

The Hoosier Humanist Herald

FreeThought Fort Wayne, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

Message from the President

Happy New Year! Traditionally, people tend to use January 1st as a good time to review the past year and look forward to the New Year. Some even try to make resolutions to try to do better. We had some fun events in 2018: Pi Day with a movie; the picnic with big bubbles; Festivus with lots of food and "white elephant" gifts. We also held some serious events, like the ACLU presentation, Single Payer Health Care, Pride Fest, and science presentations with Dr. Maloney from PFW. We had several ongoing activities, such as the "Hoosier Humanist Hour" podcast, "We Are Atheists" TV show, and "Meeting of the Minds" discussion group.

In the coming year, I'm sure we'll continue most of our social traditions, but we also want to try to grow our group. One way to do that is to follow the advice of Jim Helton, who spoke to us on December 17th. He has successfully established a group in Kentucky by partnering with various activist groups and supporting their projects. By doing so, he has shown that atheists are decent people who desire to improve society. He calls it, "normalizing," atheism. As a result, his group is thriving and he has been named the National Field Organizer for American Atheists. He has been kind enough to extend an invitation to assist us as a group, if needed.

The New Year is also an appropriate time to thank everyone who has supported our activities during the past year. There will soon be some new FTFW Board members who will need your help to make our group even stronger. Please make your support a priority in 2019. Thank you and enjoy the New Year!

Robert Brandt, Former President of FTFW

FTFW CafePress Shop

The [CafePress storefront](#) for getting your own piece of FTFW merchandise is now open! We have a number of shirts/hoodies and stickers/buttons/magnets/signs currently available, with more products to come! FTFW gets a small commission from each purchase, so we greatly appreciate your contribution!

Karen's Corner



Karen Mizner, President of FTFW

Scuba Lizards



A scuba-diving lizard? Yes, there is such a thing. Herpetologist and researcher, Lindsey Swierk, Ph.D., has video-recorded the tiny water anole (*Anolis aquaticus*) breathing underwater to avoid predators. These little critters, found in the streams of southern Costa Rica and in a small area of Panama, have created a unique “scuba-tank” method to breathe underwater. They blow a giant water bubble around their nose in order to breathe under water for up to 16 minutes. Dr. Swierk, of the State University of New York, Binghamton, speculates that air pockets are trapped around the anole’s head and throat as it enters the water. It is the anole’s inhalations and exhalations of this air bubble that allows for the trading of fresh air to sustain the lizard while under water.

Diving beetles, and even spiders, often trap air bubbles on the surfaces of their bodies and can breathe the air trapped within these bubbles. Water anoles are not particularly fast-moving lizards, so the ability to disappear underwater to escape, and hide from, predators is a very effective survival mechanism.

Karen Mizner, President of FTFW

Amazon Smile



Do you make purchases on Amazon? Did you know that FreeThought Fort Wayne is now a charitable organization listed on Amazon Smile? Simply use the link on the Amazon Smile logo above or look up the charity, "American Humanist Association," in New Haven, IN (on Amazon Smile) to have Amazon contribute 0.5% of your Amazon purchase (at no cost to you!) to FTFW. You can also find a link to contribute to [our Amazon Smile](#) on the FTFW website under the "Stores" menu.

Annual Membership Renewal



NOW is the time And we want YOU!

**Yes, it's our annual member renewal time
Please renew your membership dues by going to**

<https://www.freethoughtfw.org/becoming-a-member/>

**There are lots of membership options
Including becoming a "Monthly Steward"**

OR

Just see a FTFW Board Member at any meet up.



Letter to the Editor and Newsletter Submissions

**Have a story to tell?
Have something to say?
Want to write a letter to the editor?**



Put your thinking cap on, grab your laptop and pen an article for the "Hoosier Humanist Herald" monthly newsletter. Just 200-300 words and you can be published writer! Submissions due by the 16th of each month. Submissions may be edited for length and content.

Send submissions to: fortwayneaha@gmail.com

Here's your chance! Have an idea for our group? Have a question for us? Have you experienced frustrations as a non-believer? Do people question you about what Humanism means? Just want to vent a bit? Have a funny story to share? Have a question for our Celebrant, Victoria Gipson? The Hoosier Humanist Herald committee will do its best to respond to your concerns. Submit your letter via e-mail to fortwayneaha@gmail.com with the subject line of "Letter to the Editor" or "Ask a Celebrant," then watch for a response in our next month's newsletter! Alternatively, if you wish to discuss current events or an interesting article, feel free to submit your thoughts as an article in the newsletter! Please note that submissions may be edited for clarity and space (200-300 words).

Take Home Thoughts from the Meeting of the Minds

Meeting of the Minds



At the "Meeting of the Minds" discussion group on December 19th, we discussed the question, "How Can We Ensure That All Participants in a Discussion Are Heard?"

We often witness people being interrupted or talked over, especially women. Rude behavior was underscored recently in the meeting between Donald Trump, Mike Pence, Chuck Schumer, and Nancy Pelosi. Although Nancy held her own, she had to force the issue several times.

In our discussion, we determined that this behavior had several possible causes.

We are all pretty well informed and well-read and are eager to present our point of view. Some contributors to a conversation are more dominant than others. This is particularly true of men raised in a society that encourages men to act forcefully, to be competitive, and to minimize the role of women. We are often guilty of not listening carefully, but thinking about how we want to reply.

Some suggestions to improve the situation included passing around a "talking token" to signify who is next in order to talk; encouraging a person to stand up if they wanted to speak or protest if they were interrupted. Most of these were rejected because they would stifle the openness and spontaneity of our discussions.

So what are we to do? The general consensus was to emphasize, at the start of any discussion, the importance of sensitivity to the interests and feelings of all

participants. We should try to be aware that the thoughts of all are valuable and worthy of being heard. We believe mutual respect is an important value to cultivate. If we can achieve these goals, then our discussions will be more enjoyable for all.

Bob Brandt, Former President of FTFW

Upcoming Events

Closing Date for Board Seat Nominations

January 6, 2019 (Sunday)

Current dues-paying members are welcome to run for a seat on the FTFW board of directors. Interested parties should submit their name to one of the current board members by the end of the day.

We Are Atheists Live Call-In Show

January Dates TBD: 7:00-8:00 pm

FTFW hosts a semi-monthly local access TV show called "We Are Atheists" through the Allen County Public Library's channel, Access 2 (also broadcast on Comcast 57 and Frontier 27). You can [view it live](#) and/or call in (260-422-3902) with any questions, thoughts, or concerns that you might have for the hosts. You may also leave comments through [Facebook](#), [Discord](#), or email (WeAreAtheistsTV@gmail.com).

FTFW Monthly Board Planning Meeting

January 13, 2019 (Sunday): 1:30-3:30 pm at Arby's (333 W. Washington Center Rd.)

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly planning meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar. Qualified (dues-paying) board seat candidates will be announced. Absentee ballots will be available for qualified members' voting.

Meeting of the Minds

January 16, 2019 (Wednesday): 7:00-8:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fort Wayne

This is a recurring event for FTFW every month on the third Wednesday, whereby folks get together for an open discussion on a particular topic of interest. Be sure to bring your suggested discussion topic ideas and we will vote as a group on which one(s) to talk about.

FTFW Members' Movie Night

January 18, 2019 (Friday): 6:30-9:00 pm at Duane Thompson's Apartment (Canterbury Green, 5116 Stonehedge Blvd, Apt. 2)

Paid members are welcome to join us for a viewing of the movie, "The Man Who Sued God." Please bring a dish to share and keep in mind that the covered parking spaces and numbered spaces are for Canterbury green residents only.

Here is a brief synopsis of the movie: after lawyer Steve Myers (Billy Connolly) abandons his career, he buys a boat and pursues a quiet life as a fisherman. When a bolt of lightning destroys his vessel, his insurance company tells him he isn't covered because the incident was an "act of God." Teaming up with Anne (Judy Davis), a journalist who's sympathetic to his plight, Steve sues God, who is represented in court by religious leaders. The defendants must give evidence of God's existence or pay.

Absentee Voting for Board Seat Nominations Ends

January 27, 2019 (Sunday)

This is the last day that absentee votes from qualified members will be accepted for the open positions on the FTFW board of directors.

FTFW Monthly Board Meeting

January 28, 2019 (Monday): 6:30-8:30 pm at the Allen County Public Library (main branch), Business & Technology meeting room

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar. In-person balloting, elections, and appointments will be announced.

FTFW Monthly Board Planning Meeting

February 10, 2019 (Sunday): 1:30-3:30 pm at the Allen County Public Library (main branch), Business & Technology meeting room

Current dues-paying members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly planning meeting. Details can be found on our Facebook pages as well as our website calendar. This will be the first meeting with the new board members.



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