



FFFF Q & A

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By ANDREA STEELE

TAMPA—For many years, the three most common questions raised by freethinkers have been: 1.) What can we do to encourage young adults to become more active in the Freethought movement? 2.) How can freethought ideas gain more exposure? and 3.) Why can't all of the freethought organizations out there play together? Attendees at the 2009 AAI Convention raised these concerns—again. All of the aforementioned issues have a solution in the International Freethought Film Festival.

Filmmakers are encouraged to reexamine views about freethought subject matter being taboo, and overcome this misconception by expressing these ideas through the art of filmmaking. Student filmmakers have an incentive to submit films that reflect the mission of the Freethought Film Festival Foundation through competition for scholarship awards, and a chance for their projects to be screened for a public audience. Film is more far-reaching and will result in exposure...more so than print, which generally leans toward a more academic audience rather than the general public. Finally, with at least ten different blocks of film screenings throughout the weekend-long

International Freethought Film Festival event, freethought organizations, businesses and individuals have an opportunity to sponsor one or more of the screenings. (Or become a major sponsor of the event for more exclusive advertising benefits) The International Freethought Film Festival is common ground, despite variations in existing freethought institutions.

Some freethinkers, with whom I have communicated, expressed disappointment that the International Freethought Film Festival will be taking place some distance from them. For most, travelling hundreds, or even thousands of miles for any event may be logistically impossible. This is perfectly understandable. However, we need to recall 2002 on a *very* cold November morning, when more than 2000 freethinkers participated in the Godless Americans March on Washington. I drove from Tampa to D.C. with my husband and three children to participate in this event. It was very important for us to be a part of an event that gave us visibility and encouraged solidarity among freethinkers. It was one specific event with a common goal.

The International Freethought

Film Festival encourages the same solidarity that freethinkers displayed at GAMOW. The event itself will, no doubt, increase visibility; but it goes far beyond the actual event. The films being produced will be around for posterity; paving the way for stigmas to dilute over time. Freethinkers around the globe, who know that they will not be able to attend the International Freethought Film Festival event in Tampa, Florida in November 2010, can still recognize its importance and lend their support by contributing to the efforts of the Freethought Film Festival Foundation.

To all other freethinkers, the latter also applies; however, if more than 2000 freethinkers can flock to D.C. on a frigid November weekend for a march on the Mall, they can surely migrate to Tampa (where it is gorgeous in November) for a film festival that reflects *their* views, and answers the most important question of all: How can we promote the growth of the Freethought movement?

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