Some with Jesus and Some with Marx
Join us May 2nd via Zoom to hear Richard Hudelson speak on a working people’s history of Duluth

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Some with Jesus and Some with Marx
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Carl Ross grew up in the Finnish Communist community in Superior, Wisconsin. He recruited me to join him as co-author for a book on the labor history of Duluth. I worked on that book for eighteen years. Carl died before the book was finished, but By the Ore Docks: A Working People's History of Duluth was eventually published by University of Minnesota Press in 1996. My talk will be based on my work with Carl on that book. Duluth had an ethnically diverse working class. Ethnic differences, religious differences, and ideological differences divided the labor movement in Duluth. Yet, it has been a powerful labor movement, from very early on, even up to the present.

Richard Hudelson grew up in a factory town in east central Indiana. His father and maternal grandfather worked at the Chrysler, manufacturing parts for the assembly lines in Detroit. The rest of his family was made up of small farmers. Dick escaped the factory, went to college, and liked it. He came to Duluth from the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, in the Fall of 1977 to take a teaching job at UMD. He taught philosophy at UMD until 1996 and then at UWS until 2011. He is the author of six books: four in philosophy and two in labor studies.
Bible as Tennessee state book a terrible idea

A proposal to anoint the bible as Tennessee’s “official state book” is not only unconstitutional, it is also an affront to true religious freedom.

By Annie Laurie Gaylor | co-founder and co-president of the FFRF

A resolution to do so has passed the House and will now head to the Senate. The Tennessee Constitution specifically guarantees “that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishment or mode of worship.” What could show more preference than having a state legislature designate one religion’s so-called holy book as its official “state book”? Back in 2016, then-Gov. Bill Haslam properly vetoed a similar bill after Tennessee Attorney General Herbert Slater noted that it violates both the federal and state constitutions.

Imagine the uproar and consternation that would attend the introduction of a bill to designate the Quran as Tennessee’s “official state book.” It is equally contrary to our nation’s religious freedom to single out the Christian Bible.

Under the First Amendment, citizens are free to choose any “holy book” they like, or none at all — the choice of the 26 percent of the American population that is currently religiously unaffiliated. The United States was not founded on the bible or any “holy book,” but on our secular and godless Constitution, which grants sovereignty not to a deity or a “holy book” but to “We the People.” The Founders were well aware of the horrors of the Inquisition, the Crusades, the Thirty Years War, the witch hunts, and the persecution of various faiths in the individual colonies. That’s why they wanted no part of religion in government.

This bill is fiscally irresponsible, as it would almost certainly result in a preventable lawsuit that would cost state taxpayers dearly. The General Assembly’s Fiscal Review Committee in 2016 estimated such a lawsuit could have cost Tennessee more than $100,000.

Religious faith is a matter for private conscience, not state endorsement. In his decision upholding the Freedom From Religion Foundation’s challenge of Christian indoctrination in Rhea County public schools in Tennessee, Chief U.S. District Judge R. Allan Edgar of Chattanooga wisely noted: “A state-created orthodoxy puts at grave risk freedom of belief and conscience, which is the sole assurance that religious faith is real, not imposed.”

In a pandemic, with so much at stake, the Tennessee Statehouse needs to stop attempting to foist Christianity upon the residents of the state and start working to address their real needs.
Andy Rooney

On this date in 1919, commentator Andrew Aitken “Andy” Rooney was born, in Albany, N.Y. He attended Colgate University until drafted into the Army in 1941. He was one of six correspondents who flew with the Eighth Air Force making the first U.S. bombing raids over Germany. He joined CBS in 1949 and helped write for the popular “Garry Moore Show” (1956-65), while also writing for CBS News public affairs. He collaborated with Harry Reasoner on a series of news specials from 1962-68.

Rooney won the first of his three Emmy Awards for his special “Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed” (1968). Starting in 1979, he wrote a regular column for Tribune Media Services. “A Few Minutes with Andy Rooney” debuted on the TV news program “60 Minutes” in July 1978 with an essay about misleading reporting of auto fatalities on the Independence Day weekend. Rooney delivered 800 on-air essays for “60 Minutes.”

The latest of his 13 books was Years of Minutes. In his 1999 book Sincerely, Andy Rooney, he included a final section called “Faith in Reason,” in which he reprinted a letter to his children about his agnosticism and freethought views.

In 2001 he was a recipient of PFFR’s Emperor Has No Clothes Award. In 2001, he referred to himself as “a writer who appears on television,” and was also awarded a Lifetime Achievement Emmy and the Ernie Pyle Lifetime Achievement Award. Rooney appeared regularly on “60 Minutes” until five weeks before his death on Nov. 4, 2011.

“We all ought to understand we’re on our own. Believing in Santa Claus doesn’t do kids any harm for a few years but it isn’t smart for them to continue waiting all their lives for him to come down the chimney with something wonderful. Santa Claus and God are cousins.”

“Christians talk as though goodness was their idea but good behavior doesn’t have any religious origin. Our prisons are filled with the devout.”

“I’d be more willing to accept religion, even if I didn’t believe it, if I thought it made people nicer to each other but I don’t think it does.”

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Wednesday, May 19th, 5:30 pm
Blackwoods, London Road

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LSF “Flounder” Bill Van Druten hosts first 2021 Pavilion Party April 24th.
The Secular Student Alliance is excited to host a multi-day virtual conference with live-streaming and on-demand video for our students and the larger secular community.

REGISTER HERE: https://secularstudents.org/conference/2021conference/

The Role of Rituals in Secular Life
Sasha Sagan, author of the critically acclaimed book For Small Creatures Such As We: Rituals for Finding Meaning in Our Unlikely World, is joined by her friend, bestselling author of Good Without God and humanist chaplain Greg Epstein to discuss how the non-religious can create uplifting celebrations and rites of passage rooted in science.

Building Local Groups: Using ‘QVC’ to Maximize Appeal
Zoom is great to help us meet with people all over the world at any moment. But if we want people to volunteer with a local event or have a group to explore a local trail with, we need ‘actual’ local people. What does it take to build a local group? How can a group expand to meet the needs of a variety of people? This presentation explores building and developing a local group using the QVC approach.

Solve Climate Change Using The Tools of Democracy
Young people are facing a lot today: a pandemic, forced online education, economic fallout, and most of all, climate change. They are fighting for their future and their voices are powerful in the call for change. Citizens’ Climate Lobby is a grassroots advocacy organization that works to build political will for climate solutions. Join Clara to learn about CCL’s climate proposal, methodology, and how you can make a difference.

A Conversation with Reps. Beyer, Johnson, and Pocan
Representatives Don Beyer (Virginia’s 8th congressional district), Hank Johnson (Georgia’s 4th congressional district), and Mark Pocan (Wisconsin’s 2nd congressional district), members of the Congressional Freethought Caucus, will be joined by Casey Brink of the Secular Coalition for America and Mark Dann of the Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Is Science Objective? Let’s have a conversation.
Some people believe that religion is irrational and subjective whereas science is rational and objective. But if science is rational and objective, then why have scientific theories and practices been - and why do they continue to be - sexist, racist, cis-heteronormative, and ableist? In order to attain stronger objectivity, scientific communities need to include a more diverse range of perspectives and solicit feedback from marginalized groups.

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Unlikely Allies: Upholding Secular Values in the Court and at the Capitol

The presentation will cover the work the American Humanist Association has done with faith-based, religious liberty, and immigrant rights partners both in recent prominent Supreme Court cases, in the U.S. Capitol with bi-partisan and interfaith efforts championing the repeal of global blasphemy laws, and immigrant rights coalition on access to COVID testing, treatment, and vaccination for all regardless of immigration status.

Data & Diversity: Expanding Our Understanding of the Secular Community

The ways in which people interact with secular communities necessarily reflect their background, their identities, and their cultural experiences. In this webinar, Alison and Debbie will discuss some of the challenges nonreligious Black people, trans people, and other racialized and sexual minorities face in secular communities, examine the available data from the U.S. Secular Survey, and discuss how we can make secular communities more welcoming and inclusive. While no one could deny that building strong, diverse secular communities is essential to the success of the secular movement, we too often hear that issues like racial justice and LGBTQ equality are not secular issues. We will counteract that myth and discuss why inclusivity is essential to achieve our movement’s goals.

‘On the Basis of Sex’: Civil Rights after Bostock v. Clayton County

Rebecca Markert and Elizabeth Cavell be discussing the case, what it means for religious liberty, namely religious exemptions to the Civil Rights Act, and how that impacts civil rights moving forward particularly for transgender rights, and, of course, crucial to any discussion of civil rights progress moving forward is the issue of the make-up of the federal courts.

Respect and Contempt for Science: The Question of Public Understanding

It is common among people with a secular worldview to champion science as a tool for understanding the world and advancing the common good. In response, a traditional refrain has been to champion educational reform to produce more widespread scientific literacy, Anjan suggests that this response, while laudable, is conceived in an impracticable way. More importantly, it is mistaken about what would facilitate a public understanding that serves our needs. Scientific literacy is an excellent thing, but even more important (and practicable) in this sphere is a kind of philosophical literacy in relation to science, as a basis for public understanding.

A Thousand Brains: A New Theory of Intelligence

Jeff Hawkins discusses his new book ‘A Thousand Brains,’ which heralds a revolution in the understanding of intelligence. It is a big-think book, in every sense of the word - unveiling a theory of intelligence that will revolutionize our understanding of the brain and the future of AI. The book can be purchased at www.athousandbrains.com

Embracing The Wonder and The Mystery of Being

In May of 2020, Jon Steingard, then frontman of the Christian band Hawk Nelson, revealed that he no longer believed in God. His lack of faith may have come as a surprise to fans of the band, but in reality, it developed over the course of several years. Jon shares his journey from pastor’s kid, being in a Christian rock band, his loss of faith, to what he believes as an agnostic, and how to be part of something “bigger than” himself.

Congressional Freethought Caucus: Christian Nationalism and the Capitol Insurrection

Members of the Congressional Freethought Caucus in discussion with secular scholars and religious advocates about the influences of Christian Nationalism on the rioters who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

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Freedom from Religion Foundation, American Humanist Association, Black Nonbelievers, Camp Quest, Center for Inquiry, and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.