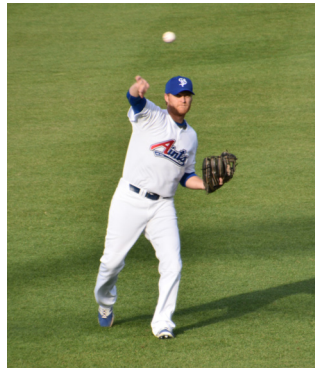


July/August 2017
Volume 27
Number 6

Saints to Aints Six years running!



Back by popular demand, the Minnesota Atheists are taking over the St. Paul Saints minor league baseball team for another night of *unbelievable fun!* Freedom From Religion Foundation agreed to co-sponsor with us again this year for the Saturday, August 12 game. This year's night is being billed as "Food for Thought" because we are asking fans to bring non-perishable food items to donate to the Food Group food bank, where local atheists have volunteered every month for the past five years.

The food donations will help the Food Group support community food shelves throughout the state, improving this world and helping make life in the here and now better.

We will be tailgating before the game starting around 3:00 p.m. at the parking lot under the Highway 52/Lafayette Bridge on Prince Street. It's two blocks southeast of CHS Field, and five short blocks from the Union Depot station on the Green Line.

Those in attendance can expect to be entertained with atheist-themed antics between innings and can bid on the atheist-themed jerseys players wear during the game. Personalized 2017 game jerseys can be ordered ahead of the game for \$50 by emailing the Minnesota Atheists board at board@mnatheists.org by no later than July 23.

Tickets in our group portal section are available now at SaintsGroups.com (password: foodforthought). It's \$21 for the Infield ("Infidel") section and \$11 in the General Admission section by left field. Both tickets come with a brand new 2017 St. Paul Saints hat. Seats are limited and we sold out before the game last year so don't wait too long!

Those familiar with this event and with the St. Paul Saints (partly owned by comedian Bill Murray) know that the sport of baseball is a secondary feature at CHS Field. The primary attraction is the shenanigans and entertainment throughout the game put on by local actors and dedicated front office staff with the St. Paul Saints. But in case you're interested, the St. Paul Saints are well into first place and poised to win their third division title in a row!



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President's Column The Fizzeling of the Fourth

By Alyssa Ehni



I had a difficult time getting into the 4th this year. More and more it seems like patriotism in the United States means being a flag waving, gun-toting, bible-thumping, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, football player (or in my case, his cheerleader girlfriend). I do not exactly fit in with any of these ideas. The Bible thumping has and continues to grow louder and louder. I am not even sure that the general public would consider someone patriotic without some level of religiosity.

Being American is an identity that was handed to me. It is not one that I chose. It is one that is shaped mostly by what other people deem to be American. The current cultural perception of “being American” is not consistent with what I was taught growing up. I learned that the mixing of many different cultures is what made our

Day of Reason Protecting Jefferson's Wall

By Steve Petersen

The 2017 Day of Reason theme was Protecting Jefferson's Wall between government and religion. **Heather Hegi**, Minnesota Atheists, was the MC for the event. **Hertzey Hertz** represented Minnesota Atheists; **Audrey Kingstrom**, and **Bobbi Jacobson**, The Humanists of Minnesota; **David Pacheco**, Americans United for Separation Church and State, Minnesota Chapter; **Rev. Dr. David Breden**; First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis; and **George Kane**, Freethought Toastmasters. For the first time, we had 5 legislators speak, with more in attendance: Representatives Mike Frieberg, Ilan Omar, Tine Liebling, Raymond Dehn, and Susan Allen. Omar is the only Muslim in the Minnesota Legislature and Allen is the only Native American.

country great. A variety of cultures would mean a variety of religions would follow. However, this is not what I generally see in practice.

It seems that many Americans believe that the United States is a “Christian” nation. Some are able to allow room for deviations while others believe that there is no place for those who are not Christian, let alone those who are lacking a belief in any deities. It seems atheism is tough to defend as being “American.”

I find some hope when I march in the May Day parade or when I table at Pride. The first time I marched in the May Day parade I was shocked at the number of people who were genuinely excited to see us. Every year I table at Pride, people who are believers in a liberal Christian sect or alternative religion will approach our table and tell us they are glad we exist and promote secularism. I also find hope in polls that show “nones” and people living generally secular lives are growing in number, especially amongst the younger generations.

This hope offers a small counter balance to the fears I have with the current political and social climate. Maybe next year it will be easier to get into the 4th and feel patriotic.



Representatives Raymond Dehn, Ilan Omar Mike Frieberg and Tina Liebling

Day of Reason Speech

A Handmaid's Tale

By Hertzey Hertz



Good Day!

Thank you for coming out! Today is a special day, not only for those supporting the separation of church and state, but for geeks, specifically *Star Wars* geeks. Today is “May the 4th be with you.” As much as I

would like to talk about *Star Wars* (and trust me I can), it is another fictional world that catches my eye today. The dystopian novel, *A Handmaid's Tale*, written by Margaret Atwood. For clarification, Dystopia, according to Webster's, is an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives. The genre of dystopia started with *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift and has such notable authors as George Orwell and Ursula K. Le Guin.

A Handmaid's Tale, was written in 1985 and

One of the first things done to set up their governance, is to strip the protection we have with the first amendment.

has been produced into multiple media formats from movies and podcasts to ballet and opera. It just made another, rather timely, debut as a series on Hulu. The world is set in a dystopian future, where America has become a Christian theocracy called The Republic of Gilead. The story is told, not from the ruling class, from which many stories are told, but from the lowest. Offred (the main character), is what is called a handmaid. Due to environmental issues and disease, most people are sterile — handmaids are the few remaining women who are fertile. To make the world great again, the Republic of Gilead took society backwards, beyond the 1950s to a more 1600s philosophy, where human rights, and specifically women's rights are severely limited. For women, it comes with losing everything: from jobs and the ability to own property to your free-

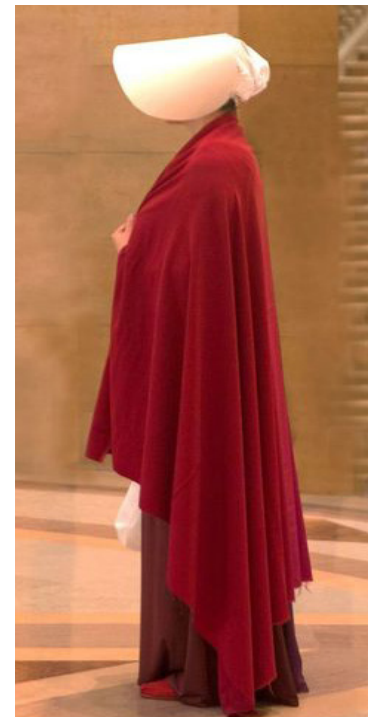
dom to read and even your name.

How did society move to such an unbending government power? Through the narrator, the handmaid Offred, we are able to see minor flashes of what happened. We know there was a staged attack that killed most of the government by a religious movement. The movement then suspends the Constitution under the pretext of restoring order. To reiterate, one of the first things done to set up their governance, is to strip the protection we have with the first amendment, to make sure their beliefs were the only ones to survive, and would be given the ability to rule; an ability that we know the writers of the constitution were wary of during its inception.

With this power, they were able to reorganize society, create new social classes for their leaders, and create laws based solely on biblical scriptures to restrict as many citizens as possible. We are given examples of how far they were willing to go to enforce their laws by Offred's many accounts.

For example, on one of her all too rare outings. She walks by what is only known as “the wall.” Hanging on the wall are hooks, where criminals' bodies are hung as a warning. Their crimes shown by signs hung around their necks. We don't see murder, or rape — we see gender treachery (or homosexuality), being a leader of the wrong religion, a Judeo-Christian religion, and, the worst crime, facilitating an abortion. Some of these are things I have heard extremists say they wish the government would go to extreme punishments for.

Remember, this is a fictional world. Yet, I can't help but see how it brings in elements of what is possible if religion were able to take over government, and exasperate problems such as climate change, the denial of science, and the denial of human rights. If



Continued on page 11

Day of Reason Speech Celebrate the Johnson Amendment

By Dave Pacheco



First of all, I would like to thank Minnesota Atheists and the Humanists of Minnesota for organizing this event and for inviting us to speak here.

Why is this night different from all other nights? A phrase usually spoken by the youngest person at the table during the Pesach Seder, it is meant

to express the child's confusion at the difference between a typical every-day or holiday meal and the unusual features of the Seder.

So why is this Day of Reason different from all other Days of Reason? I'm not the youngest person at the table, and I've seen a few Days of Reason come and go, and I feel this one is different. We are watching, today, as an Executive Order is signed that intends to provide sweeping protections for religious practice, at the expense of the rule of law that should apply equally to all people. We have at the helm of this country a person who has repeatedly threatened to eliminate the Johnson Amendment, a critical part of our tax code that protects religious freedom and separates Church from State by enshrining into law the requirement that your tax money not be used to subsidize someone else's religious practice.

This is not an audience that needs much convincing, but I have heard this question several times in the past few months: is there really a federal law that prohibits religious leaders from speaking about politics and candidates from the pulpit? And the answer is: Of course not. That would be a violation of multiple aspects of the First Amendment.

What there is, is the Johnson Amendment: A FEDERAL LAW THAT PROTECTS THE INTEGRITY OF TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING HOUSES OF WORSHIP, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations such as MN Atheists, Humanists of Minnesota and many others, AS WELL AS PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF OUR ELECTIONS AND THE TAX CODE, and is a critical brick in the

Wall of Separation between Church and State.

This law prohibits tax-exempt organizations — whether a secular group or a house of worship — from supporting or opposing political candidates and political parties, IF they wish to keep their tax-exempt status. It furthers the original intent behind providing tax-exempt status to nonprofit organizations, which was to ease the financial burden on organizations that operate for religious, educational, and charitable purposes. It was not intended to enable these organizations to more easily engage in partisan politics. So, the law provides significant benefits and protections to these organizations, in return for which the law asks that the organizations not use those benefits for partisan politics.

Congress inserted the law into the U.S. tax code in 1954 without controversy or opposition. The language was offered by then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson (which is why many now refer to the law as the Johnson Amendment), adopted by

The founding fathers saw firsthand how smaller religious communities in the states suffered when government declared a preference towards another.

a Republican-led House and Senate, and signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower.

What are the consequences of the Johnson Amendment? What can non-profit organizations do or not do? Let's start with what they can do.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP CAN CURRENTLY SPEAK OUT ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES:

Faith leaders and houses of worship can preach or speak out on any issue or legislation. In addition, faith leaders can endorse or even become candidates when they do so in their personal capacity and not on behalf of their tax-exempt congregations.

Houses of worship can engage in lobbying on issues and legislation, host candidate forums, engage in voter registration drives, distribute answers to candidate questionnaires, encourage people to vote, help people get to the polls, and endorse or oppose non-partisan referendum on issues of concern. They just can't endorse or oppose candidates nor political parties.

Civic engagement activities are important for

community building, whereas partisan political activity fosters deep divisions among members of the community.

CURRENT LAW PROTECTS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY by keeping politics out of the church, and the church out of politics:

Current law protects the integrity of houses of worship, elections, and the tax code. Changing the law would transform houses of worship into political action committees, fundamentally changing their character and diminishing the distinctive role of the church. Tying America's houses of worship to partisan elections would divide congregants, and set houses of worship against each other along political lines. Moreover, by remaining outside of partisan political campaigns, religious groups are autonomous and not beholden to any particular candidate or party.

Houses of worship minister to their congregants and communities and speak out on issues of justice and morality, but stay above the fray of campaigns for political office. Changing the law would fundamentally change their character and diminish the distinctive role of houses of worship.

Individuals, corporations, and partisan groups could offer large donations to congregations and then demand they take a position on a candidate, transforming houses of worship to conduits for political activity and expenditures. Houses of worship would feel pressure to refrain from speaking out on issues of the day if that would conflict with a candidate's positions.

Our current tax code is designed to incentivize donations to organizations that serve the community as a whole. Changing current law would instead incentivize donations to organizations to support political candidates, further marginalizing those who have a different opinion.

The government grants organizations tax-exempt status in order to encourage them to carry out charitable work. Repealing the Johnson Amendment would turn charities into political campaign operations, decreasing the amount of time and resources dedicated to good works and eroding the public's trust in all non-profits.

MOST AMERICANS DON'T WANT CLERGY TO

ENDORSE CANDIDATES FROM THE PULPIT:

According to multiple recent polls, the vast majority of Americans believe houses of worship should stay out of partisan campaigns. A March 2017 poll by PRRI found "more than seven in ten (71%) Americans oppose allowing churches and places of worship to endorse political candidates while retaining their tax-exempt status, compared to only 22% who favor such a policy." In addition, sixty-two percent of Republicans and fifty-six percent of white evangelicals Protestants also support current law. A March 2017 Evangelical Leaders Survey showed that 89% of evangelical leaders do not think that pastors should endorse politicians from the pulpit.

What does the Johnson Amendment NOT do? Let's address some of the more common myths:

CURRENT LAW DOES NOT VIOLATE THE FIRST AMENDMENT:

Contrary to opponents' talking points, the Johnson Amendment does not violate the First Amendment for several reasons. First, the law doesn't restrict free speech, it instead serves to prevent the government from subsidizing political endorsements through tax-exemptions. Nor does the Johnson Amendment violate the religious freedom rights of houses of worship: the law doesn't target religious organizations, but instead applies equally to secular and religious tax-exempt organizations. To the contrary, giving houses of worship an exemption to the endorsement restrictions but applying it to secular groups would give an unconstitutional preference to religion.

CURRENT LAW DOES NOT UNFAIRLY TARGET RELIGIOUS GROUPS:

The Johnson Amendment applies uniformly to all nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, whether religious or secular: None can endorse or oppose candidates or political parties. If these groups want to influence a political campaign, they may do so, but they may not continue to operate as tax-exempt organization

PEOPLE OF FAITH ARE NOT PROHIBITED FROM ENDORSING AND OPPOSING CANDIDATES:

Religious leaders may endorse or oppose a party or candidate when acting in their individual capacity. For example, Pastor Robert Jeffries

Day of Reason Speech A Breach of Jefferson's Wall

By **Bobbi Jacobson**

Having lived with ALS for 20 plus years, I know that in addition to the loss of my ability to walk, talk and care for myself, I will eventually be unable to breathe without the aid of a machine, or receive nourishment without a feeding tube. Before I reach the final stage, I want the option to die peacefully, at home, surrounded by my family. That is why I support the End-Of-Life-Options legislation proposed by Senator Eaton and Representative Freiburg.



President Trump's Supreme Court appointee, Neil Gorsuch, has argued vehemently against "assisted suicide" without making a clear distinction between an urge to die, that arises from an untreated mental health disorder, and the use of a medication to relieve suffering at the end of life. In fact, he opposes medical aid in dying so much, that in 2006, he wrote a book, *The Future of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia*, which has been heralded as "the most comprehensive argument against this legalization, ever published."

But it's not only medical aid in dying that is in jeopardy by the appointment of this newest member of the Supreme Court. Here are a few of his judgements on the lower court:

In *American Atheists v. Davenport*, Gorsuch joined a minority opinion that argued that, "any reasonable observer" would not necessarily view crosses, erected on public property, in honor of Utah state troopers, as a government endorsement of religion.

In *Abdulhaseeb v. Calbone*, Gorsuch argued that a Muslim inmate can claim that his religious rights were violated by an Oklahoma prison that refused to provide halal food.

In *Hobby Lobby v. Sebelius*, Gorsuch wrote a lengthy defense of a Christian family business, who said the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate impinged on their freedom of religion. YES!!! He was THAT GUY!!!

Our new Attorney General, Jeff Sessions has insisted that the First Amendment doctrine, of separation of church and state, has been too broadly interpreted.

As Alabama's Attorney General, in the 1990s, he backed a county judge who posted the Ten Commandments in his courtroom, and opened court with a daily prayer.

He has declared same-sex marriage, an indisputable threat to American culture, and as Alabama's attorney general, he defended a state law, barring funding for gay student groups on state college campuses. We can expect to see a shift in the department's work on gay, lesbian, and transgender issues under Mr. Sessions.

In the mid-1980s, he called the Voting Rights Act, which prohibited racial discrimination at the polls, "an intrusive piece of legislation" and said that federal judges of that era "can be criticized legally for exceeding jurisdiction."

In 2015, Mr. Sessions received the annual Keeper of the Flame award, from the Center for Security Policy, a Washington think tank that promotes anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. Need I say more?

Our new Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, during a 2001 meeting of "The Gathering," an annual conference of some of the country's wealthiest Christians, stated that "school choice, leads to greater Kingdom gain"; and that "public schools have displaced the Church" as the center of communities. Rob Boston, a spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, has referred to DeVos as a, "four-star general, in a deceptive, behind-the-scenes war on public schools and church-state separation." According to The New York Times, "it is hard to find anyone more passionate about the idea of steering public dollars away from traditional

As Alabama's Attorney General, [Jeff Sessions] backed a county judge who posted the Ten Commandments in his courtroom, and opened court with a daily prayer.

public schools than Betsy DeVos."

In March 2015, Vice President Mike Pence then governor of Indiana, signed a statewide Religious Freedom Restoration Act into law. This law allows any individual or corporation to cite



News and Notes

The Right and Wrong Reasons to Oppose Sharia

By *George Francis Kane*

On Saturday, June 10, members of the Minnesota Chapter of ACT for America gathered in the Capitol Rotunda to demonstrate opposition to Sharia law, which it claimed was a threat to American democracy. Outside, a far larger “anti-fascist” counterdemonstration gathered to denounce the ACT for America demonstration. When demonstrators met counterdemonstrators, brief clashes ensued, resulting in seven arrests. ACT for America held demonstrations that day in 28 American cities, with a similar scenario playing out in several of them.

The premise of the demonstrations, to resist the imposition of Shariah law in America, seems absurd on its face. U.S. Courts enforce the laws enacted by Congress, the states and municipalities. Nowhere in this country is there a Muslim majority that can enact Sharia into our legal code, or would want to. We recognize Sharia law only in the context of contracts; it can be written into a contract for a loan, or a business partnership, or a prenuptial agreement, for example. The parties may agree that, if there is a disagreement under the terms of the contract, it will be resolved by binding mediation by a Sharia court at the local mosque.

This is a common arrangement in religious groups. Jews draw up contracts requiring disputes to be resolved by rabbinical courts. Catholics stipulate in some contracts that disputes must be resolved by local clergy. There is no reason that only Muslims should have their rights under contract law abridged. There is no credible threat to American law, democracy or way of life from domestic groups promoting Shariah.

ACT for America claims Sharia law conflicts with our concepts of civil liberties, and that the marches “are in support of basic human rights for all,” but ACT for America’s appeal is constructed around stirring up irrational anti-Muslim fears. The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated them an Islamophobic hate-group and “the largest grassroots anti-Muslim group in America.”

While provoking anti-Muslim fears is the

main goal of their propaganda, they are trying to portray themselves as ideologically mainstream by denying racism and Islamophobia and by distancing themselves from extremists. The group purged Roy White, the President of its San Antonio chapter, after he announced workshops that would train attendees in how to shut down mosques. It also canceled a March Against Sharia rally in Arkansas when it was disclosed that its organizer, Billy Roper, was a longstanding white supremacist. They claim to be protecting women and children by denouncing, for example, female genital mutilation, attempting to appeal to liberal values such as feminism.

The group seems to be media savvy, with much broader conservative aspirations than its anti-Islam appeal. It would be wrong to underestimate them, as they claim more than 750,000

[U.S. Courts] recognize Sharia law only in the context of contracts

members (up from 525,000 in the week I worked on this article!) and close ties to president Donald Trump. It claims to sponsor over 1000 local groups, and that “ACT’s grassroots network has driven the education process toward the successful passage of 81 bills in 32 states.” It lists among its core issues border security, energy independence and support for Israel, and lists many federal and state bills that have been passed for which it claims some credit.

Minnesota Atheists of course opposes Sharia Law, as we oppose government imposing any religious dogmas with the force of law. We hold that government must maintain total religious neutrality, and may not give preference to any religion over any other religion. We stand, therefore, in opposition to ACT for America, in such issues as its calls to end immigration and travel to America by Muslims. We realize, however, that many atheists may be as vulnerable to Islamophobic fear-mongering as many Christians. We invite our members to examine the website actforamerica.org to decide if this group is using irrational fears to attract people to anti-secular policies and a broad conservative agenda. While you are at it, please also examine on our website the Minnesota Atheist public policy position on dealing with Islam.

Day of Reason Speech The Establishment Clause

By *George Francis Kane*

You are all aware that the first two clauses of the First Amendment — “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or restricting the free exercise thereof ...” together define the separation of church and state. The Free Exercise Clause prohibits government from interfering with a citizen’s practice of religion, but it must be complemented by the Establishment Clause, which prohibits government from prescribing religious orthodoxy. Within practical limits, government cannot stop me from practicing my beliefs, and it cannot tell me what I should believe. Together, they tie the hands of government, to ensure that it does not dictate the religious life of society. In Thomas Jefferson’s

If anything is sacred to an atheist, it is secular government ... Jefferson’s wall must be kept high, wide and impregnable.

historic metaphor, they create a Wall of Separation between church and state.

The Establishment Clause refers only to Congress, but the Fourteenth Amendment extended its scope to all levels of government. Judicial review of Establishment Clause violations has

a relatively short history, beginning only in the 1940s. The Supreme Court has created several tests for Establishment Clause violations. In the 1968 case *Epperson v. Arkansas*, Justice Abe Fortas created the Neutrality Test, that government may not favor one religion over any other, and that it may not favor religion over irreligion. The three-pronged Lemon Test was established in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* Supreme Court case:

1. The government’s action must have a legitimate secular purpose;
2. The government’s action must not have the primary effect of either advancing or inhibiting religion; and
3. The government’s action must not result in an “excessive entanglement” of the government and religion.

In the 1984 case *Lynch v. Donnelly*, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor created the Endorsement Test, that there has been a violation of the Establishment Clause if a reasonable observer would conclude that an act of government had endorsed religion. Whenever this happens, government sends the message to all that some citizens — specifically Christians — are members of a preferred group, and that all others are regarded by the government with disfavor.

Each of these tests contains an important insight into an aspect of the Establishment Clause, and a violation should be proved if a government

Cryptogram

By *George Francis Kane*

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jro tl — v Agicuocvj.

—Wviy Omvcj, “Jroltrry”

Johnson Amendment continued from page 5 endorsed Donald Trump for president. Because he did so in his personal capacity, rather than as pastor of his church, the church has not violated the law. Furthermore, houses of worship may choose to allow their pastor to issue endorsements from the pulpit — they simply will lose the organization's tax-exempt status

So why is this Day of Reason different from all other Days?

Because even the youngest child at the table should be able to see how eliminating or even weakening the Johnson Amendment is undesirable. We have learned from history very clearly and repeatedly that when we mix religion and politics at the pulpit, unfortunately we get neither religion nor politics, but the basest and least desirable common elements of the two: Coercion, desire for control over a community and power mixed with the debasing influence of money, and the imposition of the beliefs of the majority on everyone result in an incendiary and

Cable Report

By Steve Petersen

We taped two programs in the past two months. Jack Caravela interviewed Grant Steves on "The Bible: Translation or Interpretation" and "The Bible: Orthodoxy or Heresy."

View it online on the Minnesota Atheists iTunes or YouTube channels. If you have an idea or expertise in a subject of interest to atheists, contact Steve Petersen at address@mnatheists.org.

Cable Crew: George Kane, Brett Stembridge, Shirley Moll, Steve Petersen, Grant Hermanson and Art Anderson.

divisive formula.

Separating the church from the state is what the founding fathers envisioned, and they did so with the wisdom of personal experience. They saw firsthand how religious liberty is constrained when political partisanship gets involved, and how the smaller religious communities in the states suffered when government declared a preference or even an inclination towards another. It was, literally in some cases, a matter of life or death.

Please join me on this Day of Reason in celebrating the Johnson Amendment and its foundational aspects in supporting the wall of separation between church and state, and let your legislators know how important it is to keep it around. An Executive Order cannot remove the Johnson Amendment: only congress can do that, and congress, as we should always remember, reports to you.

Happy Day of Reason!

Podcasts: Available via iTunes and YouTube which are made possible by Grant Hermanson. To date, our YouTube channel has had over 300,000 downloads.

Cable schedule:

Minneapolis: Ch. 75. Monday 7:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Steve Petersen.

Northwest Community Television (NWCT)
Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth and Robbinsdale, Ch. 20. Check web page for date and times at <http://nwct.org/programming.aspx>.
Sponsor: Grant Hermanson.

St. Paul: Ch. 15 Wednesday 5:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Jim Wright.



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action fails any of these tests.

Nevertheless, all of these tests have been put into question by the Supreme Court decision *in 2014 in the Township of Greece v. Galloway* case. The court found that the invocations at Town Council meetings did not violate the Establishment Clause because they are traditional. The only test the decision found applicable is that of coercion to compel religious orthodoxy with the force of law and threat of penalty. If we accept this reasoning, the Establishment Clause becomes impotent and meaningless.

If anything is sacred to an atheist, it is secular government. For the nation to operate in the rational self-interest of its citizens rather than the prejudices of gods, Jefferson's wall must be kept high, wide and impregnable. The battle to repair the wall of separation between church and state is a duty we owe to our nation and to posterity.



Minnesota Atheists Membership and Donations

Membership Levels

- One-year student membership \$10
- One-year individual membership \$35
- Three-year individual membership \$90
- One-year household membership \$45
- Three-year household membership \$115
- One-year sustaining membership \$75
- Three-year sustaining membership \$200
- Life membership \$600

Donation Funds

General Fund \$ _____

Building Fund \$ _____

Radio Fund \$ _____

Donations are tax deductible. Membership fees are deductible for the amount beyond their fair market value.

Student memberships include a subscription to the PDF version of *The Minnesota Atheist* delivered by email. All other memberships include a subscription to the printed version delivered by postal mail. If you would prefer the PDF version delivered by email, please check the box and provide your email address.

Please make checks payable to:

Minnesota Atheists.

Students, please enclose a copy of your fee statement or school identification.

Minnesota Atheists
PO Box 120304
New Brighton, MN 55112

Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

Only email newsletter Email address _____
(Required for student memberships and email subscriptions)

Jefferson's Wall continued from page 6 its religious beliefs as a defense when sued by a private party. According to the Huffington Post, "many opponents of the bill, which included business leaders, argued that it could open the door to widespread discrimination."

These are just a few examples of how government officials are attempting to bridge Jefferson's wall separating Church and State. If this incenses you, as it does me, I urge you to voice your discontent by calling, emailing, or by putting pen to paper and addressing your elected representatives, whether it be on a local, county, state or federal level. It is time for rational free-thinkers to stand and be heard!

A Handmaid's Tale continued from page 3 they could rule as a theocracy, what would that look like? Is the world we want to give, one that relives the past over and over again? No, we must protect the wall so that we can continue to learn from the past and move to a future where people have the freedom to worship, or not worship, as they see fit. This is one of many reasons, why we must protect Jefferson's Wall.

Cryptogram Answer

If Christ were here now there is one thing he would not be — a Christian.

—Mark Twain, "Notebook"

Upcoming Events

Atheist Night with the St Paul Saints Saturday, August 12, CHS Field, 310 5th St E, St Paul MN. The only professional sports team in the country to hold an atheist night.

FFRF National Convention September 15–17, Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, 1 John Nolen Dr, Madison, Wisconsin. Register at <https://ffrf.org/outreach/convention/2017-national-convention>

Atheists Talk Community Brunch 1st Sunday of every month at 10:30 a.m., Q. Cumbers, 7465 France Ave S, Edina.

Godless Gamers Every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and Thursday at 6:00 p.m., Fantasy Flight Games Center, 1975 County Rd B2, Roseville.

Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous Every Sunday from 6:00–7:00 p.m. and Wednesday from 7:00–8:00 p.m., Health Recovery Center building, lower floor, 3249 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis. Based on A.A., minus beliefs in any form of a God.

Freethought Toastmasters Meeting 1st and 3rd Monday of every month from 6:30–8:00 p.m., Larpenteur Estates Party Room, 1280 Larpenteur Ave W, St Paul. freethought.toastmastersclubs.org

Freethought Dinner Social 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 5:00–7:00 p.m., Davanni's, 8605 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington.

Freethinking Females 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m., Claddagh Irish Pub, 7890 Main St N, Maple Grove, and 4th Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m., Sweeney's Saloon, 96 North Dale Street, St. Paul (Note, two different locations). Shattering the myth that Atheist groups are male dominated with a female's only event.

Volunteer Food Packing 2nd Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m., The Food Group, 8501 54th Ave N, New Hope.

Blasphemer's Brunch 2nd Saturday of every month at 10:30 a.m., Pizza Lucé, 800 W 66th St, Richfield.

Minnesota Atheists Board Meeting 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m., Amherst H Wilder Foundation, 451 Lexington Pkwy N, St Paul. All Minnesota Atheists members are welcome.

Bowling for Deities Last Saturday of every month at Noon, Memory Lanes, 2520 26th Ave S, Minneapolis.

For more events, visit www.meetup.com/minnesota-atheists



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Minnesota Atheists

Positive Atheism in action since 1991

Minnesota Atheists is dedicated to building a positive atheist community that actively promotes secular values through educational programs, social activities, and participation in public affairs.

Minnesota Atheist

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Minnesota Atheists Goals

Minnesota Atheists practices positive, inclusive, active, friendly, neighborhood atheism in order to provide a community for atheists, educate the public about atheism, and promote separation of state and church.

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Alliance

International,

American

Atheists, The American

Humanist Association,

Council for Secular

Humanism, The

International Humanist

and Ethical Union, and

Secular Coalition for

America.

Minnesota Atheists

Membership

Regular members: 218

Life members: 43

Meetup members:

2,400

Minnesota Atheists

Honorary Members

Hector Avalos, PhD

Dan Barker

Gerald Erickson, PhD

Annie Laurie Gaylor

Dick Hewetson

Robert M. Price, PhD



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