

Editor's Message –

by Dwain Deets - Editor in Chief

Liberty of Conscience, the theme for this issue, is an attempt to break new ground. Many probably look at that title on the cover and wonder, “What does that mean?” Then they see the Religious Freedom Monument, and ask, “Why not just make the theme *Religious Freedom*?” Those asking will have to read Mynga Futrell’s lead article for an answer. Finding language that doesn’t advertise for religion is hard. This is one attempt to do that.

Setting aside the question of the words for conveying the theme, this is a great time to celebrate the importance of early Virginians in establishing the principals commonly called *religious freedom*. With our 2007 Convention meeting in Crystal City, Thomas Jefferson’s home in Monticello seems very close, just a two-hour drive away. Jefferson, our hero, especially for authoring the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which became a model for the U.S. Bill of Rights, is one big part of this. James Madison was the

other key actor who prodded the Virginia legislature to approve the statute prior their meeting in Richmond in 1786.

We atheists struggle to explain the significance of this legal protection of religious freedom to the general public, while also trying to make the point that the pertinent phrases in the Bill of Rights include protections of those without religion as well. That point is hard to make when phrases like “those without religion” aren’t explicitly stated.

To shift topics a little to the health of *Secular Nation* magazine, a large number of new subscribers came along with the early registrations to the 2007 Convention. This increased our circulation by 23% since our last issue, which dealt with “God-Free Parenting.”

Enjoy this issue. Be sure to check out Marilyn LaCourt’s article on “What War on Religion? In Defense of Religion,” our regular columnists Robert M. Price and Herb Silverman, and the excellent book reviews by Kenneth Krause.