



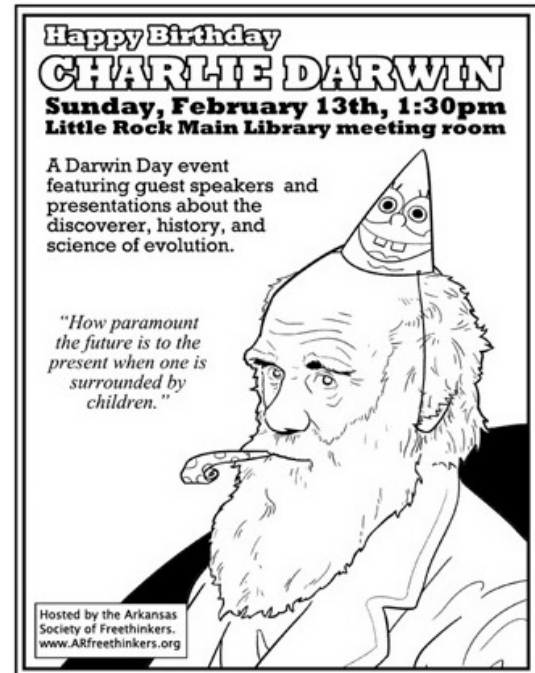
Arkansas Society of Freethinkers Official Newsletter February 2011 Vol 1 Iss 2

February Calendar

- Feb 1** **First Tuesday Pizza**
7 PM @ Vino's
- Feb 5** **Recovering From Religion**
6 PM Monthly Meeting
- Feb 6** **Adopt a Highway Clean-up**
10 AM See Meet-Up for details
- Feb 6** **Super Bowl Party TBA**
- Feb 8** **Freethinking Woman's Group**
5:30 PM See Meet-Up for details
- Feb 12** **SciFi Writers Club**
7PM See Meet-Up for details
- Feb 13** **Darwin Day Celebration**
1:30 PM @ Main LR Library
- Feb 15** **Skeptics in the Pub**
7 PM Hibernia Irish Tavern
- Feb 16** **Book Club: The Moral Landscape**
7 PM Starbucks LR
- Feb 19** **Saturday Movie Night**
TBA
- Feb 20** **Monthly Discussion Meeting**
1:30 PM @ LR Library Guest Speaker
- Feb 22** **Freethinking Woman's Group**
5:30 PM See Meet-Up for details
- Feb 25** **New Member Pot Luck Shindig**
6 PM Anne's Home See Meet-Up for details
- Mar. 1st** **First Tuesday Pizza**
7 PM @ Vino's

Officers

President	Tod Billings
Vice President	Susan Kent
Secretary	Anne Orsi
Treasurer	Mark Love



Darwin Day Celebration

Sunday, February 13, 2011 1:30 PM
Main Library
100 S Rock St
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 918-3000

Come celebrate the 202nd birthday of Charles Darwin. We'll have a birthday cake and punch in Darwin's memory, and several speakers on his contributions to science and the understanding of our world.

The event will feature several speakers giving presentations on themes relating to evolution, with time for questions.

Our guest speakers will be:

Janet Lanza - The mechanisms of evolution
Professor, Department of Biology, UALR
Ph.D. Evolutionary Ecology

Tod Billings (President) - A history of human evolution
Degree in Anthropology and Masters in Psychology.

Robin Verble - Evolution of reproduction and sexual selection
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Biology, UALR
Cake, refreshments and social afterwards.

Guest Speaker at the Monthly Meeting

Matt Gifford - Biodiversity of lizards and salamanders
Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, UALR
PhD Evolutionary Biology

Is celebrating Christmas, as a Federal Holiday, discrimination against other religions?

In case you haven't seen the discussions on the Meetup site, I would like to share one I posted today, slightly updated.

The "tradition" of having Christmas as a Federal holiday has been an oversight and in error.

American citizens of all religions and many with no religion have paid the bill to give Federal employees a day off with pay.

Why not give everyone the Islam month of Ramadan off or five days off for the Hindu holiday of Diwali? And Hanukah? These are just a few examples.

The argument that this country was founded on Christian principles, whether true or not, can no longer stand as a reason to hold everyone to those principles or to a holiday. We are a diverse nation.

Not surprisingly the first three states to make Christmas a legal holiday were in the South: Alabama in 1836, Louisiana and **Arkansas in 1838.**¹

Christmas became a federal holiday June 26, 1870.

Our government has discriminated against all other religions without us realizing it, or without us caring, or did we just get caught up in the season?

Well, the season has ended, and I think the discrimination should too. Peace. - Editor

Other Celebrations That Are Ignored by the Fed.

"Various ethnic and religious groups in America celebrate days with special meaning to them even though these are not national holidays. Jews, for example, observe their high holy days in September, Muslims celebrate Ramadan, African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa, Irish Americans celebrate the old country's patron saint, St. Patrick, on March 17, and Mardi Gras is the day before the Christian season of Lent begins and is a big occasion in New Orleans, Louisiana, where huge parades and wild revels take place. There are many other such religious and ethnic celebrations in the United States."

Source: <http://www.usa.gov/citizens/holidays.shtml>

Hello Everyone,

If you hadn't noticed, there is a lot more happening in the Society this month. Several new Meet-Ups were added after the January newsletter went out, so be sure to check the Meetup site regularly, because there might be a new Meetup added at any time.

I joined the Meetup on December 3, and at that time there were 49 members. Today there are 90 listed. In one day we picked up 5 new members. And as far as I know, we have done ZERO advertising. What could we do if we had a member drive? Know someone who might be a closet atheist? Send them to our site. The person with the most referrals in the month of March will win a slice of pizza and soft drink, napkin included at Vino's.

Please see me at Vino's April Meetup to claim your prize.

If some of the links on the front page do not work, please do not blame me. MeetUp changed the format after I had set these links up here.

If you have any suggestions or care to write an article, 20 words or less, you can email it to me through the MeetUp site or direct to sterpka@cebridge.net.

Seriously, I look forward to your articles, poems, stories, cartoons, etc., but I would like to keep them about one half of a page in length. About 500 words.

I met several admitted writers in this group, and now we have a "SciFi Writers Club", so if you don't volunteer to write something, I will hound you until you do. Rants accepted, just not against me.

Happy Non-believing - G. Sterpka, Editor

Favorite Atheist Quotes

"Be thankful that you have a life, and forsake your vain and presumptuous desire for a second one."
- Richard Dawkins

"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."
- Benjamin Franklin

"Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism ever conceived."
- Isaac Asimov

For those of you who would like to read more about atheism, here is an informative link :
<http://atheism.about.com/>

¹ http://www.thehistoryofchristmas.com/ch/in_america.htm