



# DULUTHINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS



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**JOIN US NOVEMBER 3RD**

# Thomas Paine

## Freethinking Founder Of Our Country

**Presenter: Jane Whitledge**



*Jane Whitledge, Duluth, is a published poet, currently working on a book collection.*

**T**he lecture will outline the life of the freethinking founding father Thomas Paine, his beginnings in rural England, his meeting with Ben Franklin in London, and his travel to America where he attacked the monarchy and inspired the fight for independence with his powerful pamphlet, *Common Sense*. We'll cover his time in France during the French Revolution, and the writing of *The Age of Reason*, which would earn him the hatred of his country, for its questioning of the Bible and for its daring call to reason. His last years, forgotten and reviled—and the renewed appreciation for this supreme political writer and thinker.

# First Thursday LSF Happy Hours with Tom & Gerry

Join us **November 7th** and every first Thursday of the month at **Mexico Lindo** in the **Fitger's Brewery Complex** for Happy Hour from **4:00—6:00pm** with your hosts **Tom and Gerry**.



# LSF Social Dinner with Sue Anderson • November 20th

Join us at 5:30 pm at Clyde Iron Works!





# Upcoming LSF Presentations

DATE	PRESENTER	TOPIC	HOST	REFLECTION
Dec. 1st	Jim Lyttle	Civil Communication	June Carter	Jan Resberg
Jan. 5th	Bill Guse	New Evangelical Themes		Dr. Charles Gessert
Feb. 2nd	Howard Mooers	Charles Darwin		Jim Lyttle

## Next Pavilion Party **Saturday November 23rd**

**J**oin us at the home of our Flounder, Dr. Bill Van Druten on Saturday, November 23rd. Plan to arrive at 4pm. Bring a "Pot Luck" food item, or maybe an interesting libation to share with other attendees. We'll talk and laugh at Dr. Van Druten's lovely home: 2931 Greysolon Road in Duluth. Park anywhere on Greysolon Road but not on 30th Avenue!



## LSF November Planning Committee meeting **Sunday November 17th**

**T**he November LSF Planning Committee meeting will ALSO be held at Bill Van Druten's house 2931 Greysolon Road in Duluth, at 10 am on the THIRD Sunday (November 17). (Park anywhere on Greysolon Road but not on 30th Avenue!). The

Planning Committee meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the POCC (People of Conscience Committee), at the same location. The POCC will be discussing a holiday food drive and an annual calendar of events, as well as a possible TED talk.



# Alabama Lt. Gov.'s call to 'pray for us' unconstitutional, FFRF warns

**A**labama Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth must refrain from using his public office to propagate religion, the Freedom From Religion Foundation has warned.

A concerned Alabama resident reported to FFRF that Ainsworth routinely uses his position as lieutenant governor to promote and endorse his personal religious beliefs and encourage Alabama citizens to pray. In particular, Ainsworth recently shared an article about the Blount County Sheriff utilizing his official position to promote and endorse Christianity with the message:

An anti-religion group is trying to make Blount County sheriff abandon a prayer vigil. Don't they know Alabama's motto is "We Dare Defend Our Rights"? Join me in praying for the sheriff and asking God to touch the hearts of the misguided FFRF lawyers.

This comment is in response to the Blount County Sheriff's



**Lt. Gov. Will Ainsworth**

Elizabeth Warren Says She'll Consider Hiring a "Secular Outreach Director" FFRF pointed out the constitutional issues with endorsing such a religious event.

FFRF Staff Attorney Chris Line sent a letter to Ainsworth to emphasize the constitutional issues with his religious endorsement and the exclusionary nature of his comments.

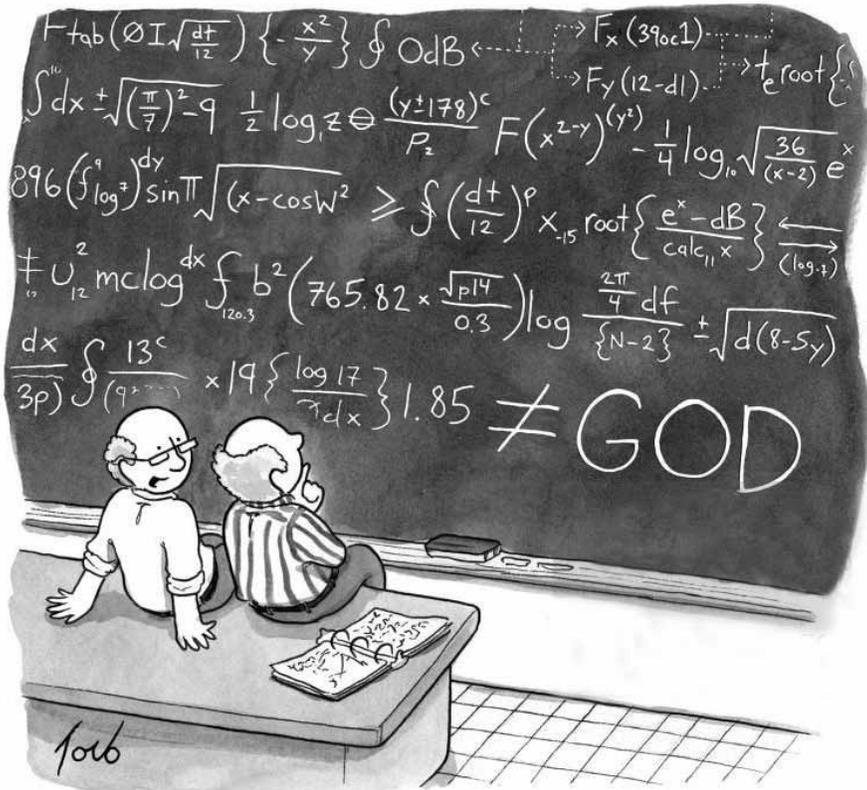
"As lieutenant governor, you represent a diverse population that consists of not only Christians, but also minority religious and nonreligious citizens," Line writes to Ainsworth. "Religious endorsements made in your official capacity send a message that excludes the 24 percent of American adults who identify as nonreligious, including 38 percent of Millennials and younger Americans. Religious endorsements coming from your office needlessly alienate the non-Christian and nonreligious citizens you represent, turning them into political outsiders in their own community."

In order to uphold his obligation under the constitution to remain neutral on matters of religion while acting in his official capacity as lieutenant governor, Ainsworth must not use his official social media accounts to encourage citizens to pray.

"Government officials can worship, pray or quote any religious text they wish when acting in their personal capacities," Line continues. "But they are not permitted to provide prestige to their personal religion by lending a government office and government title to religious ideology. Their offices and titles belong to 'We the people,' not the offices' temporary occupants."

FFRF has asked the lieutenant governor to disassociate his public office from his personal religious beliefs and to refrain from posting religious endorsements on any official social media pages.

"Lt. Gov. Ainsworth using his official platform to preach to Alabama citizens automatically creates an in-group and an out-group along the dividing line of religion," comment FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor. "It's a completely inappropriate abuse of power."



"This'll show the Theology Department."



**F**or an overwhelming part of U.S. history, America's motto was purely secular, "E Pluribus Unum" (From many [come] one). E Pluribus Unum was chosen by a committee of Jefferson, Adams and Franklin. Many Americans mistakenly assume our founders chose "In God We Trust" as the motto, but nothing could be further from the truth. Our founders were committed to a secular government. For most of U.S. history, our money was likewise free of religion.

Of all of the complaints over state/church entanglement received by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, none has received more complaints from our membership than

the inscription "In God We Trust" on currency. The Freedom From Religion sued the federal government in 1994 to have "In God We Trust" removed from currency and as our national motto.

The motto was put on all paper currency by an Act of Congress in 1955. The phrase was chosen as our national motto by an Act of Congress in 1956. It first appeared on paper currency in 1957.

The Foundation lawsuit was dismissed by a 10th-circuit federal judge on the grounds that "In God We Trust" is not a religious phrase. The Foundation appealed the dismissal.



## The 'nones' are growing

**A**ndrew Fiala, a professor of philosophy and director of The Ethics Center at Fresno State, wrote recently that the growth of religiously unaffiliated Americans requires a new look at faith in our nation.

"There are more nones now than there are Catholics, Evangelicals or any other single faith group," says Fiala. "The nones are growing fast, while other

affiliations are declining."

"For young people growing up in a liberal culture, religion is quaint and old-fashioned. The growth of non-religion is a youth movement," continues Fiala. "The Pew Center reports that across the globe, people under 40 attend church less frequently and are more likely to admit that they are not religious."