

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 · MADISON, WI 53701 · (608) 256-8900 · WWW.FFRF.ORG

Dear FFRF Convention Registrant:

We're delighted you'll be attending the **40th Annual National Convention of the Freedom From Religion Foundation** on the weekend of **Fri., Sept. 15 - Sun. Sept. 17, 2017**, in Madison, Wis. Below is everything you need to know.

Please take a moment to read this letter, review the enclosed map and detailed schedule of events, and pack as a reference. We will also be emailing you this information.

Please take note of our early 3PM Friday start with award-winning journalist Cara Santa Maria and acclaimed author and columnist for The Nation, Katha Pollitt!

Check weather reports before packing, but typically mid-September in Madison is clear and sunny with highs in low seventies and lows of 50 F. A light jacket and sweater advised.

We are often asked about dress code. We're freethinkers so it's fine to come as you are, but many attendees enjoy dressing up for the Saturday dinner.

If you have any questions or additions to your convention registration, please contact us by our **registration deadline, Fri., Sept. 8**, so that we can accommodate your request at 1-800-335-4021. **No convention meals may be ordered at the door, so plan ahead!**

CONVENTION CHECK-IN/REGISTRATION

If you're attending the Friday open house (see below), pick up registration materials (name badge, meal tickets, and convention brochure, final schedule) at Freethought Hall. Otherwise, please check-in at the registration table at **Monona Terrace Convention Center, 1 John Nolen Dr.**, on **Fri., Sept. 15, starting at 2 PM** outside Madison Ballroom, main level. Registration will continue throughout the convention at this site. Book/sales tables also open at 2 PM. Registration stays open throughout the Friday dinner break. The ballroom will close from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM.

Meal tickets (inside your badge) will be collected prior to meals by servers. A security guard will check to ensure everyone is wearing name badges in order to be admitted to all FFRF events.

If you plan to arrive on Saturday, Sept. 16, but have registered for the 8 AM NonPrayer Breakfast, please first pick up your meal ticket and other materials outside the breakfast room, Exhibit Hall A (see details below under Group Meals). Registration reopens by 9AM Saturday outside the ballroom, main floor.

See enclosed schedule, subject to minor revisions, for complete convention hours, events and details.

FREETHOUGHT HALL OPEN HOUSE, FRIDAY, SEPT. 15, 9:30-NOON

Our open house is at FFRF's newly expanded office, Freethought Hall, 10 North Henry Street, Madison, WI 53703 – corner of West Washington Avenue. **(For security reasons, FFRF doesn't publish our address online, so make a note of it.)** Although the open house is free, pre-registration is required, so be sure we know you're coming. (Skip ahead if you're not attending.)

Check in with friendly staffers in the Anne Nicol Gaylor Lobby to receive your registration materials and name badge. **Doors won't open before 9:30 AM. Arrive no later than 11:30 AM** to tour entire facility. Open house closes at noon. The building is handicapped accessible, with an elevator and public restrooms on each floor.

You'll receive a keepsake brochure with building history and highlights for a self-guided tour. Staff posted throughout the building will meet and greet. Enjoy socializing, complimentary pastries, bagels, hot beverages, orange juice or Champagne Mimosas in the elegant 4th floor Charlie Brooks Auditorium. (Note: We're offering a snack to tide you over, which will not conform to dietary restrictions, so please plan your breakfast accordingly.)

Peruse artifacts and treasures from 40 years of activism in our 4-story building. Get your souvenir photo taken with our life-sized (and life-like) mannequin of Charles Darwin in the third floor library! Visit our memorable Atheists in Foxholes granite monument dedicated to veterans in the Rose Zerwick Memorial Garden & Courtyard.

Transportation to and from Freethought Hall. Enjoy the lovely walk from the downtown convention hotels. As your map shows, Freethought Hall is 6 blocks from the Hilton, and 3 blocks from Best Western Premier Park Hotel. Walk past Wisconsin's magnificent state capitol.

For those with time or walking constraints, FFRF offers a coach bus shuttle, which will travel a continuous loop to and from the Hilton Hotel and Freethought Hall starting at 9:15 AM. (Note: The shuttle bus has priority seating for boat cruise registrants from 10 AM to 11 AM. These buses will be labeled for the cruise.) Final pickup at Freethought Hall will be noon. (Your hotel may also offer shuttle rides. See Hotel Shuttle Service, P. 3).

Driving? Overture Center Garage, 318 W. Mifflin St., is a block from Freethought Hall. Limited two-hour street parking may be available, but is pricier. Sorry, no parking is available in our building driveways.

FRIDAY — BETTY LOU BOAT CRUISES ON LAKES MONONA & MENDOTA

This event was so popular FFRF had to add two boats, and all spaces are sold out. If you pre-registered for this event, please carefully read the additional cruise details enclosed.

PROGRAM STARTS EARLIER THAN USUAL ON FRIDAY

The convention start time has been moved up to accommodate our impressive lineup of speakers. Show up by 3 PM Friday so you don't miss any of our powerhouse presenters.

The program resumes at 7:00 PM sharp, ending with comedian **Paula Poundstone's** performance. Poundstone will meet and greet for 1 hour after her performance, sign books and CDs. ***Under no circumstances may Paula Poundstone's performance be recorded, broadcast, televised, filmed, webcasted, photographed or otherwise reproduced. We have signed a contract to that effect, and it extends to the Meet and Greet.***

A concurrent complimentary dessert reception (cupcakes, hot beverages, cash bar) concludes the evening in the beautiful Lakeside Pavilion.

Saturday's program includes the optional NonPrayer Breakfast at 8 AM, with morning program resuming at 9:30 AM - Noon, afternoon 2 – 5 PM, followed by dinner and entertainment.

FFRF CONVENTION GROUP MEALS

All convention meals require pre-registration and tickets (can't purchase at the door).

FFRF's first-ever "**Forward**" Tailgate Party takes place Friday, 5 – 6:45 PM on the Rooftop Gardens of Monona Terrace. Dinner guests can savor the Wisconsin tailgate party buffet dinner and cash bar, and mingle with a fun, secular crowd as we are entertained by Madison's famed "Forward! Marching Band." (If you prefer to dine elsewhere, pick up our handy restaurant guide on the nearby food scene when you check in.)

The **NonPrayer Breakfast starts at 8 AM sharp on Sat., Sept. 16** in Exhibit Hall A, Exhibit Level (take the escalator or elevator from main floor and look for signs for Exhibit Hall). ***Please arrive on time for breakfast, which is plated, both as a courtesy to servers and so you don't miss the famous "Moment of Bedlam" led by Dan Barker.***

Pre-ordered **Saturday grab-and-go box lunches are available at noon** near registration. Present your ticket, then enjoy lunch al fresco on the rooftop with beautiful lake views. Or pick from a plethora of restaurants on or near the Capitol Square or on State Street.

Saturday night's plated banquet dinner (cash bar starts at 5:45 PM; dinner is served at 6:30 PM) will also take place in Exhibit Hall A. We'll return to the Madison Ballroom for the post-dinner drawing for "clean" money, and performances by Roy Zimmerman and Julia Sweeney!

SUNDAY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP & STATE BOARD MEETINGS

FFRF members are invited to the annual membership meeting Sunday morning at 9 AM, followed by the annual State Representatives meeting ending by noon in Hall of Ideas FG. Hear reports, chapter leaders, discuss future conventions. Light breakfast pastries, coffee and tea will be served at the start. ***(State Representatives: Remember to request late checkout Sunday.)***

TRANSPORTATION TO & FROM AIRPORT

All three convention hotels have courtesy vehicles to handle your transportation, based on availability, to or from the Dane County Regional Airport. When you arrive, use the courtesy phone located at the hotel board between Bag Claims 1 and 2 to request a shuttle:

- Hilton Madison Monona Terrace - 608-255-5100
(Book your return shuttle with the Hilton by going to the front desk and requesting a shuttle.)
- Sheraton Madison Hotel - 608-251-2300 between 7AM and 11PM
(Book your return shuttle with the Sheraton by going to the front desk and requesting a shuttle the night prior to your departure.)
- Best Western Premier Park - 608-285-8000
(Book your return shuttle with Best Western the night prior to the departure with the valet.)

Available ground transportation from the Dane County Regional Airport includes taxi service (typical minimum charge, including a 15% tip, will cost you \$24.55). Travel time to and from the airport is 15-20 minutes. Public transportation options: www.msnairport.com/parking_transportation/ground_transportation.aspx

SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM SHERATON TO MONONA TERRACE (CONVENTION SITE)

If you're staying at the Sheraton Madison Hotel, 3.3 miles from the convention center at 706 John Nolen Dr., you may reserve a shuttle to the convention center in advance with the Sheraton front desk between 7 AM and 11 PM, 608-251-2300. For ambitious walkers, there is a pretty lakeside path (we do not recommend walking alone after dark). Or it's an easy (and scenic) drive.

CONVENTION/HOTEL PARKING

Monona Terrace Convention Center. Hourly parking is \$3.00 per hour on weekdays with a \$16 per day maximum, except weekends, which is \$5.00 per day. If you enter after 5 PM weekdays, the cost is a flat fee of \$5. See map enclosed for nearby parking ramps.

Hilton Madison Monona Terrace Hotel. Garage self-parking is \$17 daily for guests. Valet parking with in and out privileges is \$20 daily. There are charging stations for electric cars.

Best Western Premier Park Hotel. Garage valet parking only, \$10 daily for first vehicle; \$20 daily for second vehicle, if it can be accommodated.

Sheraton Madison Hotel. Complimentary surface parking.

CONVENTION RECORDINGS POLICY

Individuals may not audio- or videotape any speeches. (Nonintrusive photos during presentations are OK, except for Paula Poundstone—whose contract forbids photography or any type of recording). FFRF audio- and videotapes speeches, if permitted by speakers, and posts them at ffrf.org/convention2017. Transcripts of **convention speeches, as always, will be published** in future issues of Freethought Today. Look for FFRF photography coverage in our newspaper and online by Ingrid Laas, convention photographer, and talented staff photographers FFRF Attorney Andrew Seidel and FFRF Legal Fellow Chris Line.

SOCIAL MEDIA – COME OUT OF THE CLOSET VIDEOS!

Into social media? Live tweet the convention using #FFRFCon2017. Follow us @FFRF. Record your **“out of the closet atheist” video** (keep it to 1 minute) to share on FFRF's YouTube channel. A videographer will be available to assist you in a recording space near registration. We may unveil more surprises. A few excerpts of the conference will go out via Facebook Live! (to be announced).

MAY I BRING A LAST-MINUTE GUEST?

We have room for registration at the door. However, FFRF must receive all meal orders no later than Friday, Sept. 8. Phone 1-800-335-4021 M-F 9-5 Central to register additional companions or order meals.

New guests should look for the “On-site Registration” table.

FFRF WELCOMES YOU

We want all participants to feel comfortable, welcome and safe. If any problem should ever arise, let us know. Tell one of our staffers or volunteers to contact the directors immediately if you have a problem or concern, and we'll do our best to help.

See you soon! Enclosed: schedule and map

Also find lots of convention information at our website: ffrf.org/convention2017

NATIONAL CONVENTION

MADISON | SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2017

Schedule is subject to change

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Morning Open House

9:30 AM- Noon Open House, Freethought Hall
Downtown Madison
(RSVP required)

Early registration opens

10:45 AM Boat tours

Downtown locations
(Ticketed event – sold out)
See separate details

Afternoon Formal Opening

Monona Terrace Convention Center
Madison Ballroom

2:00 PM Registration re-opens
Monona Terrace, 1 John Nolen Dr.

Sales tables open
Madison Ballroom

3:00 PM Short Welcome &

Kelly Helton, Student Activist

3:15 PM Freethought Heroine Award
Cara Santa Maria, “She Atheist”

4:00 PM Forward Award, Katha Pollitt
Booksigning follows

5:00- 6:45 PM “Forward” Tailgate Dinner (Ticketed)
Rooftop Gardens, Monona Terrace

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Evening Program

Madison Ballroom

7:00 PM Evening Welcome, Music
Dan Barker, Annie Laurie Gaylor
Year in Review

7:30 PM Henry Zumach Freedom From Religious
Fundamentalism Award
Maryam Namazie

8:30 PM Paula Poundstone

9:30 PM Poundstone Meet and Greet

Complimentary cupcakes and hot beverages
Grand Terrace

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

8:00 AM Nonprayer Breakfast (Ticketed)
Exhibition Hall A

Nothing Fails Like Prayer Awardee

9:00 AM Ballroom, sales tables re-open

9:30 AM Welcome, Lisa Strand
Music, Dan Barker

9:40 AM Zenos Frudakis
“The Evolution of the Clarence Darrow Sculpture”

10:00 AM Battle of Church & State: Legal Accomplishments
FFRF Legal Staff

11:00 AM Freethinkers of the Year
Jesse Castillo, Jerry Bloom, Marie Schaub

Noon - 2 Lunch Break
Grab & Go Lunch (Ticketed)

2:00 PM Kimberly Veal,
“Metamorphosis”

2:30 PM Brent Michael Davids
“Do you know an American Indian atheist?”

3:00 PM Michelle Goldberg
“Donald Trump & Christian Nationalism”

4:00 PM Steven Pinker, FFRF Honorary President
Booksigning for Goldberg & Pinker follows

6:30 PM Saturday Night Dinner (Ticketed)
Exhibition Hall A

8:00 PM “Clean Money Drawing”

8:30 PM Music, Roy Zimmerman

9:00 PM Julia Sweeney
Book, DVD and CD Signings for Sweeney &
Zimmerman follow

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Annual Membership Meeting

Hall of Ideas FG

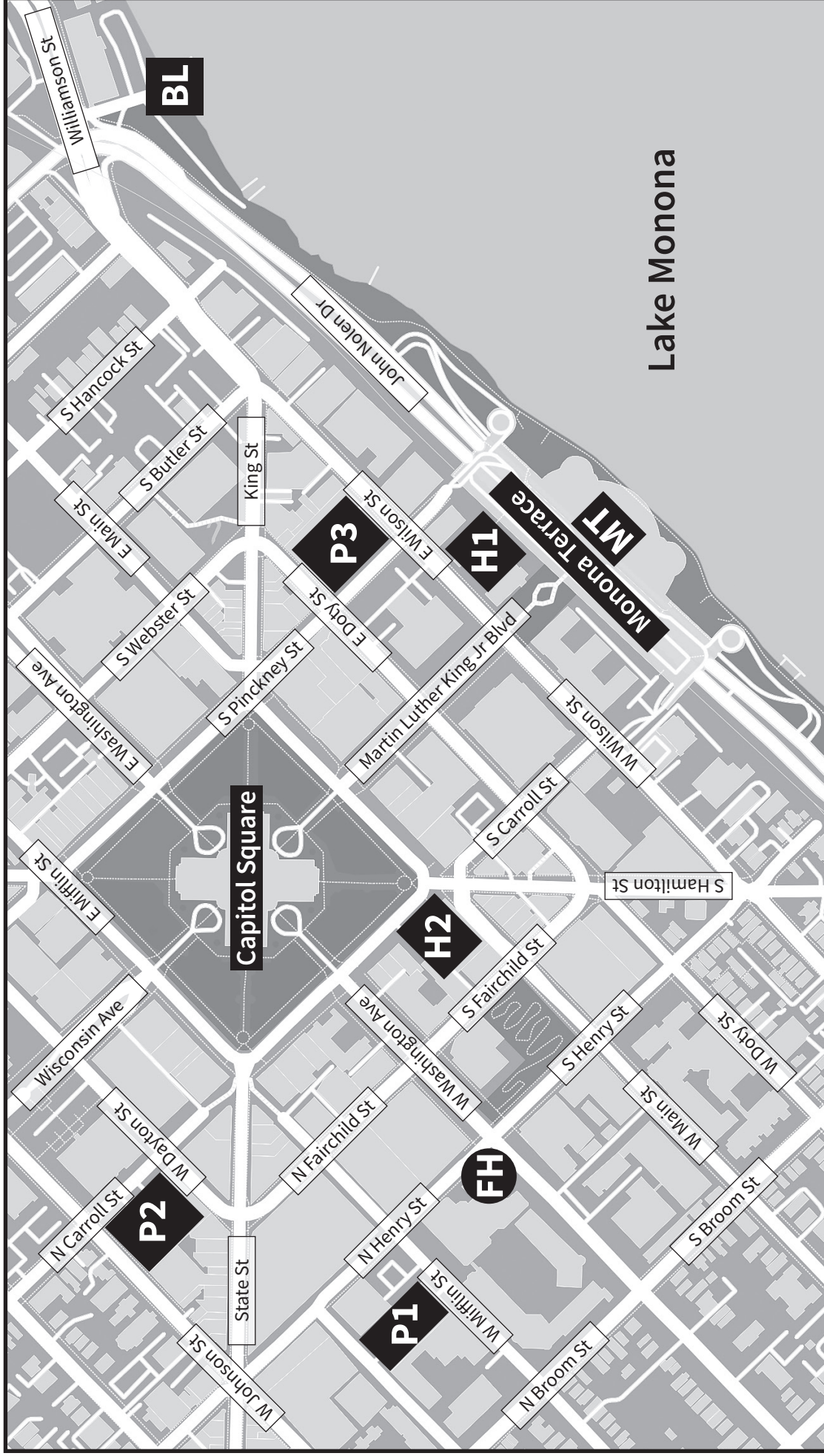
8:30 AM Complimentary pastries, hot beverages

9:00 AM Annual Membership Meeting
For current FFRF members

State Representatives Meeting
Adjourn by Noon

▲ Lake Mendota

Downtown Madison



KEY

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|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| FH | Freethought Hall (10 N Henry St) |
| MT | Monona Terrace |
| BL | Betty Lou Boat Cruise Dock |
| H1 | Hilton Madison Monona Terrace Hotel |
| H2 | Best Western Premier Park Hotel |
| P1 | Overture Center Parking Garage |
| P2 | State Street Capitol Parking Garage |
| P3 | Government East Parking Garage |