

# THE INGERSOLL

The Newsletter of the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum and the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee



REPORT

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### MUSEUM HOURS 2015

The Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum will be open at 61 Main St., Dresden, N.Y., from Noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays from May 23 through October 30, 2015. Suggested admission is only \$2.00!

## JEFF INGERSOLL CHAIRS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Jeff Ingersoll of Hammondspport, New York, was named Chair of the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee. He succeeds Roger Greeley of Marquette, Michigan, who chaired the Committee since 1991 and is now Chair Emeritus. Jeff Ingersoll—Robert Ingersoll's seventh cousin four times removed—owned a Buffalo-based contracting firm that specialized in restoration and painting of historic structures. Since 2002, he served as the Ingersoll Museum's volunteer construction manager, contributing thousands of dollars' worth of donated time and materials to paint, maintain, and repair the birthplace. In 2014, Mr. Ingersoll retired and opened the McCorn Winery Lodging, a bed and breakfast in a historic winery building nestled on a hillside overlooking Hammondspport, New York.



The Museum's new official portrait. Photo by Andrew Skolnick.

## NEW NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD NAMED

Incoming Ingersoll Memorial Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll has announced the appointment of a new National Advisory Board. Members include Museum Director Tom Flynn, Ingersoll Committee Chair Emeritus Roger Greeley, and a list of distinguished Ingersoll admirers from around the country:

**Margaret Downey** is founder of the Freethought Society, the Anti-Discrimination Support Network, and the Thomas Paine Memorial Committee and developer of the Tree of Knowledge, a humanist alternative decoration for public spaces during the December holiday season.

**Dr. Melinda Grube** is a professor of history at Cayuga Community College in Auburn, New York, and a regional historian of west-central New York's Burned-over District. Melinda often does interpretive portrayals of suffragist leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

**Steven Lowe**, of Washington, DC, developed popular walking tours of Ingersoll-related sites in the nation's capital and is founder of the annual Robert Green Ingersoll Oratory Contest.

**Doug Schiffer** created the very useful online chronology of Ingersoll's travels, speeches, and appearances in the press (now being updated to work better with contemporary browsers).

**Sandra Parker**, a specialist in historical paints and coatings, is Jeff Ingersoll's wife and collaborator; they make up the twenty-first century's Ingersoll/Parker partnership. (Robert's wife Eva's maiden name was Parker.)

The Advisory Board will communicate regularly, exchanging news and ideas with an eye toward promoting attendance at the Ingersoll Museum and visitation of the Freethought Trail.

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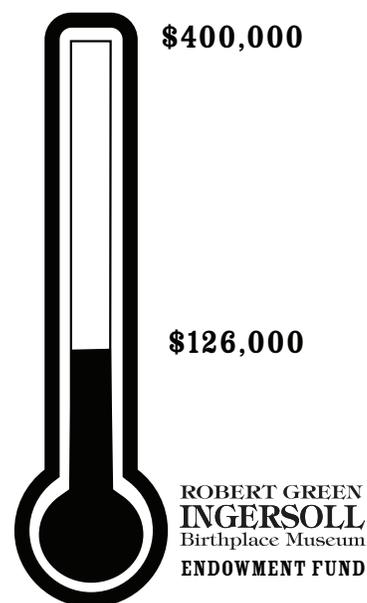
## MUSEUM ENDOWMENT MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER TO GOAL

The Ingersoll Museum's endowment fund enjoyed a "growth spurt" in conjunction with the vigorous fund-raising toward last year's complete updating of the Museum interior. As this is written, it stands at \$126,000. Because it has crossed the \$100,000 threshold, a portion of endowment income can now be withdrawn each year to support Museum operations.

"A \$400,000 endowment would allow the Museum to be largely self-sufficient," commented Museum Director Tom Flynn. "At that level, endowment income would pay all of the Museum's routine costs, and it wouldn't need to rely on the Center for Inquiry for funding or big supporters for contributions every year." Typically, Flynn added, endowment funds grow by receiv-

ing bequests, "but the Ingersoll Museum endowment fund welcomes gifts of any size from any donor. Individuals who are in a position to make a more substantial gift—whether in the form of cash, appreciated stock, real estate, or a paid-up life insurance policy—may find endowment giving attractive also."

If you're considering making a gift to the Ingersoll Museum endowment fund, the professionals at the Center for Inquiry's Development Department can assist you in arranging your gift in the way that can achieve your charitable objectives while achieving maximum tax advantage. Contact Development Director Martina Fern at [mfern@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:mfern@centerforinquiry.net) or call (800) 818-7071.



## PEORIA INGERSOLL STATUE SHOWING ITS AGE

On a cross-country trip, Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll and national advisory board member Sandra Parker visited Peoria, Illinois, where Ingersoll raised his Civil War regiment and first became a national figure. Peoria's Glen Oak Park displays the only full-length statue of Ingersoll, carved by sculptor Fritz Treibel. "I was sorry to see that it is showing its age," Jeff Ingersoll reports. "The bronze is heavily tarnished, and more disturbingly, the stone base has numerous cracks and there are chips in the lettering. When we return home in April, I will be writing a letter to the Peoria Parks Department requesting that a restoration and maintenance program be instituted."



## SEEKING IMPROVEMENTS AT EBON INGERSOLL GRAVESITE

Ingersoll aficionado Gerrie Paino wrote to the Ingersoll Committee reporting that "the gravesite of Ebon C. Ingersoll at Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington, DC, is unmarked." Ebon Clark Ingersoll (1831–1879) was Robert Ingersoll's beloved older brother and early law partner. Ebon was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives and spent four terms in the U.S. Congress. When he died young (at age forty-seven), Robert Ingersoll gave a gravesite eulogy for his brother that became one of his most cherished speeches. It contains this oft-quoted passage:

Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.

Ebon's grave never received a headstone—an omission the Ingersoll Committee hopes to remedy. The first step in arranging to place a marker on the grave of a long-dead person is to obtain permission from a living family member. Fortunately, Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll is also Ebon's seventh cousin four times removed, and he has written to Oak Hill Cemetery saying, "The family feels it is important that his grave should be marked." The next step will probably be a special campaign to raise funds for an appropriate headstone.

## FREETHOUGHT TRAIL UPGRADES SMARTPHONE TOURS

The Freethought Trail—a collection of sixty-one marked and unmarked free-thought, abolition, and women's rights sites in west-central New York State, with the Ingersoll Museum at its center—has upgraded its cellphone/smartphone tours. Service provider OnCell Inc. has implemented TourSphere service featuring a more powerful menu accessible by smartphones and mobile



devices. Explorers of the Freethought Trail can hear audio commentary on each of the widely scattered Trail sites and even receive alerts when they're coming close to a site. Still prefer your flip phone? No problem; the classic dial-in audio tour service is still available. Of course, the most complete information on all Freethought Trail sites is online at [www.freethought-trail.org](http://www.freethought-trail.org).

## WHO WE ARE NOW

The Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum is operated by the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee, a project of the Council for Secular Humanism, which is in turn a program of the Center for Inquiry. This marks a change from last year; in January of 2015, the Council for Secular Humanism and its sister corporation, the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, merged into the Center for Inquiry. The Ingersoll Museum will continue to operate weekends from Memorial Day through Halloween and to welcome the public to its new T. M. Scruggs Museum Interior, which made its debut in 2014.

## FLYNN JOINS CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM BOARD

Museum Director Tom Flynn has become a founding member of the Board of Directors of the New York Cultural Heritage Tourism Network (NYCHTN), a tourism and education advocacy group of which the Ingersoll Museum and Freethought Trail are members.



## A FEW SEATS LEFT ON 2015 MOTOR COACH TOUR!

So successful was the all-day motorcoach tour of the Ingersoll Museum and women's rights sites at Seneca Falls that followed August 2014's Ingersoll conference at the Center for Inquiry, a similar tour will be offered in conjunction with "Reason for Change," the Center for Inquiry's June 2015 national conference.

On the morning of Monday, June 15, a luxury motor coach will leave from the Marriott Buffalo Niagara in Amherst, New York, the site of the conference. It will travel to Dresden, New York, where tour participants can explore the Ingersoll Museum and enjoy an elegant luncheon paired with Finger Lakes wines. The coach will then follow the Freethought Trail back to Rochester, New York, for a

guided tour of the National Susan B. Anthony House and Museum followed by stops at Frederick Douglass sites in that city. The evening concludes with a gala dinner and the return trip to Amherst. Cost for the Finger Lakes Freethought Tour (which includes luncheon and dinner) is \$160 per person. The tour is strictly limited to fifty-five persons—when the motor coach is full, registration will close. So act fast! To register using a credit card (MC/Visa/AmEx/Discover), visit <https://secure.centerforinquiry.net/csh/events/freethought-trail-2015> or call 1-800-458-1366 (during business hours Eastern time). To register by check, money order, or credit card, complete and mail the hardcopy registration form below.

**Finger Lakes Freethought Tour Monday, June 15, 8AM – 10PM** \$160 x number of persons \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Limit fifty-five participants)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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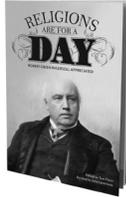
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Credit-card orders may be faxed to (716)636-1733 or called in toll-free to (800)458-1366 from 9 AM to 5 PM Eastern Time.

# MARKETPLACE



**Ingersoll Museum Mug:** A three-color ceramic mug features drawings of Ingersoll and his birthplace museum. Around the rim is the bold Ingersoll quote, "The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know." 11 oz. mug, hand-washing recommended. \$14.00



**Religions Are for a Day: Robert Green Ingersoll Appreciated:** Museum Director Tom Flynn chronicles Ingersoll's life and impact with many never-before-published details. Plus numerous accounts of historical mysteries solved during the Museum's more than twenty years of operation. \$15.00



**"A Visit with Robert Ingersoll" DVD:** Stage actor Richard McNally performs his one-man show as Ingersoll before a live audience in an authentic Victorian setting. A multi-camera professional production. Runtime approximately one hour. \$18.00

**"A Visit with Robert Ingersoll" DVD:** Stage actor Richard McNally performs his one-man show as Ingersoll before a live audience in an authentic Victorian setting.

**Museum Brochures:** Museum visitors pick up these five fact-packed brochures about Ingersoll's public life, his Civil War service, and more. Now you can enjoy them at home! \$8.00



<input type="checkbox"/> Ingersoll Mug	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Religions Are for a Day	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> A Visit with Robert Ingersoll	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Museum Brochures	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Logo Pin	x _____



**Council for Secular Humanism Logo Pin:** It may be a program of the Center for Inquiry now, but it's still the Ingersoll Museum's sponsor. Attractive enamel lapel pin with vivid Council logo. \$6.00

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