

Northwest Free-thought Alliance
presents the sixth

Northwest Regional
Freethought Conference

Darwin @ 200
(& other matters)

Portland State University
Portland, OR

March 27-29, 2009

“Let’s get together and celebrate (and profit from) our differences.” — Paul Valery, poet and philosopher (1871-1945)

About the conference

The Northwest Freethought Alliance, supported by the Humanists of Greater Portland, is coordinating the efforts of three dozen freethought and other groups in the Northwest, including member organizations of the Northwest Freethought Coalition (NWFC), in planning and hosting this regional conference.

Keynote speakers

Dr. David Domke, a University of Washington professor, and author of two books: *“The God Strategy: How Religion Became A Political Weapon in America,”* and *“God Willing?: Political Fundamentalism in the White House,”* will be sharing ideas from his books and current events.

Dr. Bob Park, author of *“Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science”* and *“Voodoo Science: The Road from foolishness to Fraud,”* will share ideas from his research.

Roy Speckhardt is the Executive director of the American Humanist Association, and a board member of the Humanist Institute. He’s also an advisory board member of the Secular Student Alliance and the Women's Law & Public Policy Fellowship Program.

Workshops

Organizational Development

- 1. Chapter Activities:** A round-robin discussion. Bring some of your ideas, and take away others. We are hoping to have at least one person from each organization attend this session, as it's designed to allow people to share what their organizations are doing, and to learn what other organizations are doing. We expect that every little presentation will last about five minutes.
- 2. Meet-ups:** A panel on using the technology and tactics of meet-ups to collect local free thinkers for shared social events, and sometimes to further organize those people into a formal organization.
- 3. CFI Leadership Training:** The Center for Inquiry hosts training every summer; there are student leader and community organizer tracks. The students (and the local adult attendees) will report on their individual programs.
- 4. Acting on Beliefs:** Bruce Adams, the local Americans United president, will share what his group has been doing to counter-act the pretty constant effort to make public spaces (parks, schools) the arena for religious beliefs.
- 5. Stepping up to the Green:** a workshop from Oregon Environmental Council, a local Portland expert on living as lightly on the planet as possible, reducing the burden we place on the earth and our communities.

Darwinian Evolution

Some Darwinian Evolution topics and some others, as five evolution workshops would produce too much overlap.

- 6. Debating Darwin Deniers:** Jim Corbett, of the Humanists of North Puget Sound and Humanists of Washington, will show how to counter non-scientific statements or arguments, based on debates he's had with evolution deniers.

7. Reform at Victory: Michele Ulriksen, author of *“Reform at Victory,”* will share her experiences of being shipped off to a fundamentalist Baptist reform school (boot camp) when she was 16.

8. Darwin’s Black Box: Portland State University professor Mitch Cruzan will talk about teaching Biology to non-science majors and what beliefs about evolution college students bring to school with them.

9. Hope for Skeptics: Jim Corbett presents his second workshop, one he’s also giving at the AHA conference in Phoenix in June. This one is about creating hope in a life that agnostics believe stops at death.

10. Ten Myths about Evolution: The co-authors of *“Ten Myths about Evolution,”* Cameron McPherson Smith and Charles Sullivan, will share the core ideas of their book and reactions to it from a wide spectrum of readers.

Living A Reason-Abled Life

11, 12. Natural Medicines and Snake Oil Science: Dr. Harriett Hall (the SkepDoc columnist from *Skeptic magazine*) will present two different programs on extending reason and science to our daily lives, mostly in the areas of over-the-counter medicines and supplements.

13. Current AU Court Cases: Steve Green, Professor of Law at Willamette University, who has often spoken at Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU) meetings, will review legal issues in current church/state cases.

14. The Neurophysiology of Peak Experiences: Dr. Josh Fost, author of *“If not God, Then What?”* will share some of his research in the neurophysiology of religious (and other peak) experiences.

15. Invest the Change you Wish to Create in the World: Mike Katcher, of Microcredit Enterprises, will talk about using very small loans, micro-credits, primarily to women entrepreneurs in the Third World to launch them on the road to economic self-sufficiency.

Schedule

Friday			
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Registration, wine and cheese reception		

Saturday			
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Registration		
9:00 - 10:00	Opening session, housekeeping		
10:15 - 11:30	Jim Corbett: Debating Evolution Deniers	Dr. Hariett Hall: Snake Oil Science	Panel: Chapter activities
11:45 - 1:30 p.m.	Dr. David Domke: Lunch & Keynote		
1:45 - 3:00	M. Ulrikson: Trial at Victory	Dr. Hariett Hall: Natural Medicines	Panel: Meetups
3:15 - 4:30	Dr. Mitch Cruzan: Darwin's Black Box	S. Green, JD: AU Cases	Panel: CFI leadership training
6:00 - 9:00	Dr. Bob Park: Banquet and keynote		

Sunday			
8:45 - 10:00	Jim Corbett: Hope for Skeptics	Joshua Fost: Neuro-physiology of peak experiences	Bruce Adams: Acting on Beliefs - AU
10:15 - 11:30	Smith & Sullivan: Ten Myths about Evolution	Jen Coleman: Stepping up to the green	Mike Katcher: Micro-credits
12:00 - 1:00	Roy Speckhardt: Closing remarks		

Cost

The conference will cost \$125.00. The fees cover four meals (Saturday breakfast, lunch, and the banquet; Sunday breakfast), three snacks (Friday PM reception, and mid-morning and mid-afternoon on Saturday), and will allow full access to all sessions of the conference.

Access

The conference will have complete barrier-free access. There is a campus map at <http://www.pdx.edu/map.html>. The conference is in Smith Hall (F-6) on the map; parking is at E-7.

There is a sky-bridge on the 4th floor of the parking garage, which crosses to the

third floor of Smith Hall, where the conference will be held.

Lodging

There are many hotels in downtown Portland. The nearest one is University Place, a former Red Lion hotel right on the PSU campus; their phone number is (503) 221-0140.

There is also the possibility of staying in or near Portland with a local freethought host. E-mail nfaconference@earthlink.net to notify us. We'll want to know how many people and when you'll be arriving.

Registration

Print it out the registration form and mail it to:
13739 15th N.E., Suite B-3, Seattle, WA, 98125.

There are 36 groups that have access to the conference. We have room for 216 people: that's only 6 per group. Once we get to 216, we'll be closing registrations.

Download the registration form here:
<http://www.nfaconference.org/application.pdf>

Questions/Concerns

E-mail nfaconference@earthlink.net if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.