

Secular Student Alliance Conference 2009!

Friday, August 7th

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10:00am – 3:00pm – Visit the Creation Museum with PZ Myers (optional)



Back in June, blogger PZ Myers challenged Ken Ham of the evangelical Creation Museum to give him a personal guided tour. When Ken Ham didn't take him up on it, the SSA decided to send him anyway! Join over 250 atheists as we (respectfully) giggle our way through this wrong-headed monument to anti-intellectualism.

7:00pm – The 2009 Best Awards Presentation



While always a tough call, we can confidently say that this year's award winners represent some of the best student freethought groups ever! Join us as we celebrate the best in media coverage, web design, service projects, and overall excellence.



SB!

Lyz Liddell is the SSA's Senior Campus Organizer, where she works directly with student affiliates to connect them with critical resources. A Master in bassoon performance, she plays with the Columbus-based medieval music group *Early Interval*.

7:30pm – Secular Coalition for America: Activism Training



This workshop, led by Secular Coalition for America Executive Director Sean Faircloth and Communications Associate Jesse Galef, gives both new and seasoned leaders the tools to effectively lobby their representatives on freethought and state-church separation issues. Attendees will learn how to educate officials and the public, and how to make student voices heard in the halls of power.



SB!

Sean Faircloth became Executive Director of the SCA in June 2009, after serving as Majority Whip in the Maine legislature and a national leader in the fight for children and family services. **Jesse Galef**, Communications Associate, also joined the SCA in June, and became an expert in media relations while working for the American Humanist Association.

8:30pm – Using Media for Secular Outreach

The Pastafarians of the University of South Carolina-Columbia are truly the kings of all media this year, having been featured on local

television, *Freethought Radio*, and even the *New York Times*. This tutorial, led by Andrew Cederdahl, will both recount those successes and give you practical tips on how to use the media positively and effectively.



Andrew Cederdahl, a political science major, is the president and co-founder of the Pastafarians at University of South Carolina – Columbia. He has been selected as the national 2009 American Atheists Founder's Scholarship winner and received the 2009 "Changing the Face of USC" Diversity award from USC's Office of Multicultural Student Affairs for his work in raising awareness of secular students and issues.

9:00pm – How to Sound Good In the Media

Planning a big event, but afraid to subject yourself to media scrutiny? Being in front of a camera, a mic or a journalists' pen can be frightening. This presentation is to help you deal with the media and not sound like an idiot.



Joel Guttormson is President of Metro State Atheists at Metropolitan State College of Denver. He also volunteers for the Center for Inquiry (CFI) as an On-Campus Regional Coordinator, and as a member of their Publications and Activism Committees.

9:30pm – Bringing the Campaign for Free Expression to Your Campus



The Campaign for Free Expression is an initiative to focus attention on the individual's right to express viewpoints, opinions, and beliefs. This session will focus on consciousness-raising events and activities a group can do to challenge complacency about impediments to free expression on campuses, as well as locally and globally.

Debbie Goddard is a campus organizer at the Center for Inquiry in Amherst, NY. She has been involved with church-state separation, secular organizing, GLBT and progressive issues since high school.



10:00pm – Speed Networking

Meet and share ideas with student group leaders from across the country! Feel free to continue your conversations outside or back in the dorms.

SB!

= Member of SSA Speaker's Bureau
= Free to speak on your campus!

BUT THEN, OUT OF NOWHERE...

Saturday, August 8th

9:00am – Getting People to Meetings



SSA Board of Directors Vice Chair **Don Sutterfield** walks you through strategies for the perennial struggle to get people to show up. Learn how to plan agendas that are structured for fun and efficiency, and how to navigate the perilous waters of open discussion.

Don Sutterfield is the Vice Chair of the SSA's Board of Directors. He has worked extensively with Students for Freethought at Ohio State over the last five years, and recently appeared in The Economist in an article about Camp Quest.

9:30am – Atheist Students in a College Setting



With the meteoric rise in atheist visibility, the needs of atheist needs are only now being recognized. Come learn about the latest research about freethinkers on college campuses – the recommendations for atheist inclusion may surprise you.

Kathleen Goodman is a Doctoral Candidate in Student Affairs Administration and Research at the University of Iowa. She is an active member in the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) where she serves as a directorate member of the Task Force on Spirituality, Faith, and Religion. **John Mueller** is an Associate Professor in the department of Student Affairs in Higher Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is a leader in the ACPA, and a recipient of their Annuity Coeptis, Emerging Scholars, and Diamond Honoree awards.

10:00am – Best Service Project: the Winner's How-To



Service, volunteering, and fundraising – oh my! This session will give you the tools you need to get your group started on a service project, as well as the different avenues you can take to give back to your community.

Ashley Paramore, the Events Coordinator for Students for Freethought at Ohio State, is an undergrad in psychology. An SSA Board Member, she video blogs on YouTube under the name *healthyaddict*.

10:30am – Collaborating with Religious Groups

In 2009, Students for Freethought at OSU earned their school's Multiculturalism Award from their school for their work with a Christian ministry. This session will explore atheist-theist interactions from the other side, and will open up new vistas for these collaborations.



Jonathan Weyer is a campus minister at The Ohio State University with the CCO-The Cloister and is an ordained minister with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. He lives in Columbus, Ohio with his wife Wendy, three kids and a cat.

11:00am – Fundraising Through your Institution



Your University is the main source for funding your student group! Find out where this funding comes from, how you can tap into it, and tips to maximize the allocation for your group.

Shelley Mountjoy is founder and President of the Rational Response Squad at George Mason University, where she is a graduate student. She is Vice President of Virginia Freethought Renaissance, an Organizer for Beltway Atheists, and was recently elected to the SSA's Board of Directors.

11:30am – One Nation Under the Constitution: Meet the SCA's Executive Director



Theocrats often claim that ours is a "Christian nation," but they ignore critical elements of our common heritage. Sean Faircloth connects these overlooked aspects of history with contemporary advocacy for a secular worldview in Washington, D.C.

Sean Faircloth became Executive Director of the SCA in June 2009, after serving as Majority Whip in the Maine legislature and a national leader in the fight for children and family services.

12:00 – 1:30pm – Lunch (on your own)



Check out the wide variety of restaurants and eateries nearby the Ohio State University, and invite your favorite speaker to join you for further conversation.

1:30pm – The United Coalition of Reason



With the recent explosion in freethought groups, the United Coalition of Reason was formed to foster unity between local groups by providing free promotional material, public relations training, and other services. This session will show how campus groups can get involved and reap benefits from this new organization.

Fred Edwords is the former director of communications for the American Humanist Association, former editor of the Humanist magazine, and past president of Camp Quest. He currently serves on the advisory board of the Secular Student Alliance and now heads up this new nationwide effort to increase local cooperation within the community of reason.

SB!

2:00pm – Meet the American Humanist Association

Once you graduate, the American Humanist Association can get you involved in freethought work on a national level. Learn about the AHA's work on behalf of humanists and atheists in the United States, our internships offered in Washington DC, and how you can get involved with our over 120 local humanist groups across the country.



Maggie Ardiente is the development director at the AHA and editor of *Free Mind*, the AHA's membership newsletter. She was an editorial intern for the *Humanist* magazine, former vice-president of her campus freethought group, the James Madison University (JMU) Freethinkers, and has served on the board of directors of the Secular Student Alliance.

2:30pm – Meet American Atheists



Begun in 1963 by the (in)famous Madalyn Murray O'Hair, American Atheists was one of the first openly atheist organizations. As one of the most visible groups operating today, **Edwin Kagin**, AA's head legal advisor, will show you what they can offer your group.

SB!

Edwin Kagin is a bedrock of Freethought activism. A co-founder of Camp Quest and a member of SSA's Advisory board, his fight for secular values led to unsuccessful runs for the Kentucky Supreme Court and State Senate. Currently, he is the head legal advisor for American Atheists, and is nationally known as a pugnacious speaker.

3:00 PM – Peer Problem Solving

You know that problem that your group is having? Enlist student group leaders from across the country to help! This session will give you the opportunity to submit detailed questions to your peers for constructive advice and encouragement. You can find the question submission form in your conference packet; please hand them in **before lunch Saturday!**



4:00pm – Meet Camp Quest

Camp Quest is an international network of sleepaway summer camps aimed primarily at kids from non-religious families, with the goal of providing a place for fun, friends, and freethought for kids ages 8-17. This talk will introduce you to CQ's innovative approach and program for children from nonreligious backgrounds, as well as give you and your group ways to get involved.



SB!

Amanda K. Metskas is the executive director of Camp Quest, Inc. She is a co-author of *Raising Freethinkers: A Practical Guide for Parenting Beyond*

Belief, and holds an M.A. in political science from Ohio State University.

4:30pm – An Atheist at West Point: Meet the Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers

In a very real way, evangelical Christians have infiltrated the military, with destructive consequences for freethinkers, non-evangelicals, and foreign policy. This session will relate the experience of one cadet as he rose through the ranks, with an emphasis on how the increasing religiosity of the military parallels similar efforts at public colleges.



Jason Torpy, President of Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers, is a graduate of West Point and OSU. He sits on the boards of the Secular Coalition for America and the American Humanist Association.

5:00pm – Meet the Freedom From Religion Foundation

The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) is one of the largest freethought organizations in the country, well known for its litigation to preserve state-church separation and its efforts to increase humanist visibility. This session will give you a background on the group, including the reasoning behind some of its more controversial actions.



SB!

Dan Barker, Co-President of FFRF, came to freethought after many years as an evangelical preacher. He is nationally known as an atheist spokesperson, having participated in numerous debates with theologians and theocrats. As a member of the SSA's Speakers Bureau, he is available to speak on your campus!



SB!

5:30pm – The Friendly Atheist: Atheism & Dating

Looking to meet that nice atheist boy/girl? Considering dating someone religious? This talk will feature tips and tricks for wooing that special someone, with personal stories and anecdotes shared by readers of friendlyatheist.com.

Hemant Mehta, internationally known as the author of *I Sold My Soul* on eBay, serves as the Chair of the SSA's Board of Directors. A high school math teacher, he runs the popular blog FriendlyAtheist.com.

6:00 – 7:30pm – Dinner (on your own)



Check out the wide variety of restaurants and eateries nearby the Ohio State University, and invite your favorite speaker to join you for further conversation.

BUT COME BACK FOR...

7:30pm – The 2009 Freethought Backbone Award



Dan!

Annually awarded to the fiercest fighters for freethought, this year's award goes to **Dan Barker** for his lifelong devotion to building a secular society. His organization, the Freedom from Religion Foundation, has done fantastic work supporting student groups, raising enough money to send its speakers on national tours for free. Way to go,

8:00pm – Keynote Presentation: PZ Myers

Humanist of the Year and blogger extraordinaire, **PZ Myers** presents "Counting Coup on Creationism", an exhortation to take the fight directly to the promulgators of ignorance.

An Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Minnesota-Morris, **PZ ("Paul Zachary") Myers** is the author of the popular and provocative science blog Pharyngula. Recently declared Humanist of the Year by the American Humanist Association, no less a figure than the windbag Bill Donahue has called for his termination.



9:00pm – Freethought Trivia

This isn't just a sit-in-your-seats trivia session. Emcee Frisby gets you up and going with games, fun and prizes!

Sunday, August 9th

9:00am – SSA Membership Meeting



The annual meeting for members of the Secular Student Alliance. Come to get involved with the organization that supports your group!

10:00am – We're Not All Prunes & Hard Candy: Working with Off-Campus Groups



Chances are, around your university there's at least one atheist, freethought, humanist, or whatever group. Who are they, and what do they do? This talk will introduce you to what some off-campus groups do, and give you the tools to combine forces to increase the local level of freethought awesomeness.

Sharon Moss is the president of the Humanist Community of Central Ohio and former president of Students for Freethought.

10:30am – When You're Gone: Succession Planning

You won't be in college forever (we hope!). Here's how to make sure your group sticks around even when you're gone. This talk will focus on ensuring leadership continuity, documenting and transmitting best practices, and other proven methods for keeping your group alive.



Chris Calvey is the founder and former president of the Atheists, Agnostics, and Freethinkers (AAF) at the University of Illinois. He served on the SSA's Board of Directors from 2008-2009, and is currently pursuing a PhD in biology at the University of Wisconsin Madison.

11:00am – When You're Gone: Staying Involved

You won't be in college forever (we hope!). Here's how you can stay in the movement after graduation.

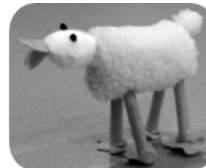
Shelley Mountjoy is founder and President of the Rational Response Squad at George Mason University.



Jeremy Diamond was a co-founder of American University Rationalists and Atheists and served as the club's first president.

11:30am – Odds & Ends

An eclectic set of short subjects:



- **Bob Bhaerman** on initiatives in humanist education.
- **David Saforo** shares his freethought work in Ghana.
- **Jon Sussman** introduces Activity Packets.
- ...and the **SSA Staff** roll out spankin' new programs.



12:00pm – Lunch (on your own)

Check out the wide variety of restaurants and eateries nearby the Ohio State University, and invite your favorite speaker to join you for further conversation.



1:00pm – Atheist On the Fence

August Berkshire is a pro at reaching out to younger freethought audiences, including those in high school, as well as community and Christian colleges. Attend this presentation if you're interested in bringing him to your campus.

August Berkshire has been a leader in the atheist movement since 1984. His experience includes positions as past vice president and council chair of Atheist Alliance International, past president of Minnesota Atheists, and current board member of Freedom From Religion Foundation. He has the "ATHEIST" car license plate for Minnesota.