SAYING “THANK YOU”

As freethinkers, it can sometimes be difficult to express gratitude in the abstract sense. Most people with a supernatural belief system think immediately of their god or goddess when they want to express a sense of gratitude for positive circumstances in their lives.

In fact, this sense of gratitude towards a supernatural entity is so pervasive in our culture that even the most hardcore atheists sometimes catch themselves saying “Thank God!” at moments of good fortune.

This outwardly-focused instinct is a nearly-universal human characteristic, but perhaps we as freethinkers can put it to good use if we simply think through the full range of implications. After all, in our everyday lives we regularly say “thank you” to waiters, to grocery baggers, and to people who hold doors open for us. But why should we stop at these small gestures of kindness and helpfulness?

At the moments when we take stock of the positive aspects of our lives, rather than direct our offerings of thanks skyward, as do many of our family, friends, and neighbors,

continued on Page 3

NEW LUNCH LOCATION: GOLDEN CORRAL

Meeting after the monthly service for lunch has been an NTCOF tradition for years. Our congregation has grown by such leaps and bounds throughout 2009 that we’re just not able to fit in our old restaurant anymore.

Fortunately, we’ve been able to find someplace else suitable: Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, across from the Grapevine Mills Shopping Center. They have a wide selection of hot and cold foods, salad, and ice cream, all for one price. And in addition to giving us all an opportunity to eat lunch together again, Golden Corral will donate 10% of our lunch cost back to the NTCOF—just hand your receipt over to Amanda Jules and she’ll collect them for the donation!

Written directions are listed on Page 3.
**OCTOBER 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!

**Whitney:** “I was raised in the Presbyterian Church and was very active in youth group and church choir/band till about midway through high school. There was some infighting in the church and I quit going and didn’t like any of the churches I visited so I quit going to church in general. I almost started attending a Unitarian Church later in college but decided I didn’t want to wake up early on Sunday. By the time I met my husband I wasn’t really that religious and had been actively questioning why I believed in god but didn’t really know how to think about the question. I kinda realized that I didn’t really believe anymore when it didn’t bother me that I was dating an atheist...in previous years that would have been a big issue. So, I read a few books that helped me think about the god question in a different way (I was kinda stuck on how did the universe get here if not for god, not bothering to think that I don’t know is a perfectly acceptable answer). I was very serious about making sure my change in views was for a good reason and took a philosophy of religion class...by the time it was over I had moved from “undecided” over to the agnostic atheist side”

**CosmicPerspective:** “I’ve only been seriously questioning the basis for my previously supernatural beliefs for a few years, so it’s good to see how other people have wound their ways out of some rather hazy thinking. I think it would be great to put a little booklet together, maybe online, for newcomers to see, of some of our deconversion (or never converted) stories, just so we can tell others where we’re coming from... it’s a way to not feel so alone.”

**KipBond:** “[Baptism] is a silly belief that deserves being ridiculed. I think it’s also good to make fun of the Mormon’s “holy underwear”, and the Scientologist’s “alien souls”. They don’t believe these things because they have thought about them rationally... and they won’t stop believing because they have thought about them rationally. They need a little emotional push in the right direction.”

**pastortim:** “The flip side of this is that the sort of ethics that can and should be applied to everyone cannot - and should not - be altered to suit some sectarian taste. So if marrying ten women is wrong, it is wrong whether you are Mormon or not. If getting high on peyote is wrong, then it is wrong even if you are a member of some Native American religious sect. And if it is wrong to let your kid die from preventable causes then it is still wrong if the parents “don’t believe in” immunization or established cancer treatment and so on.”

**NTCOF CHILD SUPPLIES: PLEASE DONATE**

The “Sunday School” program here at the NTCOF is providing a unique experience for our children that combines science, historical lessons, and our shared freethinking values. But we also need our NTCOF members to participate by donating supplies from this list:

- Baby Wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Dixie Cups
- Paper Plates
- Reusable Napkins/Hand Towels
- Snacks
- Paper
- Markers
- Paints/Paint Brushes
- Glue
- Safety Scissors
- Any Craft Supplies
- Science Experiment Ideas

Please direct your donations to Youth Director Amanda Jules!

**NOVEMBER BULLETIN SPONSORSHIP: PRO-COUNT, INC.**

The November 2009 issue of the NTCOF bulletin was sponsored by Pro-Count, Inc, who will donate $40 to the NTCOF on behalf of any NTCOF member who enrolls and completes Concealed Handgun License training through this school. To sign up for the class, please visit: www.chl-tx.com

Please contact the Executive Director if you or your business would like to sponsor a future bulletin.
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 Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills shopping center, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900.

Easy driving directions: To reach Golden Corral from the Wyndham, take the SOUTH exit from the parking lot (turn your head left as you walk out the main entrance to see it), the drive across Esters Blvd onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114). From there, just take the first exit to the RIGHT onto International Parkway (121), then take the Grapevine Mills Parkway exit. Turn LEFT on Stars and Stripes Way, and continue on to E. Grapevine Mills Circle.

Family Group: The Family Group will also be meeting at Golden Corral with the rest of the NTCOF! There will be a separate room for the families, but everyone is free to mingle and chat with everyone else.

Pub Night: We take the opportunity to meet at unique local pubs with great beer selections and great conversation. This month, we’ll be at The Ginger Man in Dallas on November 7th.

Board Game Night: The regular game night crew meets nearly every Friday night at the IHOP on 2310 Stemmons Trail (I-35), near Northwest Highway (Loop 12). Plan to arrive at about 7:30 PM, and stay late playing Risk, Rummikub, and other fun games!

Women’s Group: Do you miss getting to spend quality time with female friends? Want a comfortable place to chat without all those pesky men around? Come on out to the newly-formed NTCOF Women’s Group, where there will be knitting lessons, conversation, and lots of female freethinking fun! Next meeting is Sunday, November 25th, with details to be determined.

Food Critics Dinners: WILL RESUME IN JANUARY 2010!

why not take a little extra time to think through all of the individuals who have contributed to them?

When you sit down to lunch today at Golden Corral, you may notice some other people in the restaurant turn their eyes upward and give credit for their meal to a deity. But as a freethinker, you can recognize the natural processes that brought the food to your plate: the farmers, truck drivers, restaurant owners, and even the cooks and other staff who see that the food is laid out for you to eat when you walk in the door- and you can thank them, if only mentally.

But we don’t have to stop there- rather than keep gratitude outwardly-focused, as most people do instinctively, why not recognize the role YOU play in bringing about the good things in your life?

Simply by adopting a freethinking worldview, you have taken a tremendous step forward that most of your friends, family, and neighbors aren’t even able to consider without giving up a supernatural perspective that requires them to ascribe all the good things in life to a distant deity, while simultaneously blaming themselves for everything that is bad in their lives.

Being a freethinker should mean that we are not only more sensitive to showing gratitude to our fellow human beings, but that we become more free to show gratitude to ourselves. In the past fifteen years, the North Texas Church of Freethought has done truly amazing things for freethinkers and their families here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. And even though there’s much more good that we have to do, I think it’s high time that we thank ourselves for a job well done.

-Zachary Moore, Executive Director

All Donations To The NTCOF Are $$$ TAX-DEDUCTIBLE $$$
Receipts Issued On Request

The North Texas Church of Freethought
A Rational Approach to Religion

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WINTER SOLSTICE CARDS!

May the bright light of human reason illuminate the nights of your solstice season.

Now for sale at: www.cafepress.com/ntcof

Don’t forget to renew your Kroger shopping card to benefit the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program!

CAMP QUEST TEXAS BENEFIT DINNER AT AL-AMIR’S, DEC 10

The 2010 Camp Quest Texas is going to need as much support as possible to provide the best experience for our campers! Please come out to Al-Amir’s Lebanese restaurant in Addison on Thursday, December 10th from 6-9 PM, where we’ll have dinner, belly-dancing, a silent auction, and a raffle- all to benefit Camp Quest Texas! All proceeds from the auction and raffle will help provide a fantastic camp experience, and Al-Amir’s will also donate 10% of all dinner check as well! It’s the can’t-miss event of the year!

CHURCH OF FREETHOUGHT AFTER-PARTY

At the Drury Inn, in conjunction with the Texas Freethought Convention

Babysitting provided by Amanda Jules

For all your Winter Solstice purchases, please remember to start at the NTCOF website and click on:

amazon.com

November 2009