level."



Photo: Andrew Seidel

Twenty staff attorneys and interns past and present enjoyed getting together outside the office in June.

FFRF gets Gideons off school grounds

Gideons International will no longer distribute bibles to students at Heritage Middle School in Colleyville, Texas, after receiving FFRF's June 5 letter from Staff Attorney Liz Cavell.

The Gideons stood on school property next to doors where students were coming and going.

"Parents also understandably become nervous when adult men take an over-keen interest in handing materials to their young children without parental knowledge or permission," Cavell noted.

District legal counsel responded June 7 that the Gideons should not have been permitted to distribute bi-

bles to students.

FFRF frees students to 'offend God'

FFRF intervened on behalf of a parent and student after a teacher at Sea View Elementary in Salton City, Calif., told students they were offending God by cursing, especially by using the word God.

FFRF Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel wrote May 3 to Superintendent Darryl Adams that religion should be kept out of classrooms.

District legal counsel responded May 29: "Without delving too deeply into employer-employee confidentiality, suffice it to say that [the assistant principal] met with [the teacher] and

appropriately handled the matter at that time."

Religion goes off school lunch menu

Baptist church personnel will no longer be permitted to proselytize middle and high school students in the Wattsburg Area School District in Erie, Pa. Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert sent an April 26 letter to the district, noting the predatory conduct and parental unawareness that a youth pastor was allowed to talk to students and promote church events during lunch time.

District legal counsel replied May 23 that youth pastors are no longer permitted to enter schools to meet with students for any reason.

Proselytizing prof told to stop

A Erie Community College professor in Orchard Park, N.Y., was reprimanded by the school for her religious activities.

A student was taking a final exam on May 8, 2012, when his teacher laid a folded manila envelope on the student's desk and told him to open it later when he was alone. The package contained a bible with a personalized message and highlighted passages. The

student contacted FFRF to say the letter was "bizarre" and "unsettling." He gave FFRF a copy of the class syllabus in which the teacher said she forbids "taking the Lord's name in vain."

Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert stated in her initial complaint letter on July 24, 2012, "This 'gift' from Professor _____ constitutes an official endorsement and advancement of religion over nonreligion, and specifically Christianity over all other faiths, within a public classroom."

On May 17, Kristin Klein Wheaton, executive vice president for legal affairs, affirmed that the college told the teacher she had crossed the line and could be terminated if violations reoccur:

"Erie Community College is directing you to refrain from proselytizing about religion to your students and/or giving bibles or religious articles to students in the future. The College is also directing you to remove the prohibition to 'using the Lord's name in vain' from your list of classroom expectations. Furthermore, except for wearing religious jewelry, you are directed to refrain from communication with students that would conflict with your duty to show complete neutrality toward religion or would otherwise promote religion."

Thanks to journalism intern Sarah Eucalano for assistance compiling.

1st-place finisher protests race prayer

The latest blow struck for rational racing by Don Ardell, Florida FFRF member and health and wellness advocate. Don, who turns 75 on July 18, participated in a May 25 triathlon (quarter-mile swim, 15-mile bike, 3-mile run) in Crystal River. Don won first place in his division. His wife, Carol, also participated, finishing second in her age group in just under 90 minutes. Don's email below is to event coordinator Ashley Truelove, who at press time had failed to respond:

Hi Ashley:

Thanks for inviting an evaluation of the race and suggestions. You can pass my notes along to the race director. Let me begin by expressing kudos for a mostly superb race experience. The course, the management, the awards ceremony, refreshments — well done. My overall takeaway, and Carol's, was positive.

However, there was one discordant note that ensures we'll not be back, unless changes are made. We were startled by the public praying ritual directed to all participants just before the race started. It seems astonishing that a race director would think that a diverse group, about whom you could not know anything regarding their religious preferences but which surely would include many non-Christians, would want to be part of or subjected to a Christian prayer and invocation.

Any praying that affects everyone is rude and inappropriate. Saturday's prayer time was not even ecumenical in nature. It was in-your-face Christianity. I looked around to see how many were bowing their heads during the not-so-brief worship babble, being curious if others also thought this hugely annoying, as we did. I looked to see what percentage of triathletes were *not* participating, instead standing with

heads unbowed, eyes open and clearly not disposed to publicly praise Jesus or anyone else, at least not now, not here and not when in race mode.

I was pleased to observe that Carol and I were not the only infidels (or Jews, Hindus, Muslims, etc.) in attendance, who also were striking a counterpose for strict separation of church and triathlon, as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. (Yes, I'm kidding.)

I don't know about the others, but we did not travel two hours to Crystal River for a Christian triathlon. If [race director] Chris Moling's religion is such that he feels that it's acceptable to impose his beliefs and rituals on everyone, consider a polite alternative: Announce that a Christian prayer or



Carol and Don Ardell at the finish of the Chilly Willy Duathlon in Fort DeSoto, Fla.

invocation will be held *for those interested*. This courtesy would give triathletes who came to your event for a secular

competition an opportunity to be somewhere else while the prayer business is being conducted.

Thanks for considering this. I welcome your comments. This topic might make a good story for our Mad Dog Triathlon newsletter and/or the USAT magazine. Maybe USAT should consider guidelines for race directors on the topic.

Religion can be a good thing for some people but it can also be divisive. All of us do not agree on which gods, if any, to worship or how to do it, so it may be a good idea not to unnecessarily divide people who come to your races to compete, not to pray.

**All the best,
Don**

Overheard

I was locked in, so I feel kind of close to you. I was locked in the Sistine Chapel, which is a lot nicer than here.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, one of two cardinals deposed in a probe of the cover-up of Catholic Church pedophilia, speaking to inmates at Shawangunk Correctional Facility near Wallkill, N.Y.
New York Times, 3-28-13

I would point out that if you're a believer in the bible, one would have to say the Great Flood is an example of climate change and that certainly wasn't because mankind had overdeveloped hydrocarbon energy.

Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, supporting the Keystone XL pipeline
BuzzFeed, 4-10-13

Would it be for the government to decide whether a person believes in God

or not? I've committed no crime.

Turkish pianist and composer Fazil Say, given a suspended 10-month prison term in absentia for insulting Islam on Twitter, including poking fun at the afterlife

New York Times, 4-16-13

Days before I helped my mother die in 1983, when physician-assisted suicide was neither an issue nor a movement, I noticed a change in her. She became herself again. Once she knew she would be able to "get out of of life," as she put it, her terror about suffering through an impending cancer death left her, and she was suddenly calm.

Betty Rollin, board member of the Death with Dignity National Center and author of *Last Wish*

New York Times, 3-31-13

Congress has passed no federal protections for gays on employment, housing and education. In 29 states, it is perfectly legal to fire someone because of his or her sexual orientation. Thirty-one states have enacted constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. The Supreme Court should know that civil rights are not supposed to be determined on the whims of the people.

Columnist Maureen Dowd
The New York Times, 3-31-13

There is no such thing as Egyptians in Egypt. There are only Muslims and Christians.

Emad Thabet, a Coptic Christian locked in a church for hours while four Christians were killed in sectarian violence in Cairo's main Coptic cathedral
Associated Press, 4-8-13

Meet a ‘Trekkie’ Member

Name: Brenda Germain.
Where I live: Rural North Carolina, just west of Fort Bragg. It’s in the middle of nowhere, which is nice and quiet when Fort Bragg isn’t shooting off artillery.
Where and when I was born: Syracuse, N.Y., in December 1958. I grew up in a couple of small towns south of there, Lafayette and Tully.
Family: Paul, my husband, and Butterscotch, our 17-year-old cat. I am childless by choice and am a proud feminist in the central New York tradition.
Education: Tully High School graduate in 1977. I graduated in 1989 from Sandhills Community College with an associate’s degree in science degree. A year later, I went on to attend Western Carolina University, where I earned a B.S. in clinical laboratory science. After 10 years, I returned to Sandhills and earned another applied science degree, this time in Internet technologies.
Occupation: I spent 10 years working in a hospital laboratory and then 10 years as a Web programmer designing and developing interactive PHP sites. I’ve been disabled by lupus since 2010.
How I got where I am today: Hard work and the help of my husband, who made my going to college possible.
Where I’m headed: Where we all are, being a part of the circle of life replenishing the soil.
Person in history I admire and why: There are so many who stood up for



what they believed despite the blowback, but three stand out for me. Giordano Bruno for not backing down, Margaret Sanger for advocating for women to control their own biology, and Christopher Hitchens for facing death with dignity and honesty.
A quotation I like: My favorites:
• “We must question the story logic of having an all-knowing, all-powerful God, who creates faulty humans and then blames them for his own mistakes.” (Gene Roddenberry)
• “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?”

(Epicurus)
• “Atheism is an attitude, a frame of mind that looks at the world objectively, fearlessly, always trying to understand all things as a part of nature.” (Carl Sagan)
These are a few of my favorite things: All things science, “Star Trek” (Trekkie since 1966), “Jeopardy!”, lifelong learning, advocating for acceptance of atheists, documentaries, bouncy music, honesty and reality.
I’m keeping alive the hope illustrated in “Star Trek” that we may someday grow up as a species to value and embrace diversity while being kind to each other.
These are not: Those who are purposely ignorant and proud of it, dishonesty, evangelicals showing up at my house, government promotion and entanglement with religion, indoctrination rather than education, and people who tell me to have “a blessed day.”
My doubts about religion started: The first time I heard the stories at about age 8. Our family didn’t go to church, though my parents were vaguely religious. A neighbor asked to take us to their church. A couple of visits listening to the improbable stories and realizing these people thought they were true rather than myths ended that activity. I’ve been an atheist ever since, though until 1991 I remained silent so I could be employable in the small southern community where I live. When the first President Bush said he didn’t consider atheists to be patriots or good citizens, I got mad and then vocal.
Why I’m a freethinker: I seem to have been born that way. To me, to be

anything other than a freethinker is to be a slave to someone else’s agenda. I was always the “why?” child. If the answers to my questions were not logical, I deemed the answers nonsense and looked for rational answers elsewhere.
Ways I promote freethought: I’m the current president of the Military Atheists and Freethinkers at Fort Bragg. We help other atheists know they are not alone by helping build what I like to call an interNOfaith community of atheists, freethinkers, skeptics, secular humanists and agnostics in our area, consisting of soldiers, veterans and civilians.
I know from experience the isolation many atheists feel due to their nonbelief, especially in rural areas like ours. We shouldn’t have to live this one precious life we have feeling alone and disenfranchised just because we think rationally. The more of us who are open about our freethinking, the greater the likelihood that we will eventually be accepted.
What areas of life without religion need more attention? I’d like to see our community do more advocacy for elderly atheists to help them push back against society’s religious presumptions. When my agnostic grandmother died, the funeral home sent a representative and a preacher. I told them a preacher was neither needed nor welcome.
It made me think about our atheists in nursing homes who may have to endure religion when they are least able to decline and may have no one to speak up for them or fear repercussions.

Meet a ‘Pesky Progressive’ Member

Name: Elli K. Work.
Where I live: Santa Fe, N.M.
Where and when I was born: Glendale, Calif., July 9, 1960.
Family: Kathleen Rocco, partner of 20 years; and stepsons, Adam and Schuyler, 31 and 28, respectively.
Education: B.S. in social science, Portland State University, Oregon. My informal education included reading the works of my heroes. I figured if Molly Ivins could say *that* and Michael Moore could do *that*, then so could I.
Sam Harris makes me cheer, Julia Sweeney makes me laugh, and Barbara Ehrenreich makes me want to stay in the ring and keep up the good fight. These wonderful and amazing people continue to inspire me.
Occupation: Writer, activist.
Military service: 20 years, three in the regular Army and 17 in the Army National Guard. I retired as a logistics officer.
How I got where I am today: A strict German mother and a great public school education.
Where I’m headed: All roads lead back to Oregon. We’ve been in New

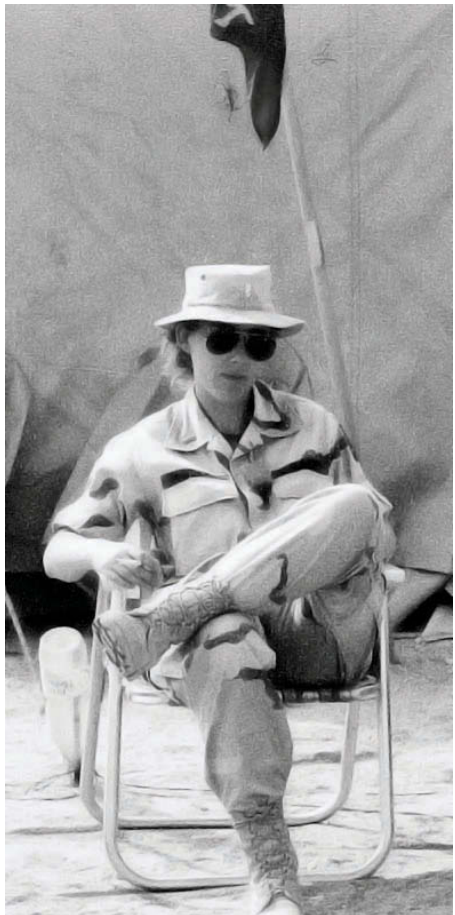


Elli Work

Mexico for the past five years and have enjoyed the Land of Enchantment, especially the fact that [the TV series] “Breaking Bad” was filmed here. But Oregon, with her mosses and snails, her Birkenstocks and organic everything, beckons.
I hope to write my next book there. Or maybe a screenplay. Or maybe a CliffsNotes recipe for beef bourguignon. OMG! FOS (Figure of Speech)! Maybe all three!
Person in history I admire: The Holy (Texan) Trinity: former Gov. Ann Richards (1933-2006); Molly Ivins (1944-2007), author, political commentator and humorist; and Jim Hightower, former agriculture commissioner, author, syndicated columnist and political activist. These unabashed liberals live on in my heart. Jim, by the way, is still very much alive and kicking ass!
Before I die I want: To see Texas turn into a blue state. Stop laughing. And for Joan Jett to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. *Jesus, people, c’mon!*
A quotation I like: “If Jesus was Jewish, how come he has a Mexican name?” (anonymous). I put that one in my book. Cracks me up every time!
A few of my favorite things: My 12-string guitar, marriage equality, FFRE, coming out as an atheist, serving in the military, running for public office, “Die Chipper” (a story in my book — think of the chipper in “Fargo”), and my book, *A Piece of Work*, available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Actually, all of these are stories in my book.
Pet peeve: Women Republicans. That will *never* make any sense to me. OK, wait. Hmmm. Nope, never.
My doubts about religion started: When I was about 6, I asked my dad, “Daddy, why were all the apostles men?” In the matter-of-fact way that was my father, he said, “Because Jesus was a man of his times.” I was immediately suspicious, but didn’t identify as an atheist until my late 20s. I just couldn’t buy it anymore.
That’s why, when a woman screams at a camera — hurricane damage in the background — “Praise the Lord, he saved us!” I say, “And screwed your neighbor? Really? Think about it.”
And maybe someday she will. Everyone deserves the chance to evolve.
Why I’m a freethinker: The insanity that rages on in the name of God, by any name, continues to have dire consequences. Among the most egregious, it has stymied a thousand years of scientific advancement, oppressed women and wasted incalculable resources. Like my favorite lapel button reads: “I’m just another soulless atheist in search of world peace and harmony.” We may never get there without God, but we definitely won’t with one.
Ways I promote freethought: I mark out “God” on paper money. I say “gesundheit” when someone sneezes. I don’t spend my money at any business that displays a fish. I had “Above us only sky” printed on bumper stickers

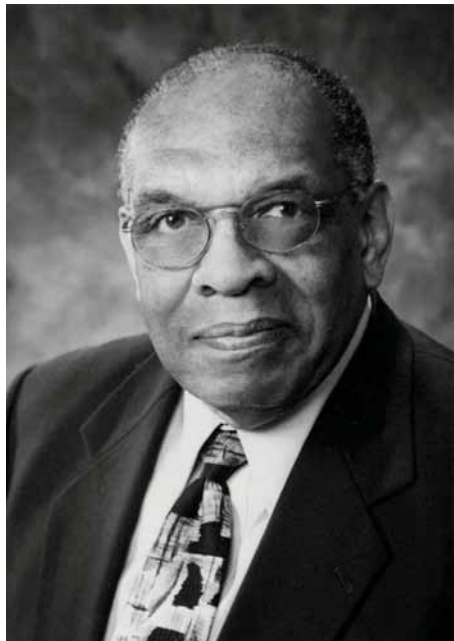
(I saw that on a banner in Freethought Today). I am an out, *unabashed* atheist, and I write about my nonbelief.



Lt. Elli Work in 1995 in Cairo, Egypt.

In Memoriam

Alton Lemon stood the ‘test’ of time



The ‘Lemon test’ is FFRF’s best friend.

- Its principal or primary effect must neither advance nor inhibit religion.
- It must not foster excessive entanglement between government and religion.

This was not new law, per se, but a kind of noble attempt to clarify and make the Establishment Clause idiot-proof. The “Lemon test” has been invoked in virtually every lawsuit FFRF has ever taken. It is our best friend.

It has been hated and reviled by the Religious Right. Three presidents (you can guess which ones) have openly sought to overturn it. Justice Antonin Scalia, a pretty scary fellow himself, odiously compared it to “some ghoul in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after being repeatedly killed and buried.”

According to The New York Times, Alton Toussaint Lemon was born Oct. 19, 1928, in McDonough, Ga., where his father owned a tailor shop. He received a degree in mathematics from Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1950.

After service in the U.S. Army, he settled in Philadelphia, earned a master’s degree in social work from the University of Pennsylvania and worked in a series of government jobs. He was active in the NAACP and the ACLU and was the first African-American president of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia.

“One of our personal regrets is that we never had the chance to meet Alton to shake his hand,” said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. “He was slated to accept his award in person at our 2003 convention but couldn’t attend due to illness. “Our memorial to Alton will be to redouble FFRF’s efforts to do what we can to help ensure that his name and his legacy live on,” Gaylor added. “Our sincere condolences to his widow Augusta and his family.”

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has a very rare, very elite category of members who are “honorary officers,” a title reserved for freethinkers who have won Supreme Court cases bolstering state-church separation. We’re sorry to report that Alton Lemon, one of our honorary officers, died May 4 at age 84 in Jenkintown, Pa.

He was a plaintiff in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), which successfully challenged a Pennsylvania law, the first such law in the nation, which gave public tax funds to religious schools. He was the recipient of the First Amendment Hero Award at FFRF’s 26th annual convention in 2003 in Washington, D.C.

Lemon volunteered to be part of the American Civil Liberties Union challenge of the law. In a landmark 8-0 ruling, the Supreme Court invalidated the parochial aid. (Justice Thurgood Marshall didn’t participate in the case.)

In one of the enduring legacies of the court headed by Chief Justice Warren Burger, the decision also codified Establishment Clause precedent into what soon became known as the “Lemon test.” If any of its three prongs are violated by an act of government, the act is deemed unconstitutional:

- It must have a secular legislative purpose.



Alton Lemon with his wife Augusta and FFRF board member Margaret Downey.



Robert Marcy, 1928–2013

Robert Marcy, 84, Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, died Feb. 15, 2013, at a local hospital. He was born July 30, 1928, in the Panama Canal Zone, and grew up in New York. He earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the Pratt Institute in 1946 and served in the U.S. Army from 1950-52.

Moving to Michigan, he worked as an engineer and received a master’s from Wayne State University, and later to the Los Angeles area to work in the aerospace industry. He retired in 1983 and moved to St. Croix, where in 1987 he met his wife, Frankie Jo “Jody” Marcy. Both are FFRF members.

“Following his instructions and staying true to his atheism, Bob had a mov-

ing secular burial at sea,” writes Jody. “In the afternoon at an open-air restaurant, family and friends met for a celebration of his life. He will be missed.” Survivors also include two daughters, Renee, a clinical psychologist, and Susan, director of a physical therapy clinic; a son, Geoffrey, a UC-Berkeley astronomy professor; a stepdaughter, Stacy; two grandchildren and three step-grandchildren. (Geoffrey and two colleagues notably discovered 70 out of the first 100 extrasolar planets. He received the 2009 Carl Sagan Prize for Science Popularization from Wonderfest.)

FFRF offers sincere condolences to the Marcy family.

Eileen Lottman, 1928–2013



Eileen Lottman, 85, New York City, died at home surrounded by loved ones June 7, 2013. She was born in Minneapolis, grew up in Sioux City, Iowa, and attended the University of Iowa Writers Workshop.

She started her professional career in New York with publicist Lois Smith, becoming publicity director and then

editor at major publishing houses including Putnam, Dell and Bantam before turning to writing full time. Eileen was the author of 23 novels, including *After the Wind* (1979), *The Brahmins* (1982) and *She and I* (1991). A lifelong advocate for free speech and social justice, she also loved animals and supported animal rights.

Her husband of more than 40 years, noted film editor Evan Lottman, and daughter Jessica Lottman preceded her in death. Survivors are her many loving friends, who feel deeply the loss of her humor, honesty and companionship. A memorial was held June 14.

“We met Eileen at an FFRF event in New York City several years ago and were very impressed with her long writing career and dedication to freethought,” said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. “Count us among her sad but appreciative friends.”

Jesse Bailey Jr., 1925–2013



Jesse V. Bailey Jr., 88, Birmingham, Ala., died April 23, 2013. A L, age 88, died April 23rd 2013. A graduate of University of West Alabama, he served in the U.S. Air Force in WWII. Bailey, a freethinker, was a founding member of the Alabama Freethought Association and a member of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. He’s survived by his daughter, Anita, several other relatives and countless friends.

According to Alice Cleveland, AFA historian, Jesse served at the Women’s Clinic, was an avid letter writer and

supported the freethought cause and abortion rights. Military services with honors were held in the Alabama National Cemetery.

At the memorial, Susan Laney, a Presbyterian director of adult ministries and friend of Anita Bailey, spoke on Jesse’s behalf: “He did not believe in an afterlife or desire one. What could be more dreadful, where would we go, what would we do? Could we sleep late on the weekends?”

To family and friends go FFRF’s heartfelt condolences.

Runs in New York Times, many other dailies

FFRF's July 4 ad counters Hobby Lobby disinformation

The Freedom From Religion Foundation is scheduled to run a full-page ad on July 4 to "Celebrate our GODLESS Constitution" in a number of U.S. dailies.

The full-page ad is a direct response to a series of July 4 ads sponsored each year by Hobby Lobby. Since 2008, the large craft store chain has run ads of disinformation on July 4. The adjacent ad essentially parodies one of the Hobby Lobby ads that uses the nation's founding fathers and framers of the Constitution.

Hobby Lobby's ads, which usually include the words "In God We Trust," portray the U.S. as founded on God and Christianity. FFRF has received many complaints from its membership over the full-page ads, which apparently run in literally hundreds of U.S. dailies.

Hobby Lobby is also involved in litigation challenging the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate. Hobby Lobby is working to permit employers who are religious to deny women employees contraceptive health care.

Although FFRF can't compete with Hobby Lobby by running ads in hundreds of dailies, we are undertaking the single most expensive ad campaign in our history to counter the Religious Right's message.

As of press time, FFRF's ad is expected to run in The New York Times, Arizona Republic, Seattle Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Denver Post, Albuquerque Journal and Columbus Dispatch. Most of the ads are in black and white to save money, but are in color in The New York Times and a few other dailies.

Taking its message of "In Reason We Trust" to parts of the bible belt, FFRF has contracted to run the ad in the Huntsville [Ala.] Times, Orange County [Calif.] Register, San Diego Tribune, Colorado Springs Gazette, Orlando Sentinel, Louisville [Ky.] Courier Journal, Jackson [Miss.] Clarion Ledger, Louisville, Miss., Charlotte Observer, The Tennessean (Nashville) and Oklahoma City's Daily Oklahoman. (Hobby Lobby is based in Oklahoma City.)

It's possible some dailies may still censor the paid ad, which was also scheduled to "play in Peoria" and a few other newspapers not confirmed as of press time.

If you appreciate this ad, please help FFRF spread the truth about the secular founding of this nation. Donate to FFRF's Advertising Fund (click Advertising Fund in the dropdown box) at ffrf.org/donate or


earnmark checks to the Advertising Fund sent to FFRF, PO Box 750, Madison WI 53701.

(Members who might like to help underwrite the entire cost of running an ad in their local newspaper should contact

THEOCRACY
ALERT!


RELIGIOUS WAR
AGAINST
MARRIAGE

ADVERTISEMENT




"Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we call it the word of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize ..."

T. Paine



"When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one."

B. Franklin



"Religious controversies are always productive of more acrimony & irreconcilable hatreds than those which spring from any other cause ..."

G. Washington

The revolutionary who gave the United States of America its very name and who fanned the flames of the American Revolution utterly repudiated Christianity and the bible. Paine wrote that "My religion is to do good" and "My own mind is my own church."

This revolutionary and Deist suggested the motto on currency should read "Mind your business." As Secretary of the Constitutional Convention he recorded that there was no prayer or support for his own prayer motion: "The Convention, except three or four persons, thought prayer unnecessary."

CELEBRATE OUR
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GODLESS
CONSTITUTION

Our first U.S. President refused to take communion, kneel in prayer in churches (or at Valley Forge), have a priest at his deathbed or take last rites.



★ The bible calls homosexuality “an abomination”: “their blood shall be upon them” (Source: Leviticus 20:13)

★ 31 states have adopted constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage, at the behest of religious lobbies (Source: Maureen Dowd, New York Times 3/31/13)

★ Only 16 states bar discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Source: Human Rights Campaign)

Polls show more Americans support than oppose same-sex marriage. Yet many religious groups would impose their dogmas on the rest of us.

There's no reason to keep hating. Protect against religious intrusion into civil liberties.



Defend the vital “wall of separation between church and state.”

Support FFRF, the nation's largest association of free-thinkers (atheists, agnostics), working to keep religion out of government.

Ask for a free issue of our newspaper,



Join today at 1-800-335-4021


FREEDOM FROM RELIGION foundation

FFRF.ORG/reason-must-prevail
FFRF is a 501(c)(3) educational charity

FFRF advertises in Scientific American


FFRF will be running issue-oriented, one-third-page ads for the next year in Scientific American, thanks to those FFRF members who responded to a matching grant by generous FFRF Board Member Lester Goldstein. Lester matched \$25,000 in gifts for the magazine ads. A retired science professor, Lester suggested that each ad be fully documented and address a timely topic to show the danger of religion in government. The first ad, appearing on page 26 of the July issue, is reproduced here. Look for ads addressing blasphemous creationism in the schools and reproductive rights in upcoming issues of the magazine.

Thank you, Lester and all kind donors who responded.




"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution..."

James Madison



"Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear..."

John Jay



"The Government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion."

— Signed Treaty of Tripoli, 1797

John Adams

Our fourth President, the primary architect of our godless and entirely secular Constitution, opposed even "three pence" of tax money being used in support of a religion. He opposed Congressional chaplaincies and government days of prayer, warning that "torrents of blood" have been spilled over religious differences.

Our third President was author of the Declaration of Independence, and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, guaranteeing no citizen "shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever." As President, he explained the First Amendment builds "a wall of separation between church and state."

Our second President did not believe in miracles or prophecies, eternal damnation or demonic possession, and fought to separate church and government in his home state, Massachusetts. Although dying on the same date as Jefferson, July 4, 1826, his dramatic last words were: "Jefferson lives."

IN REASON WE TRUST

For references, see: ffrf.org/in-reason-we-trust

Freedom From Religion Foundation

P.O. Box 750-NYT • Madison WI 53701 • (800) 335-4021

- ☐ I would like to become a member. (Includes 10 issues of *Freethought Today* newspaper.)
- ☐ I would like to donate to FFRF's Legal Fund. \$ _____

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Make payable to "FFRF" • Dues & donations are tax-deductible.

Annual Membership Dues	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> "After Life"	\$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$25

The original godless Pledge of Allegiance

FFRF is the nation's largest association of atheists & agnostics, working to keep religion out of government.

FFRF.ORG

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

‘Heretic’s Diary’ expresses artist’s journey

LaVera Langeman writes: “I began my artistic life as a fashion designer in New York City after graduating from the Fashion Institute of Technology. After having children, I started to paint. Having painted now for 20 years, I have had some success. I have won several awards, including being published in the William and Mary Review. I have had a number of shows and continue to show in several galleries.

“I love to craft and use any and every medium possible to make my projects come to life. I am married and have two wonderful boys, both in college. I have an ‘everyday life’ blog at teawithlavera.blogspot.com and a lifestyle website at teawithlavera.com. I hope you will take the time to visit me there.”

By LaVera Langeman

This show was not a light-hearted undertaking. Many years of painting, research and reflection have gone into it. I have read the bible cover-to-cover and many other books to try to understand what religion is all about.

I acknowledge that some good has been done in the name of religion and its churches, and I would never want to diminish the comfort it brings to so many people. This show deals with another aspect: the damage inflicted on cultures and societies — physical and emotional damage suffered by countless individuals — all in the name of religion.

The paintings are not meant to hurt anyone; my hope is that they will promote conversation. This show is an ex-



pression of my personal journey from the fundamentalist teachings of my childhood to the present day. (Thus there are no paintings on Islam, Judaism or other religions; I wasn’t brought up in those cultures.) As a nonbeliever (or heretic, as I would have been called at other times in history) surrounded by people who believed in a deity, I became silent. But as I started these paintings it became clear to me that silent is not what I should be. Why should my beliefs — and more so, my questions — go unheard?

Every day scientific discoveries show us how the earth has become what it is. We can translate and read myths from before Christ and see where many bible stories have come from, how the bible was put together and by whom. We can look at the history of Christianity and see what has happened to keep it alive. But not many people take the time to examine their beliefs or to research the book they base their life on. If we question things that don’t make sense to us, we are told, with circular logic, that we “must have faith.”

It is certainly simpler to accept the myths than to live in fear that one might die and spend eternity in hell. It’s much easier to err on the side of religion. Is it really faith? Or is it really fear? And what does being religious mean, when we pick and choose what we want to believe from the bible? Is it God’s word or not?

Most religions are ancient belief systems, yet we let such beliefs, often based in ancient fear and hearsay, define our own beliefs, values, and even our lives. A disturbing number of people in this country take everything stated in the bible at face value, yet as hard as they try to prove that stories of the bible are true, they cannot.

Throughout history, people have questioned religion. But innocent peo-



Mary Magdalene
Mary Magdalene is holding Jesus in the form of the Dove of Peace. He is no longer able to fly because his wing is broken. Wearing a crown of thorns representing the pain and humiliation inflicted on women in the name of religion throughout history, she cries for him and for the women of the world.

ple have been tortured or killed to assure that the church retains its power and keeps ancient beliefs alive. Many religious believers still live in fear.

By letting the bible and all its beliefs serve as an historical text and not “the truth” I have moved into a world of little guilt, with lots of time to wonder and a freedom to feel what’s really going on around me. On my own terms I am able to appreciate every moment I have here on earth with those I love.

There are so many very important, urgent things we need to consider as human beings.

I don’t have the answers and that’s OK for me. The paintings in this show give voice to my personal questions.

Editor’s note: To see all the paintings in the show and more work by the artist, go to hereticsdiary.com.



Cheesus
A news story came on TV in 2009 about a woman finding a Cheeto shaped like Jesus on the cross. My first and strongest reaction was disbelief, and then a question: What has our country turned into? A few days later, I Googled Cheesus. I’m sad to say 11 pages came up. I thought that if people truly believe this is a message from the divine, don’t they wonder about a deity wasting time creating images of himself as a Cheeto instead of coming down to Ethiopia to feed the starving?



The Madonna of the Big Bang
With all the new information in the world of science, isn’t it time to ask serious questions and not look at the world through the eyes of our fearful ancestors, who believed the world was flat? Isn’t it time for a new madonna?



Evolution

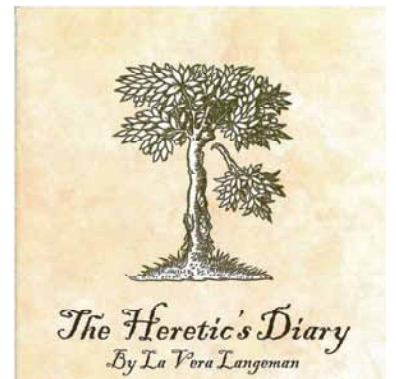
National Geographic reported in 2006 that 14% of U.S. adults thought evolution was “definitely true,” while about a third firmly rejected it. In 2007, the \$27 million Creation Museum opened in Petersburg, Ky. Half a million visitors came in the first nine months. On Feb. 12, 2009, the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth, a Gallup poll showed 39% of Americans “believe in the theory of evolution,” a quarter said they didn’t and 36% had no opinion either way. Those attitudes are strongly related to education and, to an even greater degree, religiosity.

Note: The paper in her hand [“The banana — the atheist’s nightmare”] is from an evangelical group called Living Waters Publications.



The Puppet Show

LEFT: Jesus has often been used by church leaders as a puppet to promote agendas that have nothing to do with his teachings as portrayed in the bible. Myths have been turned into miracles, all in the name of power and profit.



Keep the Faith

Religious texts often use mythological constructs such as the creation story in Genesis or Jonah and the whale to illustrate a spiritual or moral concept. Yet many churches teach that these stories are to be taken literally. The denial by the church of the right to question, express doubt or view our existence in a different light can result in such horrific acts as burning not only books, but innocent people as well.



LaVera Langeman (second from left) answers questions at her gallery show. Persons interested in hosting the show can write to her at Box 4070, Bellingham, WA 98225 or email to hereticsdiary@comcast.net.

Many stops on journey to nonreligion

By Jake Hjorth

There's a well-known saying that we should stop and smell the roses. It seems that Western culture has a hard time following that advice, maybe because we too often think of life as a journey — that is, we always need to get somewhere.



Prompted by religion, we are taught that life here and now has no value in itself. It only serves as a journey to get to "The Promised Land."

Having been on such a journey from early on and engaged in the ministry as both Roman Catholic priest and United Church of Christ minister, I've finally gotten "off the bus." I now view my life more like a cruise, the goal of which is to appreciate the sites visited and sites yet to come.

Before I go into more detail about my "ports of call," I must state that whatever ups and downs, good or bad or right or wrong my cruise has offered me, I sum it up as a great and positive life experience. Everything and everybody in my past have brought me to my "now," and for that I am grateful. Any critical remarks that I may make about past experiences should therefore be seen with that in mind.

I stepped aboard my cruise in Denmark four years before the five-year occupation of my native country during World War II started. My family was Roman Catholic, both my parents having converted from Lutheranism, Denmark's official state religion. I and my five siblings were brought up in the faith, went to church every Sunday and followed the rules dictated by the pope and promulgated by the local bishop.

During the war, our family was part of the resistance movement. We helped Danish Jews flee to Sweden. We huddled in the basement during air raids. My father was imprisoned by the Gestapo for three months in the summer of 1944. Fortunately, he was not sent to a concentration camp in Germany.

Looking back on the war experience and its aftermath, I find that it gave us all a drive to make a better world, a safer world, a more trusting world. While I was too young at the time to reflect on this, I think that it was, and still is, in my genes.

I was sent to a St. Joseph Sisters school for the first two years, after which I was transferred to a Jesuit all-boys school. I spent four years under Jesuit discipline until it got to be too much. One day I left school and went to my dad's office to ask for help. After a long phone conversation with the principal, it was decided I would transfer to a public school in our neighborhood.

Entering a public co-ed school in seventh grade was a great revelation. I enjoyed being around girls a lot. I dated a girl in high school and got engaged right after graduation. We planned on getting married as soon as our future education was completed and jobs were secured. But I started to flounder to the point that my fiancée lost patience with me. We ended our

engagement but remained friends and correspondents.

It became clear to me that religion, any religion, enslaves the minds of people by basing life on a creed of self-righteous intolerance which invariably leads to war.'

Entering the priesthood

It took a couple of years before I got my wits back together. I found that the priesthood would be the right thing for me. Trips to Rome and public audiences with the pope made me feel that to be part of an age-old institution should be my calling.

On one of my trips to Rome, I came upon the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I had been encouraged by my bishop to visit them, which resulted in my being assigned to the U.S. Oblate Fathers and entering a novitiate in France.

After a year I made my first vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, vows which I had reflected on in agony. I was sent to the Oblate seminary in Mississippi and graduated with a degree in philosophy and theology after six years. The graduation resulted in my ordination as a priest.

I enjoyed my years in the seminary. I enjoyed the American youthful ways, the willingness to try everything. I fell in love with America, a love I have to this day.

In retrospect, I admit that the education I received was very limiting. I spent my years in Mississippi during the days of the Civil Rights Movement, but it was never mentioned or discussed among us seminarians. Being somewhat cloistered, I did not reflect on it. Only later did it dawn on me that a religious order of priests should have been right there marching along with the movement.

The segregation in the South bothered me personally. One day I boarded a bus and found it a great opportunity to show how I could befriend the blacks. I went to the back of the bus and sat down, wanting them to feel that I was one of them.

At the next stop, a young black woman got on and walked toward the back. She stopped by me and remained standing, looking at me with questioning eyes. I did not understand her dilemma. After all, there were plenty of empty seats ahead of me. I remained seated till I got off.

As the bus continued on, it dawned on me what a terrible thing I had done. In my naïveté, I had tried to join the blacks, not realizing that wherever I sat, I made a demarcation line. I wish to this day I could beg the woman's forgiveness.

After my ordination, I spent two years in a U.S. parish and enjoyed serving as assistant in a large congregation with young families. After that cruise stop, I finally went back to Denmark to serve as one of the few native Danish priests.

Leaving the priesthood

During my training for the priest-

hood, there was a great movement within the Catholic Church. Pope John XXIII (affectionately called Pope Johansen in Denmark) called for a Vatican Council to open the windows to the church and let in fresh air. It was refreshing to breathe the air for a few years, but his successor, Pope Paul VI, closed the windows and the air became stale again.

It caused me to rethink my vocation. I returned to America. and after two years left the priesthood. I got married to a woman with four small children and found work in public education. Running afoul with the village school board, I became a carpenter and enjoyed that work for about 15 years. Religion did not matter much during that time. My attention went to raising a family and keeping my marriage going.

One day a friend asked me to help him with a church retreat run by a United Church of Christ congregation. I enjoyed the retreat and the pastor and soon after joined the church with my wife.

The pastor, knowing, my background, asked me some time later if I would like to become a UCC minister. I agreed and was accepted without fanfare. My next port of call was a suburban church in White Bear Lake, Minn., where I served for 10 years until my marriage broke up. I retired from ministry and went back to Denmark to teach at a folk school (folkehøjskoler) for a year.

Returning to America, I freed myself from religion as I began to study the nature of religion without commitment. It became clear to me that religion, any religion, enslaves the minds of people by basing life on a creed of self-righteous intolerance which invariably leads to war. One need only peruse the daily news.

Versatile volunteer



Todd Peissig, Wisconsin FFRF Board Member and Life Member, is volunteering periodically to reconstruct "lost" archives of Freethought Today from the 1990s, which are gradually being added to the Foundation's website.

While still a minister, I once wrote an article to the local newspaper. It was titled "To be more like Jesus than about Jesus." Religion is "to be about." Religion is based on the use of the deadly DDT: Dogma, Doctrine and Tradition.

It would be well if we would follow the great humanists' examples and be more like them than about them, to think freely and speak openly.

Let me finish not with an "Amen" but with "Keep cruising along!"

FFRF member Jake Hjorth lives in Grand Marais, Minn.



Jake Hjorth in his minister's vestment handmade by his wife. The pectoral cross was handmade in Mexico. "I never liked wearing a belt or a cincture. It made me look like a monk," comments Jake.

150 House votes for foxhole atheists

Some 150 members of the U.S. House voted June 14 in favor of allowing nonreligious military chaplains to serve atheists and agnostics in the U.S. armed forces.

Although that wasn't enough for the amendment offered by Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., to pass, it means a lot to American freethinkers. There were 150 Democrats who voted yes, 44 Democrats who voted no and 230 Republicans who voted no.

The week before, Rep. Robert Andrews, D-N.J., tried unsuccessfully to add a similar amendment to the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act in committee.

Andrews' amendment brought forth some amazingly bigoted comments from some members of the House Armed Services Committee.

Kudos to Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., who defended atheists and humanists at that committee meeting: "To say that an atheist or a humanist doesn't believe anything is just ignorant. They have very, very developed beliefs and value systems, and there are many, many of them serving in the military, including Pat Tillman. The response to the gentleman's amendment makes me feel all the more the necessity of it. Basically, if you are an atheist or agnostic in the military, the military's response is, 'We've got nothing for you. There's no hope for you.' They believe in a system of values, and that system of values is worth as much to them as Christianity is to us."

Overheard

The students are being duped. It's straight theology with no alternatives. It's a straight Christian intelligent design/creationist view of the world, which is wrong. It's not science. It's not that it's not science, it's science that has been discredited. It's like saying the Holocaust didn't happen.

Evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne, University of Chicago professor, on the "Boundaries of Science" course at Ball State University on which FFRF has filed a complaint

Muncie Star Press, 5-20-13

In Raphael's 16th-century painting "Sistine Madonna," the madonna holds the Christ child, flanked by Sts. Sixtus and Barbara, while cherubs (inset) rest below. Katherine Hilden, an Illinois artist and FFRF member, was inspired to substitute secular angels Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker for Raphael's. See more of Katherine's "Facefame: Caricatures of people in the news" at facefame.wordpress.com/.



Credit: ©Katherine Hilden

Women's bodies belong only to women

By Annie Laurie Gaylor

This op-ed by FFRF's co-president was published April 24 in The New York Times as part of its "Open for Debate" series. The topic was "Is the Hijab Worth Fighting Over?"

Nineteen is the perfect age to push the parameters of social convention, to experiment with self-expression and rebellion. Young women coming to terms with sexual objectification, harassment and social judgment have a perfect right to protest prudery and patriarchal religion without being threatened with execution.

Amina Tyler, a Tunisian 19-year-old, exercised that right. She participated in a feminist Facebook project in which she posted images of herself online, with the words "I own my body; it's not the source of anyone's honor" written on her bare chest.

Tunisia reacted with revilement and threats of violence. The head of Tunisia's Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice reportedly called for Amina to be stoned to death. She and her family faced vicious threats, including that acid should be

thrown in her face.

Amina, who reports having been subjected to a "virginity test" and other indignities, appears to be in hiding with the intention to escape to France.

She uploaded the photos on a Facebook page created by Femen, a Ukrainian women's group dedicated to freeing women. In solidarity with Amina, Femen declared "Topless Jihad Day" on April 4, holding demonstrations across Europe in which women treated their bared torsos as protest placards.

The tactics are reminiscent of Slutwalk, a protest movement fighting rape culture, in which young women (some bare-breasted, others scantily clad) take to the streets to defy conventions that blame victims for rapes.

Arguments for female modesty are sadly familiar, and troubling regardless of their religious context.

I'm proud to be part of the tradition that Femen and Slutwalk have joined. In 1977, after Circuit Judge Archie Simonson in Madison, Wis., called the rape of a 16-year-old high school student by three boys a "normal reaction" to her wearing a turtleneck and jeans, I engaged in a different kind of street theater.

After organizing the first picket of his courthouse, I dressed in a nun's



Annie Laurie Gaylor (dressed as a nun) protests a judge's anti-woman ruling in 1977.

habit and marched holding signs that said "Shall men be our dress codes?" and "Is this what you have in mind, judge?" We successfully recalled that judge. But the attitudes, unfortunately, persist.

There's nothing obscene about breasts. What's obscene is decking women in burqas or face-shrouding veils. What's obscene is that a statement by a young woman that she owns her own body could still set a world religion on fire.

FFRF creationism complaint leads to Indiana probe

After receiving a student complaint, FFRF called for Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., to investigate allegations that a physics and astronomy professor appeared to be teaching creationism at the public university.

Staff Attorney Andrew Seidel sent a May 15 letter to BSU President Jo Ann Gora urging investigation of professor Eric Hedin's honors course, "The Boundaries of Science," described in the syllabus as an honest, objective investigation on the intersection of science and religion. The elective class is not part of the core curriculum.

"It is our information and understanding that this class has been used to proselytize students and advance Christianity by using gaps in scientific

knowledge — the 'boundaries of science' — in an attempt to prove religious belief correct," Seidel wrote.

"We fully understand and support the need for academic freedom and free inquiry, particularly at the university level. But, as taught, this class crosses ethical and constitutional lines. BSU appears to offer a class that preaches religion, yet gives students honors science credit."

Seidel wrote that he's concerned Hedin may also be "preaching" as opposed to "teaching" by injecting religion into his introductory astronomy class. Students taking both of Hedin's courses remarked on the religious bias at the Rate My Professor online site. Comments range from "The class had

an extremely Christian bias and he doesn't not believe in evolution," to "Constantly talks religion. As an atheist, I was slightly concerned my science teacher is a devout Christian."

Jerry Coyne, a biology professor at the University of Chicago and author of the book *Why Evolution Is True*, started blogging about the situation May 16 and has been posting regular updates.

Coyne, an honorary FFRF director, remarked, "The students are being duped. It's straight theology with no alternatives. It's a straight Christian intelligent design/creationist view of the world, which is wrong. It's not science. It's not that it's not science, it's science that has been discredited. It's like saying the Holocaust didn't happen."

Terry King, Ball State provost and vice president of academic affairs, told the student newspaper June 23 that he expects a report by the end of June from the committee reviewing the academic integrity of the honors course. Three are Ball State faculty: Gary Dodson, professor of biology; Richard Fluegeman Jr., professor of geological sciences; and Juli Thorsen Eflin, professor of philosophy. Catherine Pilchowski, a professor of astronomy at Indiana University, is the fourth member.

The controversy has been widely covered by mass media.

In the News

Same-sex rulings upset Religious Right

Religious forces opposed to same-sex marriage and civil unions lost twice in U.S. Supreme Court decisions announced June 26. The court struck down the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act on a 5-4 vote, with the majority opinion written by Justice Anthony Kennedy. The court's DOMA decision immediately provides full federal benefits to same-sex couples in states that have legalized gay marriage.

In a 5-4 ruling written by Chief Justice John Roberts, the court paved the way for same-sex couples to marry in California by leaving intact a 2010 lower-court ruling that struck down the state's 2008 voter-approved ban known as Proposition 8.

California Attorney General Kamala Harris urged the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to lift the stay on the injunction against Proposition 8 and allow same-sex couples to marry "as quickly as possible."

Rev. Steve Jones of the Missionary Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., said in a statement: "[A]s followers of Christ, Christians are conscience-bound to declare marriage as the union of one man and one woman, no matter what the courts or legislatures may say. Defending the truth is more important than personal popularity."

U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., also issued a statement: "Marriage was created by the hand of God. No man, not even a Supreme Court, can undo what a holy God has instituted."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee tweeted that because of the rulings, "Jesus wept." He later added, "5 people in robes said they are bigger than the voters of CA and Congress combined. And bigger than God. May He forgive us all."

Texas school appeals bible banner ruling

The Kountze Independent School District in Kountze, Texas, filed an appeal May 28 of a state district judge's ruling that cheerleaders can hold banners with bible verses for football players to run through.

The Associated Press reported the district wants the appeals court to clarify Judge Steve Thomas' four-paragraph ruling in May. District lawyer Tom Brandt said the cheerleaders' legal advocates "are reading into the court's decision [free speech] rights that just aren't there."

FFRF started contesting the banners in September. After receiving FFRF's letter, the superintendent ordered cheerleaders to stop holding the banners. The cheerleaders, represented by a Religious Right law firm, then sued the school district.

FFRF was not a party to the suit but filed an amicus brief.

Churches upset at BSA gay policy

The Boy Scouts of America, headquartered in Grapevine, Texas, will start accepting gay Scouts, much to the chagrin of some churches. Of the roughly 1,400 voting members of the BSA's National Council who voted May 23, 61% supported the proposal drafted by the governing Executive Com-

mittee. The policy change takes effect Jan. 1, the Associated Press reported.

Gay Scout leaders (and atheists) will still be barred.

"We are deeply saddened," said Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive C. "Homosexual behavior is incompatible with the principles enshrined in the Scout oath and Scout law."

The Assemblies of God said the change "will lead to a mass exodus from the Boy Scout program." Texas Gov. Rick Perry said he was "greatly disappointed."

On American Family Radio's "Focal Point With Bryan Fischer," the host commented, "BSA no longer stands for the Boy Scouts of America. It now stands for the Boy Sodomizers of America."

The AP also reported that Baptist Pastor Greg Walker, Helena, Ala., said the troop that has been meeting at his church will no longer be allowed to.

KING-TV reported that Fr. Derek Lappe, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Bremerton, Wash., is cutting all ties with BSA Troop 1501. Steve Rinehart, an Eagle Scout and supporter of Scouts For Equality called Lappe's stance "very unfortunate and downright sad."

Wis. city turns down bible tabling

The Conservancy Lands Committee of the Middleton [Wis.] City Council voted unanimously May 22 to deny a request from Rev. Ted Krajewski of Calvary Gospel to set up an information table in the conservancy "to establish and grow an extension work in the Middleton/West Madison area. One way we can do this is by offering free home Bible Studies through Bible surveys."

In FFRF's May 21 letter to the committee, Staff Attorney Patrick Elliott urged rejection of the request. "On its face, it is apparent that the 'survey' is really used for the purpose of recruiting church members and proselytizing. We are unaware of any other organizations that have been granted broad access to table at the conservancy, let alone for months at a time, as the church is requesting."

During discussion, committee members said granting permission would set a bad precedent. City Administrator Mike Davis recommended denial. Staff noted that one chapter of the ordinance establishing the conservancy specifically barred such uses.

"I've got chapters and verses, too," Krajewski said lightheartedly right before the board voted.

High court to hear N.Y. prayer case

The Supreme Court agreed May 20 to hear *Town of Greece, NY v. Galloway*, a case in which a federal appeals court ruled in 2012 that the Greece Town Board's use of almost exclusively Christian prayers violated the Establishment Clause.

Alliance Defending Freedom appealed and is supported in briefs by 49 mostly Republican members of Congress and 18 state attorneys general.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State is representing the two women who challenged the prayers, Susan Galloway and Linda Ste-



Pays to complain

New Mexico FFRF member C.N. Flanders wrote to the state Department of Transportation about Christian crosses on a memorial sign to two students placed as part of Silver City's "Adopt a Median" program. "It suggests to me that possibly a Jewish person or a nonbeliever or anyone not Christian would not be welcome in Silver City. Would you please look into this and let me know what your thoughts are?" While DOT didn't contact Mr. Flanders, he noticed a few days later that the crosses were off the sign.

phens. The court will hear the case in its next term, which starts in October.

Prayer plaintiff gets legal standing

In *Doe v. Franklin County*, a Missouri court decided June 7 that the plaintiff, who attended county commission meetings, has standing to sue the county and Presiding Commissioner John Griesheimer, who regularly started meetings with Christian prayer instead of the scheduled moment of silence, reported Religion Clause.

The court also refused to dismiss the suit against Griesheimer on the basis of legislative immunity because the content of the prayers didn't relate to "deliberating or passing any law."

Groups challenge 'Peace with God' judge

Judge Edith Jones of the 5th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans came under fire for public statements that blacks and Latinos are more violent and that the death penalty lets inmates "make peace with God."

A killer is "only likely to make peace with God and the victim's family in that moment when the killer faces imminent execution," said Jones, 64, in a lecture. She was appointed to the federal bench by President Ronald Reagan.

A complaint filed June 4 by several civil rights groups alleged Jones violated judicial ethics. D.C. Circuit Chief Judge Merrick Garland will appoint a committee of appellate and district judges from the D.C. Circuit to recommend whether Jones should be sanctioned and to what extent.

Prayer gets boost in Louisiana schools

Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal signed a bill June 17 which lets students, faculty, parents and religious community leaders to gather for prayer on school grounds during "noninstruction" times. It passed both legislative houses unanimously. According to the bill: "Upon the request of any public school student or students, the proper school authorities may permit students to gather for prayer in a classroom, au-

ditorium or other space that is not in use, at any time before the school day begins when the school is open and students are allowed on campus, at any time after the school day ends provided that at least one student club or organization is meeting at that time, or at any noninstructional time during the school day. A school employee may be assigned to supervise the gathering if such supervision is also requested by the student or students and the school employee volunteers to supervise the gathering.

"Any school employee may attend and participate in the gathering if it occurs before the employee's work day begins or after the employee's work day ends. Any parent may attend the gathering if the parent adheres to school procedures for approval of visitors on the school campus. The students may invite persons from the community to attend and participate in the gathering if other school organizations and clubs are allowed to make similar invitations. Such persons shall adhere to school procedures for approval of visitors on the school campus."

FFRF's home base among 'least religious'

Provo-Orem, Utah, is the most religious of 189 U.S. metropolitan areas surveyed by Princeton, N.J.-based Gallup throughout 2012, with 77% of respondees classifying themselves as "very religious." After Provo-Orem in the top 10 came Montgomery, Ala., Jackson, Miss. (64%); Birmingham-Hoover, Ala. (56%); Huntsville, Ala., Holland-Grand Haven, Mich., Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, S.C., Augusta-Richmond County, S.C./Ga., Ogden-Clearfield, Utah (55%); Little Rock-Conway, Ark., Baton Rouge, La., and Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, N.C. (54%).

Burlington, Vt., and Boulder, Colo., were the least religious (17% identifying as "very religious"). Rounding out the top 10 were Manchester-Nashua, N.H., Portland-Biddeford, Maine (22%); Santa Rosa-Petaluma, Calif. (23%); San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, Calif., Eugene-Springfield, Ore. (24%); Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, Mass. (25%); Bremerton-Silverdale, Wash., Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N.Y., Springfield, Mass., and Madison, Wis., (26%).

Aussie author strips bible’s babble bare

By Richard Silverwood

From Australian atheist Edward Falzon’s Facebook page: *I was born in Sydney, city of sinners. In the mid-80s, my family moved north to Brisbane, city of slow-driving sinners. Raised Catholic, I came to my senses in my teens, partly because I found religion to be utterly boring, and partly because I discovered that girls were generally more worthy of my attention.*

My interest in religion was rekindled to a certain extent when I, quite accidentally, went on a date with a born-again Christian. It was strange to me that an intelligent, super-hot girl was so caught up in this thing called the bible, which we began to read at the end of our first date. Not the best first date in history.

Bigots are always quick to reference the bible when opposing gay marriage, attributing their prejudices to the will of God. But how well do they actually know the book that they harp on about so much? Do they know that the same book encourages human sacrifices? Are they aware that it also prohibits wearing clothing produced from multiple types of thread?

In *Being Gay Is Disgusting* [2010, Daijin], author Edward Falzon, 38, points out that Christian fundamentalists are cherry-picking which parts of their holy scriptures they follow to fit in which their own prejudices. He points out that the biblical god displays a code of morality that is a world away from that of most contemporary Christians, and he draws attention to the bits of “the Good Book” that nobody who isn’t completely insane would ever think of following.

I caught up with Edward to learn more about his controversial book.

Q. What was the inspiration for the book?

A. Years ago, I went on a date with a born-again Christian. Other than her need to pray out loud in restaurants, she was a nice person, and I wondered what made her so enamored with Christianity. I started reading a bible, and on the first page, I read that the sun is inside the sky of Earth, the moon is a source of light and the stars were created so we know what season we’re in. I concluded that no semi-intelligent Christian could possibly have read any bible and set about summarizing the whole thing.

Q. Do you think Christianity’s popularity is declining because most Christians aren’t actually familiar with the bible?

A: I certainly do. Even Christian websites concede that only about 5% of Christians have read a bible all the way through. There’s a reason atheists are more familiar with biblical contents: Most were religious, then read the owner’s manual and thought, “What the hell?”

Q. Which of the immoral and bizarre decrees supposedly handed down by God is the most disturbing?

A: It’s probably a 15-way tie. Maybe killing your children for being disobedient or slicing open the bellies of unarmed, pregnant women for being Canaanite. How about a god requiring a man to gut his own son to test how much he fears his god? Slavery is not only sanctioned but mandated and



Edward Falzon

codified. Rape is an effective way to gain a wife. The list goes on.

Q. Why the subtitle “God likes the smell of burning fat?”

A. Partly for surrealism and partly to further illustrate the nonsense in these allegedly holy books. In the U.S. (“One nation under God”), no organization lobbies the government to burn the fat of sacrificed animals to please Yahweh. Churches don’t even do it themselves, but yet they still scream about how gayness is a sin.

Q. Why is humor such a powerful tool for exposing religion?

A: Humor is sometimes the best approach to subjects that some consider sensitive because they’ve little choice but to laugh at a concept when it’s distilled to its purest, simplest form. For example, it’s genuinely laughable when it becomes apparent that Genesis claims Abraham got rich from pimping out his 90-year-old wife.

Q. When did you first begin to question your faith?

A: Actually, I didn’t. I just grew out of it. By the time I was about 13, I neither knew nor cared whether the Christian god existed and was quite unaware of any other religion.

It seems to me that faith is like a leaky battery; if you don’t plug in and charge up at a church at least once a week, it drains out of you. You just forget about it and move on with your life.

Q. Why, as you have said, is Christianity particularly harmful to children?

A: It’s quite clear that threatening kids with eternal damnation, hellfire and suffering is going to cause them considerable distress, so that probably doesn’t need underscoring. More subtle yet equally harmful is how religion teaches kids and adults that it’s OK to believe something without the slightest shred of evidence, and even to believe things in the face of evidence to the contrary.

It also conditions people to disbelieve facts such as Darwinian evolution on the grounds that they’re unpalatable to their authority figures. This is upside-down thinking that stagnates and often reverses individual and societal progress.

Q. How has the gay community received your book?

A: I’ve had many positive reviews and none that were negative. They get the joke. In fact, my book barely men-

Despite the title, the book barely mentions homosexuality.

tions homosexuality.

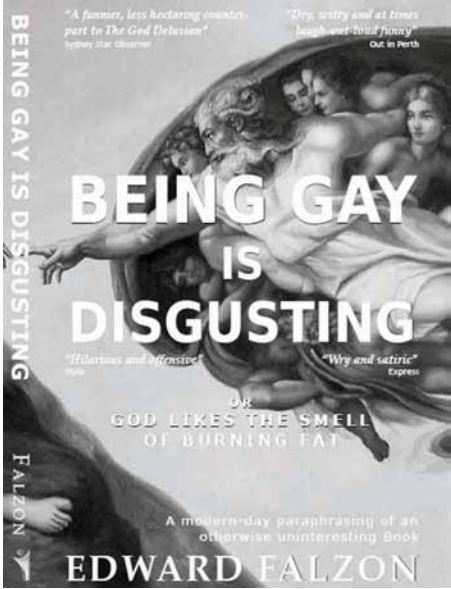
The title comes from the modern-day reality, particularly in the U.S., that the only verse in the five books of Moses that is lobbied for is Leviticus 18:22, which I paraphrase in my book as “Don’t be gay; being gay is disgusting.”

Q. You recently completed an American tour. How did that go?

A: I had a great time. I spoke in about 20 cities, mostly at universities, and was very graciously received by secular groups. I’d have liked to have gotten back on the road earlier in 2013 but things got on top of me.

Q. What can we expect from you in years to come?

A: I’m writing the sequel to *Being Gay*. It will cover the entire New Testament and has a working title of *Wom-*



en Should Shut Up and Listen. I’m also nearing completion of a small book of quotes about the secular founding of the U.S., the irreligiosity of the founding fathers and other wise, anti-religious sentiments from clever people in history.

It will be entitled *Asserted Without Evidence*, and I’m hoping I can get it on the shelves in the next three months.



Say No To Corruption!

PUNCH
#75 May 14th

Elect

ANNA PIERRE, RN

“Suk Sou Bonbon”
for **MAYOR OF NORTH MIAMI**
FREE HEALTH CARE FOR THE UNINSURED • EMPLOYMENT & JOB CREATION
CRIME PREVENTION & INTERVENTION • EDUCATION

Anna Pierre has been serving South Florida as a nurse and community leader for the past twenty eight years. She has taken the lead in providing access to care for people who don't have health insurance - as well as promoting family values and civility in our community, through her yearly Father's Day Celebration.

Anna Pierre's work as a Mother, Entertainer, Radio & Television Host / Health Educator, twenty two years as a Registered Nurse / Transplant Coordinator at Jackson Memorial Hospital, Director of Outreach at the Miami Beach Community Health Center and Head of the Not For Profit APHEC INTERNATIONAL, INC "THE PEOPLE'S CLINIC" in North Miami, which she created - armed her with a deep connection and knowledge of the needs of the community.

THE ISSUES

As your mayor, she promises to Move the City of North Miami into a brighter direction. She plans to continue to provide FREE health care for those in need. Create social programs for our seniors. Work on crime prevention and intervention. Create jobs and opportunities for small business owners. Create educational programs for our youth. A woman of high integrity, Anna Pierre promises to restore the confidence and trust the residents of North Miami have lost and are searching for.

EDUCATION

Master's in Public Health - Florida International University
Bachelor in Health Service Administration - Barry University
Associate In Sciences- (Nursing Degree) Miami Dade College
Licensed Practical Nurse - Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center

AFFILIATION

Member of HANA-Haitian American Nurses Association
Member of FNA- Florida Nurses Association
Past Board Member of Boringen Health Care Center

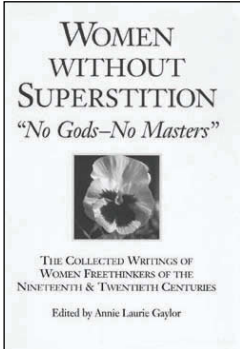
ANNA PIERRE, RN

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Lucky 7

Anna Pierre, mayoral candidate in North Miami, Fla., didn’t fare so well in the May 14 election despite her claim of maybe the Highest Powered endorsement a candidate could have. Pierre got 56 votes (0.83%) to finish seventh out of seven candidates. At a campaign stop on election day, Pierre told an NBC affiliate, “If I’m a freak and nuts for Jesus, let it be! Let the world know that Jesus is it, and when you have Jesus on your side, you can go on.”



Women Without Superstition

“No Gods—No Masters”

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF WOMEN FREETHINKERS OF THE NINETEENTH & TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Edited by Annie Laurie Gaylor

Women Without Superstition

No Gods — No Masters

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The Collected Writings of Women Freethinkers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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Black Collar Crime Blotter

Compiled by Bill Dunn

Arrested / Charged

Leo C. Koppala, 47, Blue Earth, **MN**: 2nd-degree criminal sexual conduct. Koppala, pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church and a native of India, is charged with molesting an 11-year-old girl at her relative's home, where Koppala was a dinner guest.

The complaint alleges Koppala went to a room where the girl was watching TV alone, kissed her on the cheek and lips and fondled her breasts. "Koppala told [the girl he loved her] and that when she was done with school, he wanted to come to her house so they could be free together." *Source: Pioneer Press, 6-10-13*

James Napier, 61, Alfred, **ME**: 31 counts of felony possession of explicit material of a child younger than 12 years old. Napier, who ran New Beginnings Christian Mission, was charged with a single count last August but has been indicted by a grand jury on additional charges. *Source: Press Herald, 6-10-13*

Ronald Petersen, 56, Brighton, **ME**: Theft by deception. Petersen, associate pastor at Faith Christian Center in Limerick, is accused of creating a false impression that Hope Recovery Center, located on church property, offered substance abuse treatment. The indictment alleges he defrauded MaineCare of more than \$10,000. *Source: Morning Sentinel, 6-9-13*

Cho Yong-gi, 77, Seoul, **S.KOR**: Breach of duty and tax evasion. Cho, founder and pastor emeritus of Yoido Full Gospel Church, is charged with causing \$14 million worth of losses to the church by instructing church officials to buy stocks owned by his son Hee-jun at prices 4 times higher than market value in 2002. The pastor is also accused of evading \$3.1 million in taxes in the process. *Source: Yonhap News, 6-9-13*

Clyde Downs, 48, Arlington, **TX**: Possession of marijuana, unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon and possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram. Downs, former senior pastor at New Harvest Missionary Baptist Church, was stopped for failing to signal a turn while leaving a convenience store parking lot.

New Harvest Assistant Pastor John Reed said Downs resigned in January but declined to say why. "He made a mistake, and he'll have to answer for that. But that doesn't stop him from being a good man." *Source: Star-Telegram, 6-7-13*

Donald Fregeau Sr., 90, Hydesville, **CA**: Suspicion of lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14 years of age. Fregeau, former Hydesville Community Church pastor, allegedly told police he touched a child inappropriately.

Fortuna Police Chief Bill Dobberstein said that "this has been going on for years, that there are victims going back 30 years ago." *Source: Times-Standard, 6-6-30*

K.L. Bizumot, 32, Thane, **India**: Rape. Bizumot, pastor of the Christian Church of God, allegedly raped a 19-year-old woman over a period of several months in late 2012 and early 2013. She taught church bible classes.

The woman alleged she was raped the first time after Bizumot put a sedative in her drink. She said the pastor took a photo while she was unconscious and used it to blackmail her into having more sex. She alleged he also arranged an abortion after impregnating her. He's married with 2 children. *Source: dnaindia.com, 6-4-13*

Todd M. Edwards, 49, Murrieta, **CA**: Sexual battery, sexual penetration with a foreign object and witness intimidation. Edwards was removed as bishop of the Menifee Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints after being charged with molesting 2 teen girls who attended the church.

The incidents allegedly occurred in 2011 and 2006. A third case was dropped because the statute of limitations had expired. *Source: KABC, 6-4-13*

Chukwunonso Okudiover, Ama-Alim Ngugohas, **NIG**: Okudiover, general overseer of the Jesus Army of Salvation Ministry, is accused of raping a 14-year-old boy.

Francis Ejiekwu, a family member, said the boy went to the pastor's patent medicine store because of chest pain. "He said the pastor rubbed something on his chest and he became almost unconscious, after which he raped him." *Source: Premium Times, 6-4-13*

Edward Evans, 83, Braddon, **AUS**: 3 counts of indecency on a child. Evans, a retired Catholic priest, is accused of molesting a girl between the ages of 10-16 in the 1990s at his residence. *Source: Canberra Times, 5-31-13*

Frank Klep, 69, Sunbury, **VIC**: 29 counts of indecent assault, rape of a child under the age of 14 and rape of a child under the age of 16. Klep was a Catholic priest and principal at Salesian College Rupertswood.

The Salesians deny they moved him to Samoa because of his alleged abuse of 11 boys



in 1974-84. He faces 6 more indecent assault counts filed earlier. *Source: abc.net.au, 5-31-13*

Thomas H. Baxter Jr., 35, Shawnee, **OK**: Kidnapping, weapons and assault violations and impersonating a law enforcement officer. Baxter, pastor of the Corner Stone of Jesus Christ Church and an online ministry, was taken into custody on Florida warrants.

Baxter spent 10 years in prison and was released in May 2010, said the Florida corrections website. *Source: newsok.com, 5-30-13*

Larry Dudovitz, 45, **Chicago**: Criminal sexual assault of a victim between the ages of 13 and 17. Dudovitz, formerly a rabbi at the Chabad House of Northwest Indiana, charged with molesting a 15-year-old boy in 2006. *Source: JTA, 5-29-13*

Moshe Shapiro, 78, **Jerusalem**: Soliciting aggravated assault. An indictment said Rabbi Shapiro encouraged a disciple who suspected a 71-year-old woman of being involved in Christian missionary work and pedophilia to beat her. "You have to go into her home and destroy it. You have to beat her to the point of hospitalization. I, for one, would not care if there's no one left to hospitalize," Shapiro allegedly told his follower, prosecutors said. *Source: Israel Hayom, 5-29-13*

Megan Garland, 28, Waukesha, **WI**: 2 counts of 2nd-degree sexual assault of a child. Garland, a science teacher at Messmer High School, a Milwaukee Catholic school, is accused of fellating a 14-year-old male student in a car parked at Destiny Church and School.

A witness who said the vehicle was rocking and had steamed-up windows opened the car door to see the boy with his pants down, the complaint said. Another alleged victim, a male age 15, later came forward. Fox 6 reported Garland cut herself in a failed suicide attempt and was hospitalized in stable condition. *Source: Journal Sentinel, 5-28-13*

Thomas H. Clement, 62, Clifton, **VA**: 2 counts of aggravated sexual battery of a minor. Clement, a retired teacher and principal, allegedly assaulted a 9-year-old boy on an overnight camping trip organized by Centerpointe Church in Fair Oaks.

Pastor Keith Edwards declined to say whether Clement held a formal position with the church. "Thom and his family have been part of our church for a while, but he no longer attends." *Source: Washington Post, 5-28-13*

Daniel J. Doherty, 49, and **Joanne Mirabelli**, 47, both of Tunkhannock, **PA**: Open lewdness, under the influence of an intoxicating beverage, participating in an obscene or indecent act and trespassing in a closed park. Doherty, a Diocese of Scranton priest, was discovered nude by police with his nude companion in a parked Jeep Liberty. Despite the compromising position, he denied they were having sex.

Both told police they drank 3 glasses of wine at a hotel before coming to the park. Mirabelli took a breath test which showed alcohol levels 3 times the legal limit. *Source: wcexaminer.com, 5-24-13*

Michael A. Colello, West Warwick, **RI**: DUI, refusal to take a breath test and several traffic violations. Colello, pastor at St. Joseph Catholic Church, was stopped about 11:30 p.m. after taking an exit at 85 mph. He failed a field sobriety test. *Source: WPRI, 5-24-13*

Geronimo Aguilar, 43, Richmond, **VA**: 7 felonies related to aggravated sexual assaults of 2 girls under age 14 in the late 1990s in Texas. Aguilar is senior pastor at Richmond Outreach Center. **Jason W. Helminger**, 41, an executive pastor at the church, is charged with making threatening and obscene phone calls against

an Aguilar critic. Aguilar, who's also under investigation in California, resigned from the ROC board of directors, as did Helminger. *Source: Times-Dispatch/WRIC/WBNC, 5-22-13*

Edward MacKenzie Jr., 54, Weymouth, **MA**: Racketeering, extortion, wire fraud, money laundering and mail fraud. He was director of operations at the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem Church, whose members are Swedenborgian, a bible-based denomination.

Prosecutors allege MacKenzie started in 2003 "to systematically loot the church of its considerable financial assets through a combination of fraud, deceit, extortion, theft and bribery," along with threatening church workers.

In his 2003 autobiography, he claimed he was a "leg breaker" for reputed mobster James "Whitey" Bulger. *Source: AP, 5-22-13*

David Dzermejko, 64, Braddock, **PA**: Possession of child pornography. Dzermejko, allegedly had porn on his computers in January. He was removed from public ministry in 2009 when he was pastor at Mary, Mother of the Church Catholic parish in Charleroi. He was never criminally charged in the alleged abuse, which dated to the 1980s. *Source: AP, 5-20-13*

Roberto Padilla, Storm Lake, **IA**: Domestic assault causing injury. Padilla, a Pentecostal pastor, allegedly hit his wife several times with his hands and kicked her. *Source: Pilot Tribune, 5-20-13*

Peter Bananiye, 60, Kammengo, **UGA**: Defilement. A 7-year-old girl told police that Bananiye, pastor at Lukango Church of God, asked for help carrying his luggage and then raped her at a cassava plantation. A woman later saw the girl bleeding alongside the road and took her to a clinic. *Source: allafrika.com, 5-20-13*

Michael Gothard, 49, Beaufort, **NC**: 5 counts of indecent liberties with a child and 6 counts of 1st-degree sexual offense. Gothard, a minister at New Community Church, was indicted for sex crimes with a victim under age 13 from 1999 to 2005. *Source: WITN, 5-17-13*

Daniel Lopez, 52, Lynn, **MA**: Rape of a child with force and 7 counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14. Lopez, pastor of Vida Real Internacional Congregation, is charged with molesting 5 children, male and female, under age 9. *Source: Daily Item, 5-16-13*

Cedric E. Cuthbert, 49, Sanford, **FL**: Solicitation of a minor via computer and possession of material depicting sexual performance by a child. Cuthbert is pastor at St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church and also a custodial manager at Disney World.

A Disney employee tracking Cuthbert's computer usage at work told police he downloaded pornographic videos and typed a biblical sermon based on John 13 and Psalm 148. The arrest affidavit stated that semen was found in his office. *Source: WKMG, 5-16-13*

Marek M., 40, Inowroclaw, **POL**: Suspicion of possessing and distributing child pornography. "The man has been provisionally detained for 3 months," prosecutor Stanislaw Gluszek said.

"He is still a priest, but he cannot administer any sacraments, nor can he preach," said Fr. Zbigniew Przybylski, spokesman for the Catholic Diocese of Gniezno. *Source: AFP, 5-15-13*

Trevor Fortner, 25, Levelland, **TX**: Enticement of a minor. Fortner, youth minister at Fifth Street Baptist Church, allegedly sent sexually explicit photos and text messages to an undercover officer posing as a 15-year-old girl. *Source: KCBD, 5-15-13*

Robert S. Daniel, 37, Thomaston, **GA**: Theft by deception and burglary. Daniel, pastor of First Free Will Baptist Church, is accused of

Pastor Williams is heard on an audio recording asking for 'eye candy.'

defrauding a 77-year-old female congregation member out of \$30,000.

His wife, **Renee M. Daniel**, is charged with party to a crime of burglary for allegedly luring the woman away from her home so the pastor could steal documents. *Source: Thomaston Times, 5-13-13*

Evelyn Mills Moore, 57, Kings Mountain, **NC**: Assault inflicting serious injury. The complaint states she hit another woman "numerous times" with a closed fist and a bible. *Source: Gaston Gazette, 5-13-15*

An **unidentified Catholic priest**, 59, defrocked in 2005, was charged in Armidale, **NSW**, with committing an act of indecency, 11 counts of sexual intercourse without consent and 52 counts of indecent assault. Charges relate to alleged assaults against a boy and 2 girls, aged 9 to 19, in 1982-85. *Source: The Telegraph, 5-9-13*

Marcos Pereira da Silva, Sao Joao de Meriti, **BRA**: Rape and coercion. Pereira, pastor of Assembly of God of the Latter Days, is accused of raping 6 women, including 3 minors. One alleges she was molested from age 14 to 22. A statement on the church's website defended Pereira, who has been denied bail: "The Bible teaches that there is no evangelism without persecution."

Two male congregation members face charges for coercing witnesses in the case. *Source: O Globo, 5-8-13*

Brian C. Gray, 51, Wheatland, **CA**: Unlawful sex, lewd and lascivious acts, and oral copulation with a minor. Gray, pastor at Anchor Baptist Church, admitted a year-long sexual relationship with a girl, 16, said Undersheriff Jerry Read.

Read said his department was alerted by Gray's brother-in-law, a Kansas police officer. *Source: Appeal-Democrat, 5-8-13*

Johnny Murff, 37, Lakeland, **FL**: Grand theft. Murff, pastor at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, allegedly stole \$5,561 over 17 months from church accounts. *Source: The Ledger, 5-7-13*

Kong Hee, 48, **Singapore**: Conspiracy to commit criminal breach of trust. Kong, pastor of the City Harvest evangelical church, is accused with 5 church members of misusing nearly \$40 million of church funds to further his wife's career. Kong and his wife, Ho Yeow Sun, claim her pop music career was a way to reach out to non-Christians.

City Harvest has an estimated 30,000 members, with branches in Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, Brunei and Australia. It launched its first U.S. church last Easter in Irvine, CA. *Source: Christian Post, 5-7-13*

Jeffrey D. Williams, 47, Corinth, **TX**: Attempted sexual performance of a child. Williams, lead pastor of the Church of Corinth, is accused of trying to get an underage female to strip.

The alleged victim told police the pastor "locked the door and put a chair up against the door . . . then tried to persuade her for over 2 hours off and on to remove her clothes so he could see her naked." Williams is heard on an audio recording asking for "eye candy," the arrest warrant said. *Source: nbcdfw.com, 5-2-13*

Ashley C. Fleming, 23, Powder Springs, **GA**: Shoplifting. An arrest warrant said Fleming was caught stealing a bible at Barnes & Noble: "Said accused did exit the store with the merchandise, passing all pay counters." *Source: Journal-Constitution, 5-1-13*

Timothy Lee, 58, Greenville, **SC**: 9 counts of lewd act on a minor and 18 counts of criminal sexual conduct with a minor. Anders, a maintenance worker at Wrenn Memorial Baptist Church, allegedly assaulted a victim at the church and at Anders' home from 1981-86, starting when the boy was 10.

During the probe, another alleged victim told police Anders started molesting her in 1976 at church and at his home when she was 6. Anders' nephew said he doesn't believe the allegations: "He raised me and he's the best man I've ever known." *Source: WYFF, 5-1-13*

Jonnie F. Winnell, 59, Elkview, **W.VA**: 3 counts of sexual abuse by a parent, guardian and/or a custodian. Winnell, pastor at United Gospel Mission, allegedly molested a female family member for several years. *Source: Charleston Daily Mail, 4-30-13*

William Carney, 63, Gloucester, **UK**: Car-

ney, a defrocked Irish priest, was arrested in London on a warrant for alleged molestation of at least 32 children, male and female. One alleged victim, Paul Dwyer, committed suicide.

In her report to the Irish government, Judge Yvonne Murphy called Carney “a serial abuser of children. The commission is aware of complaints or suspicions of abuse against him in respect to 32 individuals. There is evidence that he abused many more children.”

Carney fled Ireland in 1992 and married a woman in Scotland. She divorced him after learning about his past. *Source: Irish Sun, 4-29-13*

James Bertrand, Westlake, **LA**: Possession and distribution of crack cocaine. This was the 5th arrest in the last 8 months for Bertrand, founder of the “Just for Jesus” rallies. A notice on the door at his “No Fear Auto” car dealership said the business was closed and its inventory had been seized.

Jaimi Hansen, a Just for Jesus volunteer who bought a car from Bertrand, said that six months later the car started smoking so she took it back and paid \$400 to get it fixed.

“I haven’t gotten my title back from him, even after I paid my car off. I’m beginning to rethink my faith because of some of these pastors. They just want money,” Hansen said. *Source: KPLC, 4-26-13*

Pleaded / Convicted

The **Jerusalem** District Court convicted **Me-nachem Edri**, former head of Ben Ish Chai Yeshiva, of shooting one of the school’s students. Edri served as rabbi at the yeshiva but was never ordained.

He and an accomplice were found guilty of wounding Eliyahu Liberty, 26, after learning he was involved in criminal activity. Edri shot Liberty twice in the foot and struck him with the gun. *Source: ynetnews.com, 5-30-13*

Malcolm Fraser, 40, Enumclaw, **WA**: A jury found the Sound Doctrine Church assistant pastor guilty of 2 counts each of 1st-degree child rape and 1st-degree molestation after a 2-month trial. The victim, now 18, was 11 when the crimes took place while Fraser was living with her family. *Source: Courier-Herald, 5-30-13*

Scott McVean, Carluke, **SCOT**: Pleaded guilty to possessing thousands of images and videos of child pornography from 2006-12. McVean worked for Scripture Union, a Christian group that sponsored school assemblies, assisted chaplaincy teams and presented Christmas and Easter programs.

Colleagues discovered the porn on a flash drive McVean accidentally dropped. The hour’s worth of images depicted mostly naked girls between the approximate ages of 9 and 16. *Source: STV News, 5-30-13*

Donnie Snook, 41, Saint John, **NB**: Pleaded guilty to inducing a child by threat to distribute or post a naked picture, 2 counts of sexual assault, 9 counts of making child pornography, 2 counts each of possession of child pornography and making child pornography available, 13 counts of sexually touching a minor, 10 counts of inviting a youth to touch him, 3 counts of touching a child for a sexual purpose while in a position of trust and 4 counts of communicating with a child for a sexual purpose.

Snook was director of the Saint John Inner City Youth Ministry, which operated the Chicken Noodle Club, a daily hot lunch program for disadvantaged youth. He was also a city councillor.

Prosecutors said there were 17 victims from 2001-12, all boys aged 5 to 15. *Source: CBC Canada, 5-28-13*

Brian Gray, 51, Wheatland, **CA**: Entered guilty pleas to contacting a minor with the intent to commit lewd and lascivious acts and 3 counts each of unlawful sex with a minor and lewd and lascivious acts with a minor. An in-law of the Anchor Baptist Church pastor alerted authorities to the incidents involving a 16-year-old girl. *Source: news10.net, 5-23-13*

Robert C. Hester, 27, Easton, **PA**: Pleaded guilty to writing more than \$20,000 worth of checks from empty or depleted church bank accounts. Hester wrote the checks in 2012 to cover personal expenses on accounts from 2 A-lentown churches he ran — Pneuma Life Center and Maranatha House of Refuge — knowing the accounts were closed or had insufficient funds. *Source: Morning Call, 5-21-13*

Rick Bartlett, 56, Bastrop, **TX**: Guilty of animal cruelty. Bartlett, pastor at Bastrop Christian Church and a police department chaplain, was charged for an incident in which he trapped a cat named Moody in his yard. He took the cat to animal control and was told to return it to the owner listed on Moody’s collar.

Moody was later found dead under a bridge. Bartlett claimed the cat jumped out of his truck. Moody’s owners are suing him. *Source: Baytown Sun/KVUE, 5-20-13*

Yosef Kolko, 39, Lakewood, **NJ**: Pleaded guilty to aggravated sexual assault, attempted aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. Kolko was a counselor at an Orthodox Jewish summer camp, where he admitted molesting an 11-year-old boy in 2008-09.

The boy’s family moved to Michigan after being shunned for reporting the abuse to secular authorities. His father, a Lakewood rabbi, lost

his job as a result. *Source: Asbury Park Press, 5-16-13*

Michael Miller, 43, Berlin, **CT**: Pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography, obscenity and 3 counts of risk of injury to a minor. Miller, pastor at St. Paul Catholic Church, was accused of having inappropriate contact online with 7 teens.

The arrest warrant detailed how Miller invited a 13-year-old boy to watch a “dirty movie” so they could “have some fun,” and also wrote in “extreme detail” about sex acts he would perform on the boy.

A 16-year-old victim told police Miller emailed him videos from a church computer of an unknown person masturbating. *Source: Hartford Courant, 5-3-13*

Thomas Shoback, 66, Wilkes-Barre, **PA**: Guilty of 9 counts of sexual abuse for molesting an altar boy for 6 years while he was pastor at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Blossburg in 1991-97. Another 23 counts weren’t prosecuted due to the statute of limitations.

Shoback’s brother Edward was defrocked by the Vatican in 2009 after similar allegations. *Source: WETM, 5-1-13*

Sentenced

Charles Engelhardt, **Philadelphia**: 6-12 years in prison and 5 years’ probation for molesting a 10-year-old boy in the late 1990s while Engelhardt was pastor at St. Jerome Catholic Parish. **Bernard Shero**, a parochial school teacher, was sentenced to 8-16 years and 5 years’ probation for raping the same boy in 2000. *Source: CNN, 6-12-13*

Tony Walsh, known as the “Singing Priest,” had 15 months added to his 16-year prison sentence for molesting Irish school boys after 2 more victims came forward.

Walsh was sentenced for indecent assaults on the boys, ages 10 and 11 in 1979. The assault on the older boy allegedly took place on Good Friday. *Source: Irish Central, 6-10-13*

A court in Gazipur, **Bangladesh**, fined **Mohammad R. Amin** and **Mohammad E. Haque** \$128 each for breach of conduct for campaigning for a candidate in the city’s July 6 elections. They are respectively the imam and muezzin at an Islamic mosque.

Judge Sazid Anwar said that after getting a tip, “We went to the spot and caught them in the act.” *Source: bdnews24.com, 6-7-13*

Ryan J. Muehlhauser, 55, Cambridge, **MN**: 160 days in prison and 10 years’ probation after pleading guilty to 2 counts of criminal sexual conduct. Muehlhauser, pastor at Lakeside Christian Church, admitted telling his victim that he was “hearing the Lord tell him what to do.” The victim had gone to the pastor for help with his “homosexual tendencies,” the complaint said. *Source: WCCO, 6-56-13*

Angela R. Linder, 42, Yorktown, **IN**: 17 months in prison for embezzling more than \$130,000 over 9 years while working as an administrator at Union Chapel United Methodist Church in Muncie.

The prosecution alleged Linder used the money for trips, home renovation projects and fees at fertility and weight-loss clinics. *Source: AP, 5-29-13*

Ashok Singh, Dehlon, **India**: Life in prison for murder. Singh, a Sikh priest, was convicted for gagging his wife with a rubber ball and strangling her in 2010. *Source: Times of India, 5-29-13*

Christine Daniel, 58, Santa Clarita, **CA**: 14 years in prison and forfeiture of \$1.2 million for convictions on 4 counts of mail and wire fraud, 6 counts of tax evasion and witness tampering. Daniel, a Pentecostal minister and ex-physician, sold a “miracle cure” called C-Extract on the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

Daniel claimed C-Extract cured cancer, multiple sclerosis, strokes, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, diabetes and hepatitis. Deaths of 6 people who paid at least \$5,000 for the product have been documented. One person who died paid \$13,000. *Source: Orange County Weekly, 5-23-13*

Auri C. Jones, 29, Lynchburg, **VA**: 4 years in prison (suspended after serving 60 days), 3 years’ supervised probation, 4 years’ good behavior and no supervisory contact with unrelated minors. Jones, who was fired as youth director at Mountain View United Methodist Church, pleaded guilty to unlawful filming or photographing of another.

Police found “upskirt” videos depicting 2 females, an adult and a 16-year-old, on his camera. One incident happened at the church and the other at Lynchburg College, where he was an adjunct professor. He also worked at the late Rev. Jerry Falwell’s Liberty University for 6 months until being fired in 2008.

Jones was also a volunteer on the film “Finding Faith.” It details experiences of people working in child protective services. *Source: Bedford Bulletin, 5-22-13*

Gordon Rideout, 74, Polegate, **UK**: 10 years in prison after conviction on 34 counts of indecent assault and 2 counts of attempted rape. Rideout, a retired Anglican priest, molested at least 16 girls and boys between 1962-73 at a now-closed children’s home and at an army site. *Source: Daily Mail, 5-20-13*

Joey Faust and Ramon Marroquin, both

of Venus, **TX**: 2 days in jail and \$250 fines for interfering with public duties. Faust, pastor of Kingdom Baptist Church, and church member Marroquin tried to break a police line and pass out gospel tracts at the Fort Worth “Ride the Rainbow” gay pride parade. *Source: Christian News, 5-20-13*

John Cole, Merthyr Tydfil, **Wales**: 30 days in jail, \$660 fine and 2 months’ driver’s license suspension for drink-driving. Cole struck a pedestrian in Rome in 2006, resulting in “catastrophic” brain injuries and fractures in the man’s skull, spine, knee and shoulder. Cole reportedly fled the scene but returned 10 minutes later.

In a civil suit, the 37-year-old victim, an Englishman on vacation, was awarded a lump sum of \$4.7 million and \$326,000 annually for life. *Source: The Journal, 5-16-13*

William C. Wert, 56, Venice, **FL**: Life in prison on 8 convictions for sexual offenses against a child. Wert, a Carmelite Catholic priest, was charged with having sex with a 14-year-old boy at various locations (Wert’s home, vacant house, wooded area, motel room) in 2010-11.

The boy’s family sued the Carmelites, claiming the order knew of Wert’s past conviction for molesting another 14-year-old boy but still let him move from Washington, D.C., to Venice. The order settled the suit for \$1.75 million. *Source: Herald-Tribune, 5-16-13*

Gustavo R. Talabera, 39, West St. Paul, **MN**: 5 years in prison and 10 years’ probation. Talabera, a married evangelical pastor who started his own congregation, pleaded guilty to 3rd-degree criminal sexual conduct for having an affair with a 16-year-old girl in 2012. *Source: Star Tribune, 5-15-13*

Robert J. McManus, 61, Worcester, **MA**: \$900 fine and costs, 6 months’ loss of driver’s license and 10 hours’ community service after pleading guilty to refusing a chemical test after a driving accident. McManus, bishop of the Worcester Catholic Diocese, was arrested after the driver of the car he allegedly hit followed him home and called police.

Although a police report said McManus failed sobriety tests, had slurred speech and was unsteady on his feet, charges of DUI and leaving the scene of an accident were dismissed. *Source: Telegram & Gazette, 5-15-13*

Andrew J. Folks, 70, Sedbergh, **UK**: 8 months in jail after pleading guilty to indecent assault and attempted indecent assault of a teen boy while Folks was a priest in the Catholic Diocese of Carlisle. *Source: Evening Mail, 5-8-13*

Charlie Golden, 60, **Detroit**: 2 years’ probation, community service and \$3,000 fine. Golden, pastor at Perfecting Freedom Church and a city buildings official, allegedly signed phony city invoices so that taxpayers would pay for an exhaust system over a deep fryer at the church. *Source: CBS Detroit, 5-6-13*

Ronald Burning, 60, Ohsweken, **ONT**: 10 years in prison on convictions for sex assaults against male and female adults and children dating to the 1970s and continuing for decades while he was a Baptist pastor.

“I wanted to quell the hurt with suicide. I wanted to die. I fear my inability to complete the basics of one simple day,” a victim said at sentencing. *Source: Hamilton Spectator, 5-6-13*

Meir Dascalowitz, 29, Brooklyn, **NY**: 5 years in prison after pleading guilty to having sex with a teen boy. Dascalwitz molested the boy, now 17, in a ritual Jewish bath.

Mordechai Jungreis, the boy’s father, said the family was shunned by the ultra-Orthodox community for reporting a fellow Jew. “I’m happy to show the community that the game is over. If you do the crime, you need to do the time.” *Source: N.Y. Daily News, 5-1-13*

Civil Lawsuits Filed

Californian “John Doe 100” is suing the Catholic **Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis**, alleging he was molested starting in 1971 by **Thomas S. Stitts**, pastor at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church. A new state law lifts a 6-year civil statute of limitations for victims of childhood sexual abuse. The bill passed the state Senate unanimously and by 115-7 in the House.

Multiple other alleged victims, including 4 brothers in Edina, have sued. Stitts died in 1985. *Source: Pioneer Press, 6-5-13*

“John Doe” is suing **Daniel Kubala**, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Miami, **FL**. Kubala took a leave of absence after the male church employee filed the suit.

Doe alleges Kubala lured him into a bedroom April 8 and groped his genitalia. Doe claims he rejected the advance, after which Kubala allegedly said to come back the next night after drinking whiskey to “make it better.” He claims the priest made another unwanted advance April 29 and offered him \$200. *Source: NBC Miami, 6-4-13*

Two brothers, now 46 and 45, who served Mass at a South Berwick, **ME**, Catholic parish are suing the **Diocese of Portland** for not stopping alleged sexual abuse by **Fr. James Valley** in 1976-79. The priest died in 1997. *Source: Bangor Daily News, 6-3-13*

An unidentified 51-year-old is suing the **Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis**, the **Diocese of Winona, MN**, and ex-priest **Thomas Adamson**, 78, alleging Adamson molested

**‘I fear my inability to complete the basics of one simple day.
— victim of Baptist Pastor
Ronald Burning**

him. Allegations of the priest’s involvement with young boys started in the early 1960s, but he remained a priest until 1984. *Source: La Crosse Tribune, 5-29-13*

More than 80 alumni of Chicago-area Catholic schools will share in a \$16.5 million settlement by the **Irish Christian Brothers in North America** with about 400 sexual abuse victims nationwide.

About 30 Illinois plaintiffs have sued the order, 10 brothers and 2 laymen for alleged abuse dating to the 1970s.

Individuals named in the suit are **Edward C. Courtney**, **Dennis Bonebreak**, **Robert Brouillette**, **Edmund Corrigan**, **Thomas Duffin**, **C.B. Irwin**, **Daniel McDonough**, **Paul Reycraft**, **Michael Trujillo**, **Phillip Vorlick**, football coach **Joe Johnston** and wrestling coach **Robert Cachor**. Johnston died in 1987. *Source: Chicago Tribune, 5-23-13*

The **Kansas City-St. Joseph Catholic Diocese** and **Msgr. Thomas O’Brien** are defendants in a wrongful death suit filed by the parents of a 14-year-old boy who killed himself in 1983, allegedly after being molested by O’Brien.

“They had, by the time Brian Teeman committed suicide, received no less than 17 reports of serious danger to children by this priest but chose to hide that information and ignore its responsibility to report his illegal behavior to the authorities,” the suit says.

The diocese later got at least 12 more complaints about O’Brien, the suit claims. *Source: Kansas City Star, 5-20-13*

A former parishioner at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Schaumburg, **IL**, is suing an ex-priest and the Archdiocese of Chicago, accusing the priest of molesting him in 1995 when he was 10 and continuing until he was 18.

The plaintiff alleges the priest gave him \$3,000 in 2003 in exchange for signing an agreement not to report the abuse. The Chicago Tribune is not naming the defendant “because he is not on a 2006 list of clergy it says have been credibly accused of abuse of minors since 1950.” *Source: Chicago Tribune, 5-16-13*

The **Catholic Diocese of Joliet, IL**, faces 5 new suits alleging priests and a lay teacher sexually abused boys as young as 8 in the 1970s and 1980s.

All of the accused priests were removed from the ministry between 1992 and 2012. One priest and the teacher have died. *Source: Sun-Times, 5-15-13*

Kathryn M. McGrath, now 59, was “barely 16 years old,” her lawsuit alleges, when Vincent A. O’Connell molested her soon after her father died. O’Connell was pastor at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Fresno, **CA**.

After her father died in 1970 and her mother started to drink heavily, McGrath took on the role of caring for her siblings. One day in the kitchen, she alleges, O’Connell pushed her up against a cabinet, started kissing her and forced his hand down her pants, digitally raping her. She broke away and hid in a closet.

The suit says she has a “vague memory” of a later incident when O’Connell “was on top of her.” O’Connell, 80, now lives at a home for the Holy Ghost Fathers in Ireland. *Source: Fresno Bee, 5-8-13*

An Indiana woman is suing the **Diocese of Evansville** and other Catholic officials for allegedly failing to protect her daughter from being raped, ironically during an overnight church-sponsored abstinence retreat for young Latinos in 2007.

Sylvia Gameros’ developmentally disabled daughter, then 23 but with the mental capacity of an 11-year-old, lost her virginity in a bathroom to **Fredy Mendez-Morales**, who was convicted of rape in 2008 and deported.

“I felt like they tried to sweep all this under the rug and lay all of the blame on [my daughter],” Gameros said. *Source: Indianapolis Star, 5-6-13*

Civil Lawsuits Settled

Grace Episcopal Church in Whitestone, **NY**, will pay \$192,500 to settle a sex harassment and retaliation suit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. EEOC alleged an interim rector made unwelcome advances to a secretary and a sexton, including sexual remarks, grabbing their breasts and kissing them. The secretary was fired after rebuffing the advances. *Source: eeoc.gov, 5-22-13*

The **Chicago Province for the Society of Jesus** (Jesuits) will pay \$19.6 million to settle a suit brought by 6 men alleging ex-priest **Donald McGuire**, a spiritual adviser to Mother Teresa. McGuire is serving 25 years on a 2008 conviction for bringing a minor across state lines to en-

Rev. Billy's porno 'fact-finding' mission

Below is a note from renowned illustrator (and FFRF honorary director) Edward Sorel to FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor.

Dear Annie Laurie:

Attached is a photo I found in the early 1970s while looking at photos at United Press international. It was taken in 1969, and shows Billy Graham studying the enormous penises in a porn shop in New York City. Here is his version of what he was doing there. It's from Time magazine:

"One day I put on dark glasses and a hat and pasted on long sideburns, and I went to some of these stores in New York. I had thought that Sweden was bad, but Sweden hasn't gone near to the depths of various sex deviations and obsessions that we have gone. I suppose there are sections of this country that have sunk as low as anything in history, because in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah and Pompeii and Rome, they didn't have the presses or the motion pictures to stimulate all

of this."

As you can see from the photo, Billy did not disguise himself.

— Ed

In a piece in The Nation titled "New York, New York, It's a Hell of a Town," Sorel noted that as Graham "approaches his 95th birthday [Nov. 7], heterosexual Christians around the globe prepare to toast his never-ending crusade against sexual deviation. Although Billy has brought his ministry to the spiritually needy everywhere, it wasn't until he visited a New York City porn shop in the summer of 1969 that he fully realized how far America had descended into sin and depravity."

Sorel wondered, "Why did he say he was in disguise when he wasn't? Had he been in disguise on previous trips to such establishments? And how did he know these porno shops were worse than Sweden's? Furthermore, what exactly was the hand in his pocket doing?"



Credit: © Bettmann/COBIS

Black Collar Crime Blotter

gage in sex. He also was convicted in 2006 of molesting 2 boys in Wisconsin during the 1960s.

Plaintiffs range in age from their 20s to 40s. Documents recently released show the Jesuits hid McGuire's crimes as far back as 1970. *Source: CBS Chicago, 5-20-13*

Parents who accused a Concord, **NH**, priest of making inappropriate sexual comments to their 14-year-old son during the sacrament of confession will get \$2,000 to settle their breach-of-contract suit against the Catholic **Diocese of Manchester**.

Fr. George Desjardins of Christ the King Parish was accused of asking the boy during confession whether he had "engaged in watching pornographic material and masturbating." He also allegedly told the boy to use "rubbers" and warned him to be careful because a girl can "yell 'rape'" during sex. *Source: Concord Monitor, 5-17-13*

The Catholic **Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph** and **Bishop Robert Finn** have settled for \$600,000 a suit alleging **Fr. Shawn Ratigan** took pornographic photos of a 2-year-old girl at a church in 2006. Ratigan pleaded guilty in August and awaits sentencing. He failed to respond to the civil suit. *Source: AP, 5-16-13*

A Colorado man and the Catholic **Diocese of Bismarck, ND**, have settled for undisclosed terms a suit alleging a priest forced him as a preteen to perform oral sex. Steven Crochet, 46, accused **Fr. Maurice G. McNeely** of molesting him at a U.S. Army base in Hawaii in the mid-1970s. *Source: Dickinson Press, 5-4-13*

Legal Developments

Uzi Rivlin, 65, Teaneck, **NJ**, suffered a stroke days before his trial for molesting 2 male foreign exchange students was set to start. His attorney said the rabbi was in a medically induced coma and was unresponsive. A doctor verified Rivlin was unable to walk or talk.

The Israeli boys, both 13, stayed at Rivlin's home during 2 summers as part of a scholarship program he helped set up. He also taught at Temple Beth Abraham in Tarrytown, NY. *Source: northjersey.com, 6-3-13*

A **California** Superior Court judge set a Sept. 10 deadline for more than 50 Catholic religious orders to release confidential personnel files of members accused of sexually abusing children. Files are related to lawsuits already settled for \$660 million.

Files for as many as 100 priests and brothers will be made public as they are provided to the court. *Source: KPCC, 5-28-13*

A **California** Superior Court judge upheld the 18-year prison sentence of **Dino Cardelli**, 51, an Arcata pastor who pleaded guilty in 2011 to child molestation and intimidation of a witness. He was sentenced for assaulting his 2 adopted daughters.

Cardelli will now serve at least 85% (15 years) of the sentence and be on supervised parole for 20 years. His wife committed suicide after telling people she suspected what he was up to. *Source: Eureka Times-Standard, 4-30-13*

Allegations

Kingsford Kusi-Kyere, head pastor of the

He also allegedly told the boy to use "rubbers" because a girl can "yell 'rape'" during sex.

Abokobi branch of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, is accused by 7 male church members of sexual abuse. A church committee is reviewing the allegations.

Eunice Ida Odonkor of the Greater Accra victims support unit told Joy News that victims said the pastor masturbated them. *Source: GhanaWeb, 5-16-13*

Robert Ritz, 60, Brooklyn, **MD**: Marijuana and paraphernalia possession. Ritz, assistant principal at Monsignor Slade Catholic School in Glen Burnie, was led from his home in handcuffs and police confiscated a computer.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore said in a statement that police had searched the campus "in connection with an allegation from a former student who alleges being the victim of sexual abuse at the school in the mid-2000s."

WBAL-TV reported police are investigating an incident of inappropriate According to police, several unidentified staff members were suspended from the school. *Source: Eye on Annapolis, 5-10-13*

While **Msgr. Edward J. Arsenault** was being investigated by the Catholic Diocese of Manchester, **NH**, for having an "inappropriate adult relationship," the diocese discovered evidence of financial irregularities. Arsenault has resigned as president of the St. Luke Institute in Silver Spring, MD, a treatment facility serving mostly Catholic clergy. *Source: WCVB, 5-7-13*

Removed / Resigned

James J. Collins, 74, is on leave during a probe of abuse allegations dating back 40 years in the **Archdiocese of Philadelphia**, where he served as a priest and worked in various schools. Officials said Collins has retired as a priest and from the faculty of Holy Family University. *Source: WPVI, 5-29-13*

John McCabe is on leave as pastor of a Catholic parish in Roslea, **IRE**, while an allegation of child sexual abuse is investigated.

"The allegation has been reported to the civil authorities and all procedures laid down by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland are being observed," said Diocese of Clogher Bishop Liam McDaid. *Source: Fermanagh Herald, 5-29-13*

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service and FBI agents raided a Gonzaga University office and apartment in Spokane, **WA**, as part of a child pornography investigation. According to court records, someone using a credit card issued to **Fr. Gary Uhlenkott**, a music professor at the

Eyes on the prize?

Follow Billy Graham's eyes and assess his gaze. A little more than clinical, i.e., coolly dispassionate?

Catholic school, spent \$1,654 on purchases from a Toronto film company that was raided in 2010 by U.S. and Canadian authorities.

Among the titles purchased were "Boy Fights XXVIII: Bucharest Holiday," "Boys of Europa" and "God or Goat." Uhlenkott is on leave but no charges have been filed. *Source: Spokesman-Review, 5-24-13*

Sean O'Connell, 32, was removed as administrator of Queen of Apostles Catholic Church in Pewaukee, **WI**, for failing "to exercise good judgment in a relationship he has had with an adult woman," said a statement from Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listek.

"Father Sean will need to address his actions and he will receive assistance in doing so," Listek said. *Source: Journal Sentinel, 5-21-13*

John McGinn, 65, pastor at St. John's Episcopal Church in Sandwich, **MA**, was suspended for allegedly plagiarizing verbatim as many as 15 sermons from the book *Dynamic Preaching*.

Bishop Thomas Shaw said McGinn continued to plagiarize after pledging not to after allegations surfaced a year ago. McGinn said he will retire. *Source: AP, 5-18-13*

Francisco J. Ruiz, was dismissed as pastor of a Catholic parish in Murcia, **Spain**, by Bishop of Cartagena Jose Manuel Lorca Planes after an erotic video surfaced of a man believed to be Ruiz. The 29-second clip was taken by a passing cyclist. Ruiz denied he is the man shown fondling another man in the video. *Source: N.Y. Daily News, 5-16-13*

James Havens, 62, pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Mobile, **AL**, was put on administrative leave after a 34-year-old woman alleged he molested her in 1989 in her home.

In December, **Robert L. Nouwen**, a St. Vincent deacon, pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography. *Source: al.com, 5-16-13*

St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson said an independent advisory board believes a recent allegation from the 1970s against **LeRoy Valentine**, 71, is credible, so Carlson has been permanently removed from the Catholic ministry.

Earlier, 3 brothers who said they'd been molested by Valentine in 1982, settled a suit for \$20,000 each. *Source: Post-Dispatch, 5-8-13*

David Loveless, 58, has resigned as lead pastor at Discovery Church, Orlando, **FL**, after admitting to an extramarital affair. He and his wife, Caron, have been married 33 years.

Loveless is the 3rd pastor of a major Orlando-area church to resign in the last 6 months because of an affair. Isaac Hunter, lead pastor of Summit Church, had an affair with a staff member, and Sam Hinn, pastor of the Gathering Place Worship Center, admitted to one with a congregation member. *Source: Orlando Sentinel, 5-6-13*

Michael Fugee, 52, a priest in the Archdio-

cese of Newark, **NJ**, resigned from the ministry but remains a priest after a public furor arose when Catholics found out he was working around children at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Colts Neck. He was convicted in 2003 of twice fondling a teen boy's genitals, but an appeals court vacated the verdict.

Fugee underwent counseling for sex offenders and signed an agreement not to engage in youth group activities.

Thomas Triggs, St. Mary's pastor, also has resigned, as have youth ministers **Michael** and **Amy Lenehan**, who invited Fugee to take part in youth activities. *Source: Star-Ledger, 5-3-13*

Other

About 30 minutes after Rafael Padilla checked into the San Antonio Relax Inn, hotel staff got a call from him asking for an ambulance. Padilla, 42, pastor of Ascension Catholic Church in Bastrop, **TX**, had cuts and bruises and was wearing only underwear when police responded.

The police report noted the room contents included a cold, unopened beer, condoms and lubricating jelly.

When asked how he was hurt, Padilla told police "he thought he was dreaming and didn't know what was going on." *Source: Express-News, 6-7-13*

John Manzi, charged in Lodwar, **Kenya**, with sodomy, was found dead hours after being released on bail. Manzi, a Catholic priest, hanged himself with an electrical cord, authorities said. A student had accused him of molestation. *Source: Standard Media, 5-7-13*

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests is calling for the firing of ex-priest **Russell L. Romano** as a counselor at a mental health facility in Des Plaines, **IL**. Romano is accused of molesting 5 boys and is listed on the Chicago Archdiocese's website as the subject of "substantiated allegations of sexual misconduct with minors."

He was ordained in 1973 and defrocked in 2009 but was never criminally charged. *Source: Daily Herald, 5-16-13*

Richard Balentine, 38, Niles, **IL**, was found dead with a rope around his neck in his residential room at Notre Dame College Prep, an all-male Catholic High School, a day after he was questioned by police about "inappropriate communications with current or former students." He was director of campus ministry and chair of the Religious Studies Department.

Balentine was to receive the Teacher of the Year award from the Niles Chamber of Commerce at the annual Night of Roses banquet April 27. He died April 16. *Source: Journal & Topics, 4-24-13*

Email: blackcollar@ffrf.org

Letterbox

Some valuable advice about after-life

FFRF’s exciting plans for an expanded building inspire me to send you \$5,000 to become an After-Life Member. You do *so* much to nudge (or sometimes force) the world in a kinder, more rational direction that, even though I’m now paid up for over half as many lives as a cat has, I’ll continue to make annual contributions to support your wonderful work.

Thank you all for your inspiration and for the pin, which I will wear with pride and will be a “conversation starter,” as are my other freethought pins.

We intend to spend our last dime on our last day. In the course of our preparations for this event, our financial adviser suggested that we list FFRF and other organizations and people explicitly as beneficiaries for our IRAs, life insurance, etc. In contrast, if we pour these investments into our general estate, they may incur the standard rate for probate fees, expenses charged by our executor, etc.

Chuck Berry
Pennsylvania

Poetry that’s music to FFRF’s ears

Here’s our double thousand bucks to educate some ignorant clucks. There’s money from me, and more from Bill, to spite those who say we’re goin’ to hell.

Rah-rah FFRF, keep up the good fight despite the wrath of the “righteous” Right.

Loraine and Bill Davis
Proud new Lifetime Members
Maine

...

I’ve been planning to send in my lifetime Membership for months. Hurray!

Barbara Colley
Oregon

Fan of Zeus, Beatles pays tribute to FFRF

Who says you can’t prove God doesn’t exist? It only takes a simple four-word sentence: “Perfection cannot create imperfection.” The bible says God is perfect. The bible says God created man and Earth. The bible says man is not perfect, and I’m sure we can all agree the Earth is not. Simple logic tells you that these facts just don’t add up.

Nor does the old argument that God gave us free will hold water. We have plenty of free will (who to marry, what career to pursue, what to eat for lunch) without having to include good vs. evil. God could have made a world with no evil. For that matter, God could have made a world without free will and designed humans to be happy in that situation.

I play drums in a Beatles tribute band. As the only atheist, I am outnumbered 3 to 1. At almost every gig, “Paul” closes the night with “God bless you.” Once in awhile I’ll come back with, “No, it’s Zeus’ turn tonight to bless the audience,” but it doesn’t seem to have any effect. My dream is to play at an atheist function to get a little revenge! Enclosed is my check for \$1,000 for Lifetime Membership, which is quite a sacrifice on a starving musician’s salary. Thank you for all your great work. After all, what could be more important

than the truth?
Alan Wagner
Illinois

Family Foundation head values Foundation

My mentor and very close friend, James Smith Rudolph (formerly of Ann Arbor, Mich., but now living in Florida), suggested I consider supporting the Freedom From Religion Foundation as well as my support of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Having read your April 2013 Freethought Today, I am enclosing this check for \$1,000 payable from our Family Foundation.

I love the “Crank Mail” for the wonderful ironies about Christian charity it reveals and the “Black Collar Crime,” which goes on and on revealing hypocrisy after hypocrisy. This is quite amusing were it not such serious stuff.

Thanks to you for your good work and to Jim for recommending this avenue for our charity.

Peter Heydon
Michigan

‘Christian nation’ piece much appreciated

I loved your Jan/Feb newspaper so much I can’t stop thinking about it, especially Andrew Seidel’s article on “Debunking the Christian nation.” All articles were excellent and necessary, but Andrew’s article for me was something I never thought I would see in my lifetime.

Has he or anyone thought of debunking the words “Jesus Christ,” since one meaning in the dictionary for Christ is “an ideal lifestyle?”

Peggy Coulson
Texas

FFRF offers sanity for the secular

As a federal employee living and working in the D.C. area, I was thrilled to see our full-page ad today in the Washington Post on the National Day of Prayer. And with all the religious lunatics continuing their mayhem (e.g., Boston), I only wish I could give way, way more.

Ward Sorensen
Washington, D.C.

Gets kick out of ‘out of the closet’

I was delighted this morning to find on FFRF’s website the acknowledgement of Oklahoma atheist Rebecca Vitsmun’s response to Wolf Blitzer’s question about prayer. Then came the fine nonbeliever’s “invocation” by Arizona state Rep. Juan Mendez. Both took guts.

I’m getting a big kick out of coming out of the closet and your campaign is helpful. I bought many bumper stickers from the website and other sources and change them “religiously” on my car monthly. My focus is not to insult Christians but to, hopefully, open their minds that there is a beautiful, vibrant life out there on the other side of their very high fence.

Finally, I was amused by the pope’s comments that even atheists can do good. Have you secretly put him on your payroll? Come on, ’fess up, we can take it!

Jack Red
North Carolina



A Florida member sent this along as an example of how some folks seem to have put their critical thinking skills on permanent vacation.

‘Exotic dancing’ article was disappointing

I have given a lot of thought to Judith Lynne Hanna’s article on exotic dancing in the April issue. As a feminist, I was deeply disappointed to find such an article in a publication I value highly. I have always had a serious conflict with the ACLU’s position that pornography is speech. Pornography damages women and children, and yes, men, and I cannot condone nor tolerate it.

If Hanna thinks that men who leer at strippers are respecting their art form, she is way off base and contributing to the objectification of women. Further, just because Christians are against it does not make it a bandwagon for atheists to jump on.

If we do things just because Christians are against them, our actions are still being determined by them. I would appreciate it if Freethought Today would only publish articles dealing directly with nontheism.

Sue Gibson
Missouri

‘Jesus fish’ symbol preceded Christianity

Your staff attorney, Elizabeth Cavell, successfully eliminated a “Jesus fish” from City Hall in Rolla, Mo. [May13]. Perhaps it would be even better to publicize the traditional meaning of the so-called Jesus fish, and more amusing.

For the vast majority of its thousands of years as a symbol, this sacred fish sign has represented female genitalia as the “gate of life.” In India it’s well known as the holy yoni. How it came to be “Jesusized” is fully described on page 175 of my book *Man Made God* [ffrf.org/shop/books/].

I think “If they only knew!” and enjoy a good laugh every time I see a magic yoni on the bumper sticker of some fundamentalized car.

Barbara G. Walker, Life Member
Florida

Liked FFRF national ads, missed the mail

I received my Freethought Today and read it cover to cover. I miss the crank letters, although I can understand if you are no longer going to print them. They are vile, but they are the one thing I point out when I pass on a copy of the paper to others.

I love the ad you ran in the Washington Post on the National Day of Prayer. It was a similar ad in the Los Angeles Times (“Time to Quit the Catholic Church”) last July 4 that caused me to join your organization.

I didn’t realize that May 2 was the National Day of Prayer or I would have sought out a place to demonstrate, picket or otherwise make my feelings known.

Pat Hall
California

Editor’s note: The cranks got squeezed for lack of space and return this issue on page 26.

Shelley: ‘Hail to thee, blithe spirit!’

In “Inhaling spirituality’s heady fumes” [Dec13], Dan Barker is quoted saying, “If something exists, then it must be measured or measurable. How much does spirit weigh? How much space does it take up?”

Under that premise, then, love cannot be measured, nor can it be measurable. Does that mean love doesn’t exist? How about happiness? How much does happiness weigh, or how much space does it take up?

I’ve noticed in recent months increasingly strong efforts by intellectual secularists to encourage us nonbelievers to erase the words “spirit” and “spiritual” from our vocabulary. They explain that those words have a supernatural connotation and are therefore contaminated with superstition.

Let us consider, however, the word “demons,” which is also associated with the supernatural. Yet, down through the centuries, certain gifted artists and composers have been described as “battling their demons.”

Are we to assume, then, that intelligent readers will interpret those “demons” literally as ugly red creatures with horns, goatees, cloven feet and long tails? Of course not! They understand those “demons” are metaphors that describe the emotional anguish of temperamental artists as they struggle to satisfy their creative hunger.

If we are to breathe life into our description of deep emotions and experiences, we need to use some form of allegory or symbolism. Natural language simply can’t create the desired effect. Certain ecstasies (such as falling in love) create an unbridgeable gap between what we experience and what we can portray. How could anyone de-

scribe romantic love in cold, natural or scientific language and find it satisfying?

Let's also not forget that the openly atheist poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, opened one of his most loved poems, "To a Skylark," with the words: "Hail to thee, blithe spirit!" Does that imply that perhaps Shelley was not an atheist after all? Or that he had doubts about his nonbelief?

Again, of course not! The poet was merely describing, with imaginative language, a beautiful singing bird.

Even though we don't believe in the supernatural, I hope we never lose our sense of mysterious wonder when we gaze into our beloved's eyes or the eyes of a little child.

David Quintero
California

Valedictorian's prayer was merely childish

Although Liberty High School graduate Roy Costner in South Carolina purposely flouted the law to proselytize his religious beliefs in a public forum, the amount of publicity he's received has made the occasion far more important than it actually is. Newspapers and TV news reports have continued to keep this story alive, front and center.

Costner's intent was to dare his teachers, his principal, anyone in authority and all of those listening to stop his address and interrupt the Lord's Prayer. He knew exactly what he was doing, and he knew he would not be stopped! It wasn't a "calculated risk," it was a sure thing. When was the last or the first time anyone has been interrupted or stopped while reciting the Lord's Prayer? Blackballed? Burned at the stake?

His actions were more like a 5-year-old having a temper tantrum than a young man who is a leader and the class valedictorian. He is someone who ignores rules, embarrasses his school and gloats over his triumphs, especially at the expense of others.

Jeanne Owers
Texas

Christian movie review led to more hilarity

I read Sarah Eucalano's review of "Facing the Giants" [May13] aloud to my husband and we both laughed until we cried. It motivated me to go to YouTube and waste two hours of my life watching the movie.

Sarah hit most of the tripe, but what about that creepy guy who walks the halls spouting prayers over the kids' lockers? To me, that was one of the weirdest things in the movie.

Julie Johnson
Georgia

The 'mysterious unknown' only divides people

This May 23 letter to the editor of the Arizona Daily Star by FFRF Life Member Stephen Uhl was headlined "Respect differences, commonalities." It refers to criticism of atheist state Rep. Juan Mendez, D-Tempe, by Rep. Steve Smith, R-Maricopa, for delivering a godless "invocation" to open the May 21 House session (see Newsnotes page XX).

I pray (hope) that Rep. Steve Smith, while appreciating our commonalities, comes to respect our honest differences. Rep. Jamescita Peshlakai showed much liberating wisdom telling Mr.

Smith: "Your God is no more powerful than my God."

The great theologian Karl Rahner insists that "God is a mystery."

So why keep letting the mysterious unknown divide us when we are all praying for what atheist Mendez prayed (hoped) for? Is it faith-based blindness we saw recently on a bloodied street in London (his God is great); is it our frustration with our limited power when gunmen and weather kill innocent adults and children?

Let's all hope (pray to each other) that we can lovingly open our eyes to each other's real common hopes as we get free of blinding superstitions of the past. The Golden Rule still works for all, believers and nonbelievers.

Member's mailman moves in mysterious ways

I was very much looking forward to receiving my FFRF debaptismal certificate signed by Dan Barker, so you can imagine my horror when I discovered that my postman doesn't share my desire to keep church and state separate. Despite your attempts to make the envelope sturdy with a sheet of cardboard, he folded it in half and shoved it into my mailbox.

But when I opened the envelope, what did I see? Behold! Two sheets of parchment in perfect condition! It's a miracle! Or something. Probably just materials science. But something, I'm sure of it.

Of course, I only managed to print my name on one of them correctly (but hey, 50% ain't half bad, right?), so I guess the miracle was somewhat limited and/or didn't extend to my inkjet printer.

Nick Frollini
Pennsylvania

Whoa there: God + 1 equals majorities?

Regarding religion and democracy, "Me and God make a majority," declared my Pentecostal friend, ungrammatically. We were allies on a political campaign (to save 12 acres of City College land from a developer), so I never argued religion with her.

I can guarantee she was the real thing. One day she invited me over for lunch, and after lunch she talked in tongues, and then had her 10-year-old son talk in tongues. It raised the hairs on the back of my neck.

Obviously, it would be difficult to run a democracy if people coming to vote brought God with them, producing a great multiplicity of majorities.

Sid Kass
California

'Act of God' dangerous term for believers

The term "act of God" is unique to the English language and an unfortunate mislabeling of natural phenomena. In languages of less superstitious cultures, reference is made to the equivalent of "natural" phenomena, disasters or catastrophes. The French "force majeure" and German "höere Gewalt" simply imply a higher natural power, something more powerful than us, and not divine fantasy.

Blaming anything from Obamacare and same-sex marriage to lack of school prayers and not enough commandments plastered in courtrooms preys on the superstitious. Besides adding insult to injury, such ignorance feeds a thriving, lucrative religious industry that takes advantage of gullible souls



Minnesota nice

From left are Ken Eck, Cathi Harding and Lura Harding, members of the Grand Rapids Atheists and Freethinkers, an FFRF chapter. They were part of a group of 12 GRAFers cleaning up a 2-mile stretch of highway. The ongoing effort is part of the group's "Good Without God" campaign, Eck said: "Ironically, this section of highway became available to us because the Catholic churches of the Greenway area had dropped their sponsorship. So the heathens have picked up (literally) where the church dropped off." (Alana Hughes photo)

easily convinced about the existence of a vindictive, divine force out to punish, instead of forces of nature, of which science understands more and more.

Unscrupulous preachers, misguided politicians and other charlatans thrive on their low-info flocks who foolishly gobble up their nonsense and hand over their money in exchange for a false sense of protection. Not only is praying utterly worthless, but resistance to protective actions thought to be "against God's will" may easily cause even more damage and additional loss of life.

Jorg Aadahl
California

IRS won't stop religious electioneering?

The Alliance Defending Freedom's "Pulpit Freedom Sunday" blatantly violates 501(c)(3) rules against politicking and electioneering by religious organizations. The IRS will not enforce the rules against churches like they do to the rest of us. Why? Afraid of offending the religious, right-wing community?

The tea party screams discrimination but says nothing about getting away with Pulpit Freedom Sunday. I demand Congress hold hearings and Investigate and order the IRS to enforce the law. What's good for the goose ...

Ray Sparrow
Florida

Editor's note: Read about FFRF's lawsuit challenging church politicking on page 6.

Smile, you made it through another night

Smile, breathe deeply, it's another bright sunny day in little ol' Mascoutah, Ill. I received a nice birthday card from a host of freethinking friends in Madison, Wis. My children are all coming home tomorrow, I'm still planting

daffodils, have four huge buckets of them waiting on my shovel. My house is dusty, but I don't care. Life is short; make fun of it. As my old friend Emily Dickinson, an informed atheist/freethinker and America's No. 1-rated female poet ever (Walt Whitman and Robert Frost tied for first among male poets) reminded us:

That it will never come again
Is what makes life so sweet
Believing what we don't believe
Does not exhilarate.

Enjoy each day as though it is going to be your last. Make "to do good" your religion.

Joseph Cunningham, FFRF Officer
Illinois

Just call it 'Freedom of Religerence'

It's common for nefarious nations to activate ambitious belligerence. And for various denominations to advocate malicious religerence. Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jew — all are God-licensed to slaughter the other, and do.

JB Kennedy
California

Keep currency neutral regarding God

One objection to "In God We Trust" is that it is not accurate. In order to be accurate, the motto would have to be changed to "In Various Gods Some of Us Trust."

Some claim that removing the motto from our money would advance the atheist position. That is not so.

The atheist position would be to put the motto "There Is No God" on our money. Having neither a pro- nor an anti-religious motto is the neutral position and the position mandated by the Establishment Clause.

Charles A. Wilson, Life Member
California



Denver People’s Fair

FFRF’s Denver chapter tabled at the June 1 fair. From left are Lifetime Member Lance La Certe, chapter President Claudette St. Pierre and Lifetime Member Vince Borengasser. (Photo by Scot Schneider, chapter secretary.)

Overheard

My sister told me that my mom asked her when I was going to baptize my kids. My sister just told her, “Mom, she doesn’t believe in that, why would she?”
Lilliam Alfaro, a Latina atheist from Baltimore
latina.com, 5-27-13

In addition to Iraq and Afghanistan, religious sentiment is strong in Ghana, Nigeria, Armenia and Fiji, where more than nine in 10 people say they’re religious. WIN/Gallup notes that religiosity is highest among the poor and, to a lesser extent, among the less educated, which certainly correlates among the most religious countries.
Max Fisher and Caitlin Dewey, poll analysis
Washington Post, 5-23-13

The food was predictably terrible, the bed was unforgiving, and the only thing he was allowed to read was the bible. To stay sane he sang “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” because it reminded him of his wife.
News story about Richard Ross, photographer and professor at the University of California-Santa Barbara, who spent 24 hours in solitary confinement in a juvenile detention center as part of his Juvenile-In-Justice project
wired.com, 6-4-13

He’s not my brother. In my mind, he died a long time ago. I still can’t believe David got away with all this. People today have to think twice when they see a Roman collar.
Linda Cervizzi, 63, one of the siblings trying to remove the name of their brother — a defrocked Catholic priest accused of being part of a Massachusetts child sex ring — from the family’s cemetery headstone
Worcester Telegram & Gazette, 6-5-13

A lot of people still think atheists lack morals and have to be shunned or silenced. So we thought it would be a good idea to tell the world that we are

humans like them and the only difference would be that we believe in science and not a supernatural being.
Dolly Koshy, on her participation in “Hug an Atheist Day” on June 7 across India
dnaindia.com, 6-5-13

Facebook and Twitter made it easy to find people who debate and are interested in secular values. We nonbelievers have meetings and groups in a lot of Saudi cities. Although it’s really hard to notice them, if you go into them, then you will be shocked by the numbers and elements of society represented.
“Jabir,” a Saudi Arabian atheist in his 20s, noting that open atheism there can result in death
yourmiddleeast.com, 5-1-13

They did nothing to help that child. That’s why it’s murder.
Philadelphia prosecutor Joanne Pescatore, successfully arguing against dismissal of charges against Herbert and Catherine Schaible, who lost a second child after failing to seek medical help because of religious beliefs
Reuters, 6-12-13

I feel that religion, adopted purely, is ultimately representative of blindly making someone else’s beliefs your own.
Edward Snowden, U.S. spying whistleblower, from a 2003 online comment when he joined the Army and listed Buddhist, saying “agnostic is strangely absent” from the enlistment form
New York Times, 6-16-13

I wish we kept meetings of our government bodies separate from our ritual expression of faith and piety. The desire to blend them is really nothing other than a desire to signal an official endorsement of the superiority of God belief over atheistic and nontheistic belief systems.
Columnist Eric Zorn, “Let us not pray”
Chicago Tribune, 4-24-13

Sharing the Crank Mail

A sampling of the voluminous crank mail recently received by FFRF, printed in all its grammatical glory:

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE A FOOLS MOUTH I SHALL BEAT YOU INTO HEAVEN!!! YOU AND YOUR COMPANY LLC IS A FUCKING JOKE...I BET YOU SQUAT TO PEE AND THE WOMEN HAVE MORE HARE ON THEIR FACE THAN HEAD..BUT GO KICK PUPPIES AND SUE SCHOOLS OR CHURCHES YOU FUCKS AND PLEASE DON'T BOTHER TO WRITE BACK OR TO RETALIATE... I WILL POST THIS MYSELF ON HUFFINGTON POST... PEACE OUT — *Chuck Robertson*

a hymn for your chief lawyer - HYMN, HYMN, FUCK HIM — *D. Nadom, Linmon, Calif.*

YOU are scared, atheist, satanic, liberals!! YES, religion DOES belong in our schools, idiots! Not religion, but CHRISTIANITY. You lose, homosexuals, and whatever other mentally ill lifeforms make up your disgusting ranks. — *I Love Jesus, Lake Placid, Fla.*

What are you going to do if the Bible (Christianity) is the truth (and every word in it). What if there is a real heaven and hell? I would at least test the “God” of the Bible, and to the fullest extent, before I went and put all of my ducks in one basket, if heaven/hell are real “or not”, just to be sure. But I would be willing to believe that you will see Him one day. — *Dustin Bock, Orange, Texas*

We need you out of schools, see no good in your group. IN GOD WE TRUSH. — *Bruce Clark*

You people are a minority in this country. God, Guns, and Guts built this country and you bunch of pantywastes want God removed for our society. Why don’t you all move over to Afghanistan and live. You think it is so bad in this country!!! We laid our lives on the line for you draft dodging cowards and you are out to spit at us every chance you get. — *James Benoit, Delray Beach, Fla.*

Do you realize before prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, there were NO innocent people being slaughtered in our schools? So I guess you could actually be charged with accessory to murder. — *Terry, Pennsylvania*

We fight for freedom of speech and right to bare arms. Ect.. People like you make me sick to my stomach. I fought for my country for freedom. From people like you to tell me what I can and can’t do.. Your freedom group sucks Donkey Dick.. — *Marc Pardi*

You people need Jesus in your life! If it wasn’t for him you wouldn’t be here!!! As for the portrait in Jackson, Ohio I don’t see how it is any of your business? I have an idea MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!!! I would never join your group and whoever does join or is already in your group is Stupid!!!! — *Amy Arthur*

I was wondering who was the voice of Satan, considering he hasn’t a body of his own. Now I have a physical visual image of you anti God organization. Proud mother of 3 Eagle Scouts from a Gay-Free program! Yep, I love God, His laws and commandments, and have His son’s picture hanging in my kitchen. We home school. You can not control our American School. Ha,Ha,Ha. — *Teri Knox*

communists like you fuckers really take the cake. I hope there is a Jesus and he burns you assholes. If bringing the U.S. to its knees is your goal, then stopping you should be every American’s goal. And I’ll bet the damn 90% of you are foreigners dedicated to just that. If there is a hell, hope your its most prominent guests. — *FF*

Do you all suck dicks also or just but into others’ lives? Cause I could really use a blow job from your atheist mouths~ never had one from an atheist — *Richard Knox*

I DO NOT HAVE A RELIGION, I AM FREE FROM RELIGION!! I have and serve a LIVING Saviour, not a dead Buddha, nor a dead Mohammad, nor a string of dead Popes, or other “religious” leaders in religions that are totally dead! — *William J. Kerr*

Stay the Hell Out of Texas!! — *Mike Thomas, 11202 Fuch Yew Ln*

the hate for the ffrf: the ffrf is stupid if u think u gonna come to Texas and tell how to raise our kids if u don’t like our beliefs then get hell out of my country as Texans we will bring our kids to believe in God and country. — *Jim Paul, Longview, Texas*

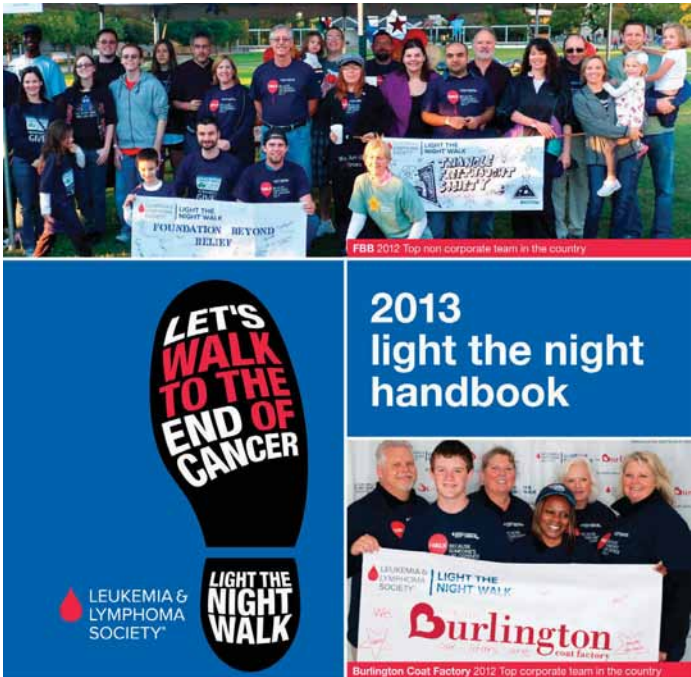
Lindale, TX: Thanks for the free publicity for our 5th grade program that you tried to snuff out. Thanks to you over 2100 people attended, with others standing and listening from outside. And most of all, THANK YOU JESUS FOR YOUR PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR OUR FREEDOM FROM SIN & DEATH!! — *Debbie Sanchez*

Downfall of Society: Stay the hell up north, you Yankee bastards. It’s organizations like FFRF and the ACLU that are the downfall of this country. — *M Ackerman, South Carolina*

Lords prayer: I love what that student did! Up you collective fucking asses! Fuck all atheists. Hope all you die lonely, pathetic fucking people when hour time comes. — *D Weatherford*

Fuck you: Why don’t y’all get fucked. Concentrate your time on something that needs attention like abused and neglected children. Again fuck y’all. — *Get A Life, Texas*

I want to donate: fuck you motherfuckers. Burn in hell you damned atheists. This is the Bible belt, so fuck off bit ch!!111 — *jack schachter*



FFRF’s chapter in the Raleigh, N.C., area is recognized on the top of the cover of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s national handbook for being the 2012 Foundation Beyond Belief top noncorporate fundraising team taking part in the Society’s charitable “Light the Night Walks.”

Japanese-American escapes Christian nation myth

By Satoko Makino

Aloha:

This is just one example of how an immigrant can be misled into thinking that he or she must be a Christian to be a true American. I also want you to know there is someone like me reading your newspaper.

I grew up going to a Christian church in Japan, only because my parents wanted a place where they could leave children on Sunday morning. I struggled to make sense out of the biblical stories as a child. The stories did not fit with the things taught in history or science classes at school.

When I was in high school, my family migrated from Japan to the U.S. mainland. I had a very difficult time learning the unfamiliar language and fitting in the American high school culture. The school staff encouraged me to join a church youth group, a Christian one in order to be more "American."

There was a church youth group leader who had access to our high school. He said my doubt about the bible's authenticity was an insult to the U.S. and made me less patriotic. He told me I would never understand American culture unless I became a Christian. I decided to be baptized.

I misunderstood by thinking that



Satoko Makino with her daughter Cherry and puppy Pua at the Makapuu Point Lighthouse on Oahu's easternmost point.

the U.S. was a Christian nation. The people in his church had a very firm opinion about my birth country: Japan was never going to be recognized as a civilized nation because Japan was not a Christian nation.

My doubt grew stronger as I matured. History, anthropology and philosophy classes in college never helped my Christian faith. "Praying until inconsistencies disappear" was not an acceptable problem-solving skill.

My doubt was heightened when George W. Bush took office as presi-

dent. It was obvious he was totally incompetent as a president despite being such a devoted Christian. But by then, I had my whole social life built around the church.

When I expressed my doubts, my friends told me to pray until I no longer saw inconsistencies in the bible. I did not have the courage to admit I was not a believer. I was afraid I would be persecuted for not trying to be American enough.

But after awhile, it was too uncomfortable to pretend I believed in

Jesus. I did not want to lie to myself and friends at the church. I never announced my lack of faith, but I completely withdrew from church activities. I lost many friends and moved out of the area.

Currently I reside in Hawaii, where generations of Japanese-Americans have established unique communities. I see many Japanese-American people belonging to Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, but many are totally nonreligious. They are proud to be American regardless of their faith or nonfaith.

Now I look back on what made me believe I had to be a Christian to be a true American. My desire to be an "American" was twisted by the Christian church. I was naïve. I wanted to have friends and belong to something in a country where I knew nobody. It was my fault.

A very simple and easy conclusion came out of a very long soul-searching process: I am happy to be an American without religion.

Mahalo [thank you] and thank you for reading.

FFRF member Satoko Makino is an accountant at a property management company in Honolulu. An MBA graduate of the University of Phoenix, she lives with her daughter Cherry, their cats Vanilla and Honeybee and dog Pua.

FreeThought Music available online

By Steve Brecker

I'm an FFRF member in Virginia and I've just launched a new venture that I want to share with other members. I am calling my project FreeThought Music.



There are hundreds of radio stations in the marketplace catering to religious talk and music programming but few outlets where freethinkers can enjoy music with freethought messages.

FreeThought Music is an Internet radio station that streams a wide selection of musical styles, all of which promote freethought messages. It's available 24/7 so you can listen anywhere and anytime via your computer, tablet or smartphone.

To visit, go to live365.com/stations/freethoughtmedia/.

You may need to register for the free membership to Live365 in order to access my station. But you do not need to sign up for the trial VIP membership. Just complete and submit the free registration and log in with your user name and password. (The benefit of VIP membership is that you don't get interrupted by commercials.)

FreeThought Music's playlist cur-

rently includes 40 selections. I'm looking to grow it with as much musical diversity as possible. All musical styles are programmed, including classical, jazz, country, rock, pop, folk and Broadway musicals. It's a veritable cornucopia of freethought musical expression!

I realize that due to the broad selection, some people may not like some of what they hear. Some people don't enjoy heavy metal rock and others don't like jazz. But I'm betting that most freethinkers are also open-minded enough to stay tuned to find music they do enjoy and selections that may grow to like.

Here's a partial sampling of artists so far: Bad Religion, Crosby Stills & Nash, Dan Barker, Dave Matthews, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Zappa, Jimmy Buffett, John Lennon, Motorhead, Tim Minchin, Randy Newman, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Steve Martin, Shelley Segal, Tool, XTC, Ziggy Marley and Roy Zimmerman.

All of the music programmed is available for purchase via download or CD purchase through a link to *Amazon.com*. Click on the track listing in the "Last Played" window that you wish to purchase.

Most of the music can also be purchased through Amazon via another site I'm building, *freethoughtmarketplace.com/*. This site is still under construction but is functional and purchases can be made.

I welcome all comments and suggestions for music selections to add. Thanks!



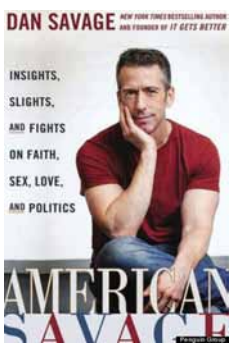
Meet the newest staffers

FFRF publicist Lauryn Seering (left) and journalism intern Sarah Eucalano take a break from office chores. (Photo: Andrew Seidel)

Savage, Mendez join FFRF convention lineup

Joining the 36th annual national FFRF convention lineup, with each receiving FFRF's Emperor Has No Clothes Award, will be columnist **Dan Savage**, and Arizona state Rep. **Juan Mendez**. The Sept. 27-29 convention starts Friday and ends Sunday at the Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton St., in downtown Madison, Wis.

Syndicated sex columnist Savage was offered FFRF's special award, reserved for public figures who make known their dissent from religion, after writing, "I haven't spent my post-Catholic decades in a sulk, wishing the church would come around on the issue of



homosexuality so that I could start attending Mass again. I didn't abandon my faith. I saw through it." (New York Times, 4-11-13)

The activist, whose new book is called *American Savage*, is co-founder with his husband Terry Miller of the "It Gets Better Project" on YouTube to inspire hope for LGBT young people facing harassment.

Mendez made national news when he bravely delivered a freethought invocation May 21 instead of a prayer before the state House of Representatives. Mendez asked legislators not to bow their heads but instead to look up, and in-



voked Carl Sagan instead of a deity. Mendez, a first-term legislator, is a public atheist and secular humanist.

Also joining the lineup will be Life Member **Ellery Schempp**, who instigated the lawsuit ending in the landmark 1963 Supreme Court decision *Abington v. Schempp*. The decision declared school bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer unconstitutional. Ellery, a retired scientist, will celebrate the decision's 50th anniversary.

Also on hand to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the first major Supreme Court decision against religious instruction in public schools will be Life Member **Jim McCollum**. Jim, who teaches constitutional law, was at the center of a firestorm when his mother, **Vashti McCollum**, challenged religious instruction in Champaign, Ill., public schools.



perform Friday night after Dan Savage and all will sign books, CDs or DVDs.

Entertaining Saturday night will be Australia's talented young singer/songwriter **Shelley Segal**, who has recorded a freethought CD, "An Atheist Album." FFRF Co-President **Dan Barker** will also entertain at the piano and include selections from FFRF's new CD "Adrift on a Star" and team up with Shelley for a few songs.

Receiving a Freethought Heroine Award will be mystery writer **Sara Paretsky**, an ardent supporter of state-church separation and women's reproductive rights and creator of the famous V.I. Warshski detective series.



Jamila Bey worked for a decade as a producer and editor at National Public Radio on such shows as "Morning Edition," "All Things Considered" and "Talk of the Nation." She hosts "The Sex, Politics and Religion Hour: SPAR with Jamila." It airs weekly in Washington and New York City.

Honored with the first Richard and Beverly Hermen Student Activist Award of \$5,000 will be **Zack Kopplin**, 19, a Louisiana student activist who's made national news in his work to repeal a stealth creationism law in his home state.



Julia Sweeney (left) and Jill Sobule promise convention-goers some great entertainment. Also singing, Shelley Segal.

Register online at: <http://ffrf.org/outreach/convention>

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



Number registering

Freedom From Religion Foundation's 36th Annual Convention September 27-28, 2013 The Madison Concourse Hotel Madison, Wisconsin

Make checks payable to "FFRF"



_____ FFRF member registration(s) @ \$65 per person	\$ _____
_____ Nonmember spouse or companion accompanying member @ \$70.....	\$ _____
_____ Nonmember registration(s) @ \$110	\$ _____
(or join for \$40, save \$5!)	
_____ Student registration(s) @ \$25 (Ask about student group rate)	\$ _____
_____ Saturday Non-Prayer Breakfast @ \$20* per person	\$ _____
_____ Classic _____ Classic Vegetarian _____ Vegan/gluten-free	
_____ Saturday Night Dinner @ \$45* per person	\$ _____
_____ Turkey _____ Salmon _____ Vegetarian _____ Vegan	
If gluten-free, please specify.	
* Meal prices include 20% gratuity & 5.5% sales tax	
Total: \$ _____	

Name(s)	Please include names of all registrants for nametags
Address	
City/State/ZIP	
Please include phone/email (in case we have a question about your registration)	