

The Hoosier Herald

FreeThought Fort Wayne, Inc. Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

Message from the President

2017 was a memorable year in many respects for FreeThought Fort Wayne. We updated our by-laws, incorporated, refurbished our web site and started a newsletter. I believe our organizational structure is secure.

Nominations for two open Board positions begin January 22nd and end February 26th. I hope many of you will be willing to serve either on the Board or as Trustee. Voting will be held on March 18th at our regular Sunday meet up at Old Crown. To be qualified to vote you must be a paid-up member. If you wish to support our group financially, see Karen Mizner at Old Crown at our Sunday meet up or go to our web site and use the "Donate" button.

We also need some help with our events. As Steve Zimmerman says, people who are willing to "chop wood and carry water." We can use help in staging events, such as acting as a greeter, setting up a display table, providing snacks and advertising.

We have a tentative schedule of events for 2018 so I hope this will be a year during which our past efforts will bear fruits.

Robert Brandt, President of FTFW

2017 Stats

- 102 Sunday and Wednesday meet ups
- 40 Hoosier Humanist Hour radio shows
- 25 Board and committee meetings
- 1 Annual membership meeting
- 19 Special events:

Homeless Gift Bags, Homeless Haircuts, Community Harvest Food Bank (CHFB) volunteer days, Pi Day, Science Day, Sherry Skufca talk, Chris Rex talk, Movie Nights at Roger's, six of us attended the 76th Annual AHA Conference in Charleston, SC, FTFW 3rd Annual Picnic, Interfaith Understanding (with PCG), Stargazing Night, Fall Frolic & Bonfire at Ben's, Graveyard of the Gods, Festivus at Don Hall's Gas House and our ongoing food drive for CHFB.

As you can see, FTFW was very busy last year providing speakers on current topics of interest, making a difference through community service as well as holding fun events for our members.

Karen Mizner, Treasurer of FTFW

Celebrant Services

HUMANIST CELEBRANT

As the only trained Humanist celebrant in Northeast Indiana, I am often asked questions about what a Humanist celebrant is and what sorts of services do I provide. I wrote this article to help answer many of the questions people have about celebrants and the ceremonies we celebrants perform. I like to say I am in the life and love business!

WHY CHOOSE A HUMANIST CEREMONY?

In an age where more and more people have chosen to live their lives without religion, Humanist ceremonies offer a contemporary way of satisfying the timeless need to bring significance to life's big changes and landmark celebrations. Throughout human history people have always marked the important events of life like birth, marriage, retirement, and have commemorated the death of a loved one.

For those of us with no religious beliefs, it is important that we can mark these special occasions in our lives with honesty, warmth and affection without relying on traditional religious clergy to do so. A Humanist ceremony, conducted by a trained celebrant, allows for a non-religious or secular approach to celebrating landmark events in people's lives.

THE HISTORY OF HUMANIST CELEBRANTS

In 1939, a group of former Quakers founded the Humanist Society to establish a non-theistic Humanist ministry. With Humanist tenets in mind, the Humanist Society trains and certifies people who, upon endorsement, would be accorded the same rights and privileges granted by law to priests, ministers, and rabbis of traditional theistic religions.

Humanist celebrants have full rights and responsibilities of ordained clergy and are authorized to attend to the pastoral and ceremonial needs of not only Humanists, but all others seeking these services as well. Celebrants provide millions of Americans an alternative to traditional religious weddings, memorial services, baby namings and other life-cycle events.



WHAT IS A HUMANIST CEREMONY?

A humanist ceremony is a meaningful non-religious ceremony created in a personalized fashion specifically for the people involved in the event to be celebrated. It is conducted by a trained celebrant with the skills and experience required to bring significance to every ceremony and works closely with families to create it.

Humanist Weddings are a celebration of a shared commitment based entirely on the unique aspects of the relationship of the couple. Couples have the freedom to write their own promises to each other. Celebrants can legally officiate weddings in all 50 U.S. states.

Humanist Baby Naming ceremonies are tender reflections and acknowledgements of the awe, joy and responsibilities of bringing a child into the world. By choosing a non-religious ceremony versus a child baptism or christening, the parents are afforded the opportunity to allow their child to be able to decide for themselves as they grow older what they do or don't believe about religion.

Humanist Funerals bring people together to express and share sadness, but also to celebrate the life of their loved one in a way that is meaningful and sincere. They are carefully written to insure they are inclusive of all present.



HOW DO PEOPLE REACT TO ATTENDING OR PARTICIPATING IN A HUMANIST CEREMONY?

You cannot live in America without having family members, friends or co-workers who are religious. Some people worry about how these individuals will respond to their non-religious ceremony. I can honestly report that at every ceremony I have officiated (religious and non-religious) I have always had attendees say afterwards that they found the service moving, sincere, lovely, and other such adjectives. They often tell me how much they appreciated the thoughts and sentiments expressed in the service.

HOW CAN I GET IN CONTACT WITH A HUMANIST CELEBRANT?

If you would like to discuss having a non-religious ceremony for a landmark event in your life, you may contact the only trained and experienced Humanist

Celebrant located in Northeast Indiana at the following:

Victoria Gipson, Humanist Celebrant

Secular Celebrations of Northeast Indiana

PO BOX 357, Hunteertown, IN 46748

Phone: (260) 343-1353

Email: SecularCelebrationsIN@gmail.com

Letter to the Editor

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 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! Please note that letters may be edited for clarity and space.

Upcoming Events

Community Harvest Food Bank Volunteering

February 24, 2018 (Saturday): 8:30-11:30 am at Community Harvest Food Bank

FTFW will be helping hand out food to the needy at the Community Harvest Food Bank. Please keep in mind that only those who are 14+ years old can hand out food, while children 5-13 can work in the grocery store area. The first 30 minutes will be a safety talk, followed by handing out or organizing food. Please wear comfortable clothing that is weather-appropriate, including closed-toe shoes. Plastic gloves will be issued to all participants. If you own a FTFW shirt, please wear it to volunteer.

FTFW Monthly Board Meeting

February 26, 2018 (Monday): 6:30-8:30 pm at a place TBD

Paid members are welcome to join the FTFW board of directors at their monthly meeting.

Science as Refined Common Sense

February 28, 2018 (Wednesday): 6:30-8:30 pm at the main branch of ACPL, Room C

Dr. David Maloney, Physics professor at IPFW, will give a free presentation on "Science as Refined Common Sense." Everyone interacts with the physical world as they grow. From those interactions we develop common-sense ideas about how the physical world behaves, but most of us never really test those ideas. Scientists are looking for explanations that hold up under repeated testing against the natural world. In this presentation we will examine several common-sense ideas and see how they need to be refined to be scientifically acceptable.

Pi Day

March 14, 2018 (Wednesday): TBD at a place TBD

A time to celebrate 3.14, the first three digits of the irrational number, Pi, which is critically important for calculations involving circles.



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