



GREATER PHILADELPHIA COALITION of REASON

Godless Billboard Greet Philly Area Motorists

May 1, 2008

For Immediate Release

(Washington, D.C.) "Don't believe in God? You are not alone."

These words are being seen on Interstate 95 north of Philadelphia. Greeting outbound drivers near the Westmorland turnoff, they are part of a highway billboard that features an image of blue sky and clouds with the words superimposed over. The striking message raises a question . . . and maybe some eyebrows.

The billboard was placed by a coalition of local and national humanist and freethought organizations, including the American Humanist Association and it's independent marketing adjunct FreeThoughtAction, Atheist Alliance International, the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia, Philadelphia Atheists Meetup, and Temple University Secular Students.

This billboard was timed to coincide with the National Day of Reason, celebrated by humanists each year on the same date as the National Day of Prayer--which this year falls on May 1, the 75th anniversary of the first Humanist Manifesto.

Speaking at a press conference held this morning at the Ethical Humanist Society of Greater Philadelphia, Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association, said: "Traditional religious billboards have abounded in the past. Something nontraditional like this is therefore needed to stimulate thinking."

Joe Fox, president of the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia, added: "The point of the billboard is to make nontheistic people, such as atheists and agnostics, aware that they aren't alone."

At the same press conference, Margaret Downey of Pocopson, president of Atheist Alliance International, highlighted the positive results that occur when nontheists find each other and become involved with other like-minded individuals.

Organizations

Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia

Sally J. Cramer, President
www.fsgp.org

Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia

Joe Fox, President
www.hagp.org

Philadelphia Atheists Meetup

George Harris
atheists.meetup.com/215/

Secular Society of Temple University

Austin Wulf, President
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5879251918>

Supporting Organizations

American Humanist Association

Roy Speckhardt, Executive Director
www.americanhumanist.org

Atheist Alliance International

Margaret Downey, President
www.atheistalliance.org

FreeThoughtAction

Jan Meshon, President
www.freethoughtaction.org

Sally J. Cramer, president of the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, declared: "Atheist and agnostic Americans have been made to feel marginalized. It's time to change that. We're here and we have a place at the table."

"We want people to know there's a serious and meaningful alternative to the religious right that has been dominating American religious discussion," Fox added. "After all, a lot of people are frustrated with the power that traditional faiths have wielded, and they don't know where to turn to find others who share that frustration. Now they will."

The billboard will be up for three months and is one of a series that will appear around the country, raising the public profile of humanists and freethinkers. The billboard is backed by an active Web site at www.PhillyCOR.org that sets forth the larger mission of the effort and offers ways that individuals can get involved. An image of the billboard appears on the site, but people can also phone 1-800-NEW- REASON. Either way they will be able to learn more about the national and Philadelphia organizations behind the effort.

"Once people have phoned or logged on, they can go further to learn more or just stop right there," Cramer said. "No door-to-door evangelist will ever visit, and there are no pop-ups on the Web page. Our only aim is to reach those who really want to learn more."

The billboard is large and clear--20 feet tall by 60 feet wide--and strikingly easy to see on the right side of the roadway.

"You can't miss it," Cramer concluded.

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PhillyCOR, the Greater Philadelphia Coalition of Reason, is a joint effort to help connect local freethinkers and provide them with a sense of community and a way to combine their voices with others who are ready to move society forward.