DFW COALITION OF REASON

Everything, as they say, is bigger in Texas.

Over the past week, it would seem that’s also true of freethought and atheism.

On Monday, two billboards were placed in the Metroplex; one in Dallas, and the other in Fort Worth. Both carried the same message: “Don’t believe in God? You are not alone.” These billboards are significant not just for the fact that they herald a public manifestation of the growing activity among freethinkers and atheists here in the Metroplex, but also because they are the first official project of the newly-formed Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition of Reason (DFWCoR).

Originally developed in Philadelphia, the Coalition of Reason model sought to bring various secular, atheist, freethinking, and humanist groups together to foster communication, share ideas, and promote cooperation. Since the founding of the PhillyCoR in 2008, secular groups in Arizona and Colorado have followed suit, forming the ArizonaCoR and COCORE, respectively.

Locally, the DFWCoR was formed as the result of a shared project between the Dallas-Plano Atheist Meetup Group and the Metroplex Atheists; the latter group took advantage of its non-profit status to collect donations for an atheist billboard project. This spirit of cooperation between two different atheist groups inspired the choice of the billboard design previously used by the PhillyCoR, and this spirit carried forward, eventually culminating in the formation of the DFWCoR itself.

Terry McDonald, Chairman of the Metroplex Atheists, graciously accepted the additional burden of coordinating the nascent DFWCoR in addition to the billboard campaign. On the DFWCOR.org website, Terry writes:

“The Dallas/Fort Worth Coalition of Reason is a group of local organizations joined together to increase the growth, visibility and acceptance of nontheists throughout the Metroplex.

While all of these organizations share common ground, each has its own particular emphasis and atmosphere. Some are focused on scientific inquiry and education; others are focused on ethics and community. Still others seek to create environments of rationality where people can socialize in climates of tolerance and support. All organizations are committed to promoting wider acceptance of a more rational and realistic view of the universe and the humans who live in it.

DFWCOR.org informs secular people in the Metroplex that there are groups to join, activities in which to participate, events to attend and like-minded people with which to socialize. In

continued on Page 2
continued from Page 1

short, we want to help those who have grown beyond religious belief to find their philosophical home.

Those nonbelievers who are not ready, or who are unable, to “come out” can take comfort in knowing that they are not the only ones who accept the reality of a 100% natural world.

For the religious community, we want them to realize that, although nontheists reject the supernatural, we share with them compassionate human values that most religious believers embrace. In most ways, we are like them, hard working, tax paying, moral citizens who care deeply about our families, our communities, our state and our country.

Nontheists are a large minority, larger than many minorities who have much more political and cultural influence than we do. DFWCoR has organized to increase our clout in the marketplace of ideas and to take our rightful place at the table of acceptance and equal rights. We invite all nontheists to support us in our efforts.”

This is an exciting time to be an atheist or freethinker in Dallas-Forth Worth - just within the first week of existence, the DFWCoR boasts eight different groups, includ-

ing the following:

Metroplex Atheists
Dallas-Plano Atheist Meetup
Freethinkers of UTA
Humanist Association of Fort Worth
North Texas Church of Freethought
Freethinkers of Fort Worth Meetup Group
Dallas Brights Meetup Group
Freethinkers of Dallas Meetup Group

Those of you who were able to attend the multi-group meetup this past February know how much fun it can be to socialize with freethinkers and atheists from other groups- just think how much potential we could have for outreach projects, organizing a convention, and even building a physical home that we can all use!

For the past fifteen years, the NTCOF has provided shelter for nonbelievers who have felt marginalized and isolated in the highly supernatural and superstitious culture that permeates the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. I think that the time is right for us to stand strong and proud as freethinkers and good citizens of this great state!

-Zachary Moore

THINK ABOUT IT!
SAM SINGLETON
ATHEIST EVANGELIST

Although we missed him in March, Brother Sam Singleton has not forgotten those of us here in Texas- he’s coming to town this month, and here’s the info:

Location: Sons of Hermann Hall, at the corner of Elm and Exposition in Dallas
Date: Saturday, April 11th, 2009
Time: Doors open at 9:00 PM, Show begins at 9:30 PM
Tickets: $15 in advance, or $20 at the door

Note: Terry McDonald of the Metroplex Atheists has secured 100 advance tickets - every ticket purchased from Terry will result in $2 being donated to keep the atheist bulletin boards posted!

LANGUAGE ADVISORY: This show contains profanity and irreverence towards religious figures.

MARCH FORUM CHATTER

The following is a sampling of the ongoing discussions held at the NTCOF forum through the past month- log on to add your two cents!

KipBond: “I had the opportunity to sit in on a discussion about the nature of subjectivity the other day after the monthly service. In good spirit, there was a disagreement as to how far science can give you understanding of the universe, and where personal experience must take over. It was fun for me to witness and participate in... I loved seeing the faces of the people involved -- as there is a look someone gets when they are in deep thought that you just don’t get to see online.”

pastortim: “The “point of marriage” has been and is a lot of different things. It seems originally to have been a kind of property transfer of a girl/woman from father to husband. Dowries suggest that the transfer was in many cases considered a kind of burden. In other cases, more recent cases than in the distant past, it was the husband who benefited the most, sometimes by becoming king by marrying the wife of a deceased king or the daughter of a deceased king with no male heirs.

The “point” of marriage today in the USA, it seems to me, is mainly to conform to social norms which, in this case, are maintained by the govt. Even then it seems to me that the govt’s interest is not in molding society but in responding to its perceived needs, esp the need to figure out what to do when families break up.”

kgeissler: “Texas Board of Education creationist Barbara Cargill today proposed an amendment to the science standards saying that teachers have to tell their students there are different estimates for the age of the Universe. This is not even a veiled attempt to attack the Big Bang model of the Universe, which clearly, and through multiple lines of evidence, indicates the Universe is 13.7 +/- 0.12 billion years old.

So Ms. Cargill is right, if she means that “different estimates” range from 13.58 to 13.82 (given one standard deviation) billion years old.

But she doesn’t mean that at all, does she? If you read her website, you’ll see she’s an out-and-out creationist. She has a large number of, um, factual errors on her site that are clearly right out of the Creationist Obscurational Handbook.”

www.churchoffreethought.org/bb
**God Panel Continues at UTA**

**The God Dialogues**
*A Roundtable Talk on The Existence of God*

Two atheists and two theists discuss "the God question" relating their beliefs and disbeliefs to real-life issues like morality, the meaning of life, and man's origin, followed by audience Q&A.

**The University of Texas at Arlington**
E.W. Hereford University Center
Red River/Concho Rooms
Thursday, April 9th
8-10PM
Sponsored by The Freethinkers of UTA
freethinkersofuta.org

The first outing of The God Dialogues panel at the University of Texas at Dallas, sponsored by the UTD Atheists, Skeptics, and Humanists was a success, bringing close to 150 atheists and theists together to hear a diversity of opinions on the nature of the Universe, the formation of morality, and the search for meaning. The next panel will take place at UTA on Thursday, April 9th from 8:00 - 10:00 PM in the Red River/Concho rooms of the University Center.

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**April Events**

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar, or through our Meetup.com site. Please check these locations regularly, and RSVP through Meetup.

**Social Luncheon:** Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and friendly discussion at Jason’s Deli in Irving, located just south of I-635 on MacArthur, at 7770 N. MacArthur Blvd., phone (972) 432-0555. Easy driving directions: To reach Jason’s from the Holiday Inn: turn RIGHT out of the parking lot onto Esters Blvd., RIGHT onto Freeport Parkway, RIGHT to enter I-635 EAST. Exit I-635 at MacArthur Blvd., then RIGHT onto MacArthur, and RIGHT again just ahead into the Jason’s parking lot.

**Board Game Night:** The NTCOF Board Game group meets nearly every Friday night at the smoke-free IHOP at 2310 Stemmons Trail in Dallas. The IHOP is adjacent to the Radisson Hotel along North-west Highway, about a ½ mile east of Loop 12.

**Secular Singles:** The Freethinking NTCOF Singles meets at the Vineyard restaurant in the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine (1800 Highway 26 East).

**Food Critics Dinner:** We’ll be revisiting the Agave Azul restaurant in beautiful downtown Carrollton. As those of you who know who came out with us last time, Agave Azul is known both for is Tex-Mex food as well as it’s fully-stocked tequila bar! Come on out and cut loose with your fellow freethinkers on Saturday, April 18th at 5:30 PM. RSVP to Social Director **Brad Watson** to let him know you’ll be having fun with the rest of us!

**Safer Sex Outreach:** The GLBT community is often faced with discrimination and persecution by those who let superstitious dogma fly in the face of human compassion and dignity. We’ll be making friends and handing out condoms to bar patrons along Cedar Springs Road in the Oak Lawn neighborhood of Dallas on Saturday, April 18th, beginning at 8:00 PM. Come out and show your support!

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**Financial Report**

Folks, you hear this over and over, but it’s true: Freethought is NOT Free! Our continued growth is only possible through your generous donations and contributions to the church - our success depends on the commitment of ALL our members. We’ll share a more detailed financial summary later in the year, but here’s a snapshot of our financial activity from the past month:

- **Total Income:** $1,487.00
- **Total Expenses:** $1,088.20
- **Difference:** +$398.80

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**The North Texas Church of Freethought**
*A Rational Approach to Religion*

Tim Gorski, MD
Pastoral Director

Zachary Moore, PhD
Executive Director

Deborah Boak
Youth Director

Susette Geissler
Outreach Director

Georgene Harkness, CPA
Treasurer

Howard Harkness
Musical Director

Don Lewellyn
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Brad Watson
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