

FIG LEAVES

Volume 21 Issue 9

September 2012

October Meeting:

Tuesday Oct. 30, 7-9 PM,
Hannaford Suites, Cincinnati

A Brief History of Cincinnati Occulture

by Justin Moore

For our October Meeting, Justin Moore will join us for a Halloween-themed presentation exploring the history of the Occult in Cincinnati. Cincinnati, the Queen of the West, has long been known as a conservative city. Even born and bred Cincinnatians may think of our city more in terms of the Reds, Skyline Chili and Goetta while ignoring our contributions to literature, the fine arts, music and cultural life in general. On the other hand the people involved in the arts tend to be of a more liberal and bohemian character and it is this side of the city, with all its colorful cast and vibrant nightlife that is often forgotten. Even further removed from most people's consciousness are the practitioners of *The Art, or Magick* as it has been called -spelled with a "k" to distinguish it from parlor tricks and illusionary. It encompasses areas of study such as Alchemy, Qabalah, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism and Hermeticism as well as Folk Cures and Witchcraft, all subjects shunned or deemed heretical by mainstream religion.

However, many of the most interesting artists of the 20th century were influenced by occult philosophy and through their art it has seeped into the cultural background. Cincinnati has been home to a number of influential authors, artists and practitioners of the occult arts from the 1800's to the 21st century. The talk will give an overview of these Masons, pagans, heathens, their influence and legacy.

Light the Night Charity Event

Thursday, October 11, 2012; 7:00 PM

Cincinnati Sawyer Point: 705 East Pete Rose Way

The Skeptical Society of Cincinnati will be one many nationwide freethought groups raising money for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's "Light the Night" event. We will be working on behalf of the humanist charity Foundation Beyond Belief to raise money for researching a cure to blood cancer. We're looking for more people to donate or sign up to raise money and walk so that we can show our secular values for science and charity.

Cincinnati's "Light the Night" walk will be on October 11th at Sawyer Point!

We want to represent our local humanist community in a big way, so please consider participating or donating. Foundation Beyond Belief has challenged the secular community to be the first team to raise \$1,000,000 for LLS in it's first year. In addition the Steifel Freethought Foundation has generously agreed to match the first \$500,000 raised.

For more see page 4

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Events

Oct. Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 30 at 7-9 pm
Hannaford Suites Hotel
Cincinnati, OH

Nov. Meeting

TBD

Please Let Us Have Your E-Mail Address!

Whenever we send out an E-mail, several rejections are returned. To confirm your E-mail and Snail-mail address if it has changed, please send an E-mail to Brian Sellers at bsellers@fuse.net.



September FIG Meeting:

Our Broken Political System



The September FIG meeting addressed such issues as money in politics, religion in politics, our imperfect two-party system and what we might be able to do to bring about change in the system to benefit the country as a whole. The presentation was given by Libertarian Brad Lowry, State Co-director for Gary Johnson, who is the presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party in 2012.

"Our government is broken," Brad said. Our country faces real and serious problems and issues that are being ignored or swept under the rug by politicians who distract us with the fear of fear (terrorism), homosexuality and other non-issues. Many of the problems we face are being perpetuated

by lobbyists, corporations and individuals who can afford to donate large sums of money to political campaigns. If these campaigns are successful, the donors expect special treatment from the elected. Favors granted to these special interests can include the introduction of legislation that is beneficial to them at the expense of the rest of the population, the environment and the future well-being of the country.

"Citizens United" is the latest campaign reform decision passed and it will only make things worse. It allows corporations to donate unlimited sums of money to a candidate, effectively allowing them to buy elections. As Brad explained, "It is absolutely destructive to this nation... Our money-drenched campaign finance system prevents Congress from working in the public interest. Moreover, as history has shown, unlimited and secret money in politics leads to scandal and corruption." Unfortunately, the Supreme Court has ruled that this use of money falls under the right of free speech. Brad stated that the Libertarian stance on this issue is that no citizen's voice should be louder than another's just because he has more money. Therefore Libertarians are against this decision. As it now stands, the person who spends the most money is the one who wins the election.

Mr. Lowry dispelled many of the misconceptions some of our members and the public have concerning the Libertarian philosophy. First, the Koch brothers and the Tea Party are not affiliated with the Libertarian party. The Kochs are one of the biggest contributors to political action committees (PACS). They secretly donate millions to politicians who are expected to reciprocate by passing legislation favorable to the Koch interests. The Tea Party is the Al Qaeda of libertarian views. It supports free markets, no taxes and small government; to the extent that if it came into power, anarchy would probably reign. Libertarians are free market advocates but realize that some regulations must be in place to prevent another recession or collapse of the financial system. Libertarians also promote a federal consumption tax. Everyone would pay the same amount of tax on goods being purchased. This would greatly



FIG Leaves - Thoughtful articles, letters, reviews, reports, anecdotes, and cartoons are very welcome. Submit in Electronic format via the internet to figmessage at gofigger dot org; or on disk or typewritten via mail to Editor, FIG Leaves, P.O. Box 53174, Cincinnati, OH 45253. Contributions received before the first Friday of the month will be considered for publication that month.

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FIG LEAVES



reduce the size of the bureaucracy that is currently needed to uphold and enforce the current behemoth that is the U.S. tax code. Libertarians also favor a small federal government that would turn over more of the responsibilities of governing to the states.

Where the Tea Party and the Libertarian Party differ greatly is in the areas of civil rights and religion in government. Libertarians assert that the federal government is charged with protecting the rights of individuals. The Constitution and the Bill Of Rights give Americans civil rights to pursue happiness in whatever way they choose, provided it does not interfere with another's rights. So Libertarians would not introduce legislation to allow gays to marry, but would charge the federal government with defending this right that is already guaranteed by the founding documents. Gary Johnson has stated that he would also end the expensive and futile "war on drugs" since it is the individual's right to do with his body as he pleases.

The Religious Right has been very influential in elections recently. In the last twenty five years they have insinuated themselves into all facets of political life, from the local school board to the run for the presidency of the country. It is now essential for a political candidate to declare his belief in God and his affiliation with an organized religion to have a chance of winning. This happens in a country that states in the founding document that "no religious test" shall be given to run for a government position. As an example, the Democratic Party was recently pressured into naming God in their official party platform.

Superior organization has enabled the Religious Right to exert a great amount of influence from within political parties by essentially conspiring and working to take them over. These people are happy to spread their agenda by canvassing, getting the voters out and donating to political candidates. Their goal is to bring about a theocracy, legislating God into all facets of government and political life. Libertarians are against this agenda and support the Constitutional right to worship or not worship as the individual's choice. They advocate the separation of the state from religion as originally stated in the Constitution. This is a huge difference in the



Libertarian Party and the Tea Party, which is saturated with religion.

Mr. Lowry addressed the worst problem facing us in today's duopoly. The Democrats and the Republicans are the ones writing the rules concerning ballot access. They deliberately make it very difficult to get a third party on the ballot by demanding that they adhere to stricter regulations than either of the

two major parties must follow. The Libertarian Party of Ohio has taken these unfair restrictions to the Ohio Supreme Court and has won each time. It has helped to enable parties such as the Green Party to gain ballot access by these actions. There are six candidates on the presidential ballot in Ohio this year.

There was a lot of frustration expressed at the meeting about the feeling of futility that comes from fighting the two-party system. Brad suggested that we do so by working for causes that we value, donating to political candidates, voting with our conscience and running for office. A web site that he suggested is >isidewith.com< where you can take a quiz to find out which presidential candidate your views most resemble.

We appreciate Brad Lowry speaking with us on very short notice. His talk was informative and spurred interesting discussion and debate in our group.

- Reported by John Welte ☚



.....
 ● **Daughter:** "After my parents divorce,
 ● I got custody of Dad."
 ● -----
 ● **IRS examiner to victim:** "Sir, praying
 ● now can only be applied to next year's taxes."
 ● -----
 ● The second most unused book, I suppose is the
 ● Holy Bible, a perennial best seller thanks to our good
 ● intentions to attend to the Word and divine the Lord's
 ● Will, which you do for a few days until you realize
 ● that you already know the Lord's Will and you would
 ● prefer not to.
 ● - Garrison Keillor, "Inner Tranquillity and Unread Books"
 ● -----
 ●





THINGS TO DO....

THINGS TO SEE...



Upcoming Meetups

Monday, October 15, 2012 6:30 PM
Monthly Monday @ The Washington Platform

Thursday, November 1, 2012 7:00 PM
First Thursday @ The Hofbräuhaus

November 19, 2012 6:30 PM
Monthly Monday @ The Washington Platform

Thursday, December 6, 2012 7:00 PM
First Thursday @ The Hofbräuhaus



Science Book Club

2012 Schedule, books, and dates

All meetings are on 3rd Sunday of month at 2:30 pm. All meetings at the Hamilton County downtown Public Library in room 3A.

October 21 — *Drama Of The Gifted Child : The Search For The True Self*, Alice Miller 2008

November 18 — *The Revenge Of Gaia: Earth's Climate In Crisis And The Fate Of Humanity*, James Lovelock 2006

December 16 — *How We Decide*, Jonah Lehrer 2009



From page 1

More about The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society:

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. and leukemia is the leading cause of cancer death in children under the age of 20. Every four minutes someone is diagnosed with a blood cancer; every ten minutes someone dies. That is around 150,000 diagnoses and 50,000 deaths per year in the US alone. To date, LLS has invested more than \$814 million in research aimed at treating and curing blood cancer, with \$76.7 million in 2011 alone. They also provide direct patient aid for those in need, family support groups, and educational services. 76 cents of every dollar LLS spends goes towards LLS's mission of research and patient services.

More about Foundation Beyond Belief:

Foundation Beyond Belief is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation created to focus, encourage and demonstrate humanist generosity and compassion. We select and feature five charitable organizations per quarter, one in each of the following cause areas:

- Education
- Poverty and Health
- Human Rights
- The Natural World
- Challenge the Gap (charities based in other worldviews)

Members join the Foundation by signing up for a monthly automatic donation in the amount of their choice, then set up personal profiles to indicate how they would like their contribution distributed among the five categories.

Active members can advocate for causes and help us choose the new beneficiaries each quarter. We also host a multi-author blog focused on humanism, philanthropy, and the intersection of the two.

Carefully selected for impact and efficiency, our featured beneficiaries are secular organizations with the exception of Challenge the Gap, which features non-proselytizing organizations based in other worldviews. At the end of each quarter, all donations are forwarded, no percentage is retained, and a new slate of beneficiaries selected.

The Foundation also sponsors Volunteers Beyond Belief, a network of humanist volunteer teams in 14 U.S. cities, and Humanist Crisis Response, raising funds and awareness for major humanitarian crises worldwide. ☘



Contradiction Corner

By Dennis Davis



For this month's edition of Contradiction Corner I will begin discussing historical inaccuracies of the Bible. More than a few times I've encountered Christians who contend that archeology has proven the Bible to be historically accurate.

There have been some successes, for example the Bible mentions a people called the Hittites in several verses such as Deuteronomy 20:17 and 2 Kings 7:6; yet for centuries there was no evidence that such a people ever existed. Then suddenly in the mid-19th Century, archeologists confirmed that the Hittites were a large nation in southern Turkey. But such biblical successes are the exception and many historical failures are obvious, some can be discovered through nothing more than simple deduction.

Believers often think that the mere mention of actual cities or people in the record proves that the Bible is historically accurate. They claim that we must accept parting seas, worldwide floods and talking snakes because locations such as Gaza, Bethel and Shechem have been discovered. This is like saying that Tom Sawyer must have been a real person because Mark Twain accurately described the Mississippi River.

In this article I will focus on historical inaccuracies found in the Exodus story. Examine any history book on ancient Egyptian history and you will notice a glaring absence from the biblical narrative. Although the Egyptians were not above taking conquered peoples as slaves, all records indicate that the great Egyptian building projects were primarily built by freemen during the off season between harvest and planting. It appears as though every male Egyptian citizen was employed for several months each year on public projects. The Cecile B. DeMille depiction of whipping taskmasters driving the Israelites to build cities is fantasy.

The only reference in Egyptian records to any large-scale expulsion of a Canaanite population was a people called the Hyksos. This was more than a century before the construction of the biblical city of Ramses mentioned in Exodus 12:37. The Hyksos were Canaanite conquerors that conquered the Egyptians; ruling them until the native population was finally able to drive them out, and take their country back. These Hyksos were definitely

not the Israelite slaves in Exodus. (*The Bible Unearthed* - Israel Finkelstein, 2002)

Both Numbers 1:46 and 26:51 state that the nation of Israel could man an army of more than six hundred thousand men at the time Moses led them out of Egypt. Considering that young men of military age generally make up about 25% to 30% of a population, this would mean that roughly two to three million slaves would have left Egypt in the Exodus. If such a collection of people were to have marched from Egypt to the Red Sea they would have covered the entire distance and back again in one continuous wall of people.

Considering that the most generous population estimates state that ancient Egypt had at most 3 million residents at any time. Imagine the damage that a loss of more than 2 million slaves, the loss of all the first born children, and the loss of all crops and livestock in the plagues would have on such a small population, Egypt would have been a wasteland. In addition to the public records, there would be physical evidence of such titanic devastation that could not stay hidden. Yet we find neither record nor artifact. Even if the Egyptians undertook the greatest propaganda campaign in history to save face, their enemies would have been more than happy to record the loss for them, but once again, no such record exists.

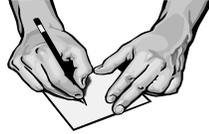
The true absurdity of the overblown Israelite population numbers is obvious when we consider that in Exodus 1:5 only seventy Israelites entered Egypt 215 years earlier. Our knowledge of genetics and population growth show us that it is physically impossible for a human population to grow from 70 to 2,000,000 people in only 215 years.

Once they leave Egypt, the situation gets worse. The deserts of Sinai are the most perfect climate for preserving archaeological evidence, so good that campfires from wandering Bedouin tribes have been preserved for thousands of years. In such an environment it would be absolutely impossible to hide the evidence of at least 2,000,000 people wandering for 40 years. Yet we find nothing, no fires, no pottery, no writings, no garbage piles, no watering troughs, nothing.

The origins of the ancient Israelite people are shrouded in mystery so that it is impossible to say much about their origins; however we can know that the story told in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy did not happen. The Bible is at best a collection of myths that correspond to real geography, but it is far from historically accurate. ❧



Letters To The Editor



Anti-Abortion Views Are Irrational

Appeared in print: Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2012, page A6

A Secular Country

by Herb Silverman

(*The Separationist*, October 2012, p.4. *The Post and Courier*, September 19)

Recently the Democratic Party put the word “God” back into its party platform, despite significant opposition when the GOP (God’s Own Party?) turned the word’s absence into a campaign issue.

A Sept. 14 letter incorrectly called the original omission a sign that the Democratic Party is “no longer a party with the values of our Founding Fathers.” Our founding document and the fundamental law of our land, the U.S. Constitution, makes no mention of God. Its ultimate source of authority is cited in the first three words: “We the people....” This God-free Constitution demonstrates that the founders intentionally established a secular country.

You will also find no mention of God in the platform of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln. Today both religious and non-religious Americans are working to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all.

People who insist that God should be an integral part of political platforms and governance will find no support from our founders. They will, however, find overwhelming support for this point of view in countries where American troops are, or might soon be, in harm’s way.

⌘

What will convince millions of mainstream Republicans and Christians that much of their political agenda is based on ideas conceived millennia ago by ignorant desert nomads?

Take the absolutist opposition to abortion — including in cases of rape, incest and to save the life of the mother — a ludicrous political stance held by candidates Todd Akin of Missouri (and, until his recent expedient reversal, Rep. Paul Ryan).

The only reason any sane adult would oppose the simple removal of a microscopic bit of tissue from a woman’s body— a piece of protoplasm as insignificant as the fingernail you regularly snip away with clippers — is the religious notion that a “soul” resides in that microscopic substance.

The only reason any sane adult would oppose the ingestion of a pill that could prevent pregnancy is the religious fantasy that a person is being murdered with the elimination of a cluster of cells that no more resembles a human being than the millions of appendices routinely removed each year by surgeons.

We live amidst a majority of scientific denialists whose idea of justice is to equate a fully-formed adult woman’s body (and life) with a scrap of insignificant protoplasm. How do such dangerous ideas arise in the consciousness of the estimated 180 million believers in the existence of a God-implanted, invisible, undetectable “soul”? Those beliefs are remnants of ancient, fear-motivated dogmas perpetuated by power-hungry zealots devoid of any rational understanding of their world.

A vote for any candidate who thinks that way is a vote for reactionary dominance over democratic enlightenment.

⌘

- Gil Gaudia
Eugene, OR

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“I thought of an Apple,” said Eve,”
And now I no longer believe

In following orders

Or staying in borders

--So throw wide the Gates, and let’s leave.”

Tim Posten in *mini-AIR* (June 2009)



Secular Coalition for Ohio (and all other States)

Despite the fact that there are tens of millions of nontheistic Americans, we remain one of the most marginalized groups in the country. The Secular Coalition for America is working to make sure that we are heard on Capitol Hill. We fight in Washington DC against religious privileging on a federal level, yet some of the most egregious violations of separation of church and state are being promoted and passed at a state level. We need your help to see real change in Columbus and across Ohio.



The Secular Coalition for America is forming state chapters across the country. Our chapters will bring together secular Americans in each state to influence government officials, legislation, and regulations. A Secular Coalition for America state chapter is unlike any other nontheistic state organization—it brings together interested organizations and individuals for the exclusive purpose of lobbying government officials.

Check out the Secular Coalition for Ohio Facebook page!

If you have any questions about state chapter details, check out our FAQs or email us.

If you're interested in receiving emails about your state's chapter, check out our signup page.

Sign up to receive emails about chapter organization! at: <http://secular.org/states/chapters/ohio>

Liquor and Longevity

The horse and mule live thirty years
And nothing know of wines and beers.
The goat and sheep at twenty die
And never taste of Scotch or Rye.
The cow drinks water by the ton
And at eighteen is mostly done.
The dog at fifteen cashes in
Without the aid of rum and gin.
The cat in milk and water soaks
And then in twelve short years it croaks.
The modest, sober, bone-dry hen
Lays eggs for nogs, then dies at ten.
All animals are strictly dry:
They sinless live and swiftly die;
But sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men
Survive for three score years and ten.
And some of them, a very few,
Stay pickled till they're ninety-two.

Anonymous



Directions to The Hannaford Suites Hotel

5900 East Galbraith Rd.

- 1) Take Exit 12 onto Montgomery Rd.
- 2) From the off Ramp at Exit 12:

From the North -

Turn Left

OR *From the South -* Turn Right

- 3) Continue on Montgomery Rd. to East Galbraith Rd. Turn Left.

- 4) After you go under I-71, turn right into the Hotel driveway.





November FIG Meeting
TBD
Hannaford Suites Hotel



October FIG Meeting
Tuesday Oct. 30 7-9 pm
Hannaford Suites Hotel



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By being a Fan you can receive FIG updates and meeting notices and RSVP for events such as the monthly FIG Community Dinners.

FIG Leaves
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FIG

Our Purpose

The Free Inquiry Group, Inc. (FIG) is a non-profit organization founded in 1991. FIG is allied with the Council for Secular Humanism as well as an affiliate of the American Humanist Association and of the American Atheists.

Though most of our members are secular humanists, we welcome to our meetings anyone interested in learning about or furthering our purpose.



To foster a community of secular humanists dedicated to improving the human condition through rational inquiry and creative thinking unfettered by superstition, religion, or any form of dogma.

In accordance with our purpose, we have established the following goals:

- To provide a forum for intelligent exchange of ideas for those seeking fulfillment in an ethical secular life.
- To develop through open discussion the moral basis of a secular society and encourage ethical practices within our own membership and the community at large.
- To inform the public regarding secular alternatives to supernatural interpretations of the human condition.
- To support and defend the principles of democracy, free speech, and separation of church and state as expressed in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

For more information, write the Free Inquiry Group at the address above, e-mail - [figmessage at gofigger dot org](mailto:figmessage@gofigger.org), or visit our web site at gofigger.org or freeinquirygroup.org.