



DULUTH THINK

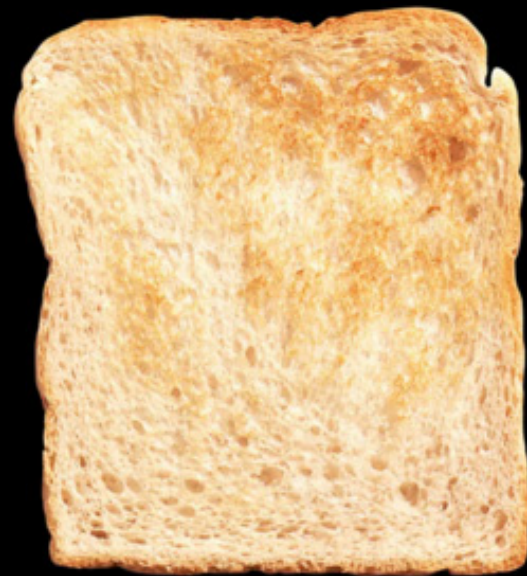
NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS



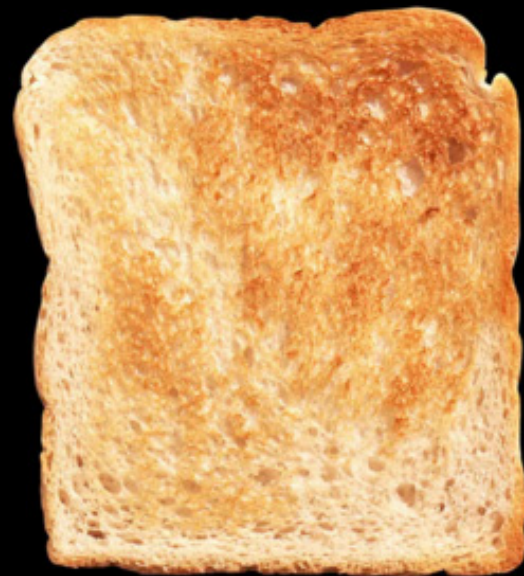
Join us Sunday August 7th at 10am at St. Scholastica's Somers Lounge to hear George Erickson present

Climate Change Is Worse Than People Realize

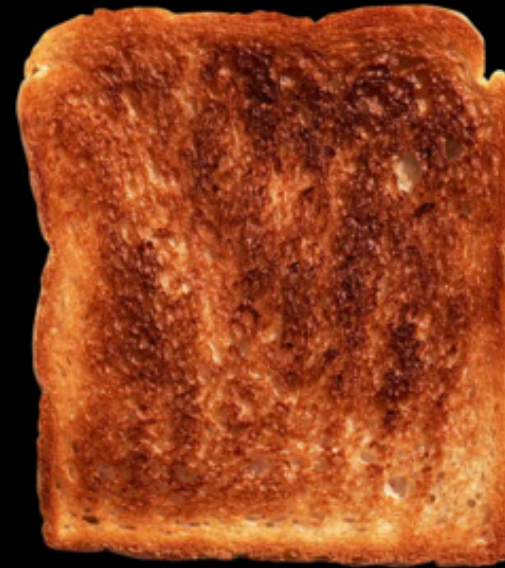
See page 2



1960s



1980s



2022



2030?

Directions to Somers Lounge page 3
History of LSF pages 4 & 5
FFRF Conventions page 6

August Happy Hour page 7
August Social Dinner page 8
August Pavilion Party page 9



LAKE
SUPERIOR
**FREE
THINKERS**

Volume 25, Issue 8

**LAKE SUPERIOR
FREETHINKERS**

is a registered 501(c)(3)
Minnesota non-profit.
Receipts are available
for donations over \$75.

NEWSLETTER

LSFreethinkers@outlook.com

CHAIR

JUNE CARTER

Juniebug8@gmail.com

VICE-CHAIR

LINDA CRUMPTON

Linda_Crumpton
@hotmail.com

TREASURER

CHARLES GESSERT

CGessert@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

DON FRASER

dfraser456@gmail.com

SOCIAL DIRECTOR

SUE ANDERSON

(218) 728-1361



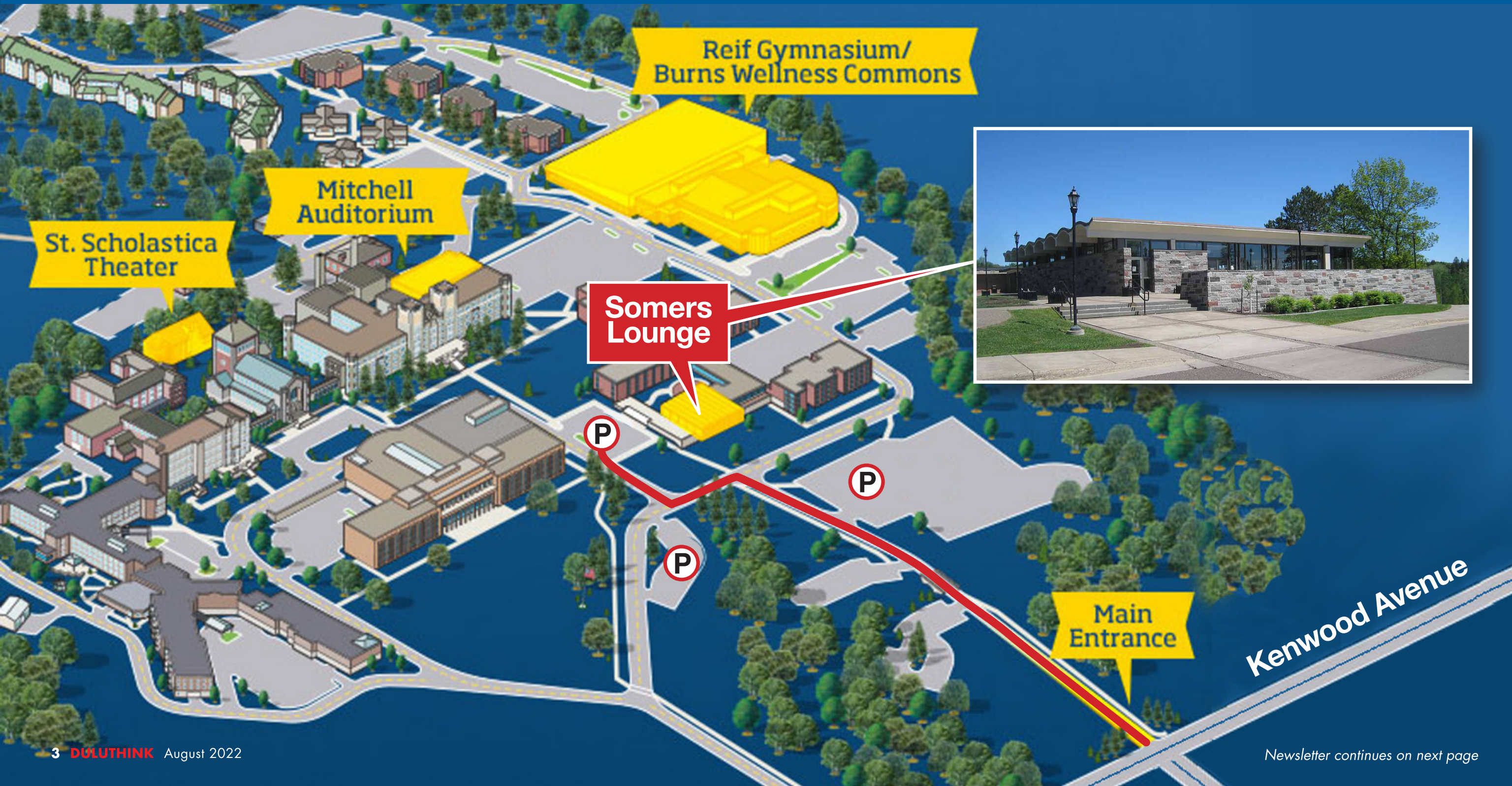
Join us Sunday August 7th at 10am at St. Scholastica's Somers Lounge to hear George Erickson present **Climate Change Is Worse Than People Realize**

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is half dead, Caribbean corals are 80% dead and species extinctions are rising. Our excesses of CO2 are acidifying the oceans that supply 20% of our protein and 50% of our oxygen. We are close to, if not past, a tragic tipping point. To combat climate change, Canada, Sweden, China, Russia, India, Poland, Pakistan, Finland and 12 other countries are building super-safe, 24/7, highly efficient, CO2-free nuclear power plants, but we are foolishly closing them and expanding inefficient, intermittent, environment-wrecking, carbon-dependent wind and solar farms - partly because BP, EXXON and the Sierra Club clones promote fear of nuclear power, which the World Health Organization rates "the safest way to create electricity."



George Erickson is a best-selling author of five pro-science books and a retired dentist. He has spent parts of 38 summers "bush-flying" in Alaska and Arctic Canada and is a former VP of the American Humanist Assoc., a former president of the Minnesota Humanists and a former member of the New Brighton, MN Environmental Quality Commission. He is a member of the National Center for Science Education, a member of the Thorium Energy Alliance – and a member of a group of about 100 independent physicists, engineers, MDs, energy experts and journalists who are deeply concerned about climate change, the environment and energy issues. He has exchanged climate change/energy emails with Dr. James Hansen, former chief climate scientist at NASA – now Climate Change scientist at Columbia Univ., whom he often quotes in his image-rich book, *Unintended Consequences: The Lie That Killed Millions and Accelerated Climate Change* – the book on which his presentations are based. After reading a sampling of Dr. Erickson's published op-eds on climate change and energy issues, Dr. Hansen called them "brilliant." (Excerpts from *Unintended Consequences* are currently being serialized by the Thorium Network, an international organization that promotes Thorium as a superior, alternative fuel to Uranium.) Dr. Erickson travels the country at his own expense, giving presentations on the environment, climate change and energy issues at colleges, schools and affinity groups. *Unintended Consequences* can be downloaded for free from the home page of www.tundracub.com. Contact him at tundracub7@gmail.com or 218-744-2003.

Directions to St. Scholastica's Somers Lounge, 1200 Kenwood Avenue



A history of the Lake Superior Freethinkers

This article appears in the August 2022 issue of FFRF's *Freethought Today*



The Lake Superior Freethinkers is one of the Freedom From Religion Foundation's chapters, based in Duluth, Minn. LSF was formed in 1997 by psychiatrist Dr. Bill van Druten as a friendship group in support of morality without superstition, freedom from religion, state/church separation and rational thought.

The group has been active in various efforts around the city since its founding 25 years ago. The following are some of the highlights of LSF's history (as stated on the group's website lsfreethinkers.org).

Meeting with the gov

On Dec. 27, 2000, van Druten and others from the Minnesota Secular Council met with Gov. Jesse Ventura. They had an opportunity to present the concerns of the secular community about practices and regulations imposed by religion on Minnesota citizens. They presented the governor with a Political Courage award from Atheist Alliance International and a First Amendment Freedom Fighter award from their own secular council.

Hospitals and choice

In 2001, van Druten went to the administrator of St. Luke's Hospital to explain what a merger with Catholic Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother would mean. Both major Duluth hospitals (the other being St. Mary's) for the city would then be under Vatican restrictions. Van Druten knew this affiliation would lead to imposition of the "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care," which place restrictions on the lawful rights of patients in matters concerning sterilization, fertilization, contraception, emergency contraception for victims of rape, pregnancy termination, and end-of-life decisions.

This led van Druten to form a coalition with the Women's Health Center. With the important presentation to the Gynecology Department by LSF Member Dr. Robert Goldish, the hospital board reversed the decision and the merger was blocked.

Boy Scouts

On June 25, 2002, van Druten wrote to the Duluth News Tribune pointing out that the Boy Scouts of America's national resolution of Feb. 6 made clear that "duty to God . . . is an obligation" and

praised "faith-based values." But a growing number of Americans resented having their sons excluded from the ranks of the Boy Scouts because they are nonbelievers.

In August 2002, former Eagle Scouts, including van Druten, returned their medals and badges to the Boy Scouts, marked as Badges of Shame. On Aug. 22, 2002, a group of about a dozen Lake Superior Freethinkers protested in Duluth against a Boy Scout ban on gay and atheist scout leaders.

Ten Commandments

A Ten Commandments monument was donated to Duluth by the Fraternal Order of the Eagles in 1957. The Eagles gave similar monuments to many American towns during the 1950s and 1960s to encourage "good morals" and promote Cecil B. DeMille's movie "The Ten Commandments."

But, in 2003, nontheist groups, including LSF and the Minnesota ACLU, complained about religious symbolism on government property. They pointed out that such displays amounted to an endorsement of Judeo-Christian religious tenets. The Minnesota ACLU wrote to LSF's van Druten and Dale Hagen to seek local plaintiffs. Together, they requested that the monument be removed to a non-government location. Van Druten suggested that the base instead support a new monument to the Bill of Rights.

When the lawsuit was filed in federal court in Minneapolis, Duluth Mayor Herb Bergson and the City Council members were named as defendants. The Minnesota ACLU said it had given Duluth three months to remove the monument, and it had not been removed. The City Council then voted 5-4 to remove the monument. However, one member changed his mind and the mayor vowed to fight, citing overwhelming public support.

The city realized that it could lose the lawsuit and end up with large financial liabilities. The city agreed to remove the monument. It was taken down quickly and quietly, and ended up in a storage facility while its final disposition was considered.

A Twin Cities church bought the stone and, on Oct. 24, 2004, the Ten Commandments monument was placed in Duluth's Canal Park. Minnesota Atheists magazine announced Certificates of Appreciation were given to van Druten, Dale Hagen, Maxine Caserta and Dave Davidson for serving as plaintiffs.

A history of the Lake Superior Freethinkers *continued from page 4*

Kroc Center

Joan Kroc was the third wife of McDonald's founder Ray Kroc. When he died in early 1984, she inherited the fortune he had made as a partner in McDonald's. When she died in 2003, she left \$1.5 billion to the Salvation Army to establish and maintain Kroc Centers across the nation.

In 2004, Mayor Bergson asked the City Council to divert \$6 million, which had been earmarked for road maintenance, to fund an attractive bid for a local Kroc Center.

By the next summer, however, it was becoming apparent that the Duluth Salvation Army was planning a religious building with a chapel, large external cross, and biblical quotes throughout the building. It refused to consider removing or relocating those religious symbols. The new Kroc Center would provide all the facilities specified in the trust, but it would also be a religious center with discriminatory hiring of employees who shared the Salvation Army's religious ideas.

City Council member Russ Stewart and the Lake Superior Freethinkers were concerned about the funneling of so much public money into what seemed to be a thinly disguised church.

So, the city hired an attorney to see what it would take to avoid running afoul of the Establishment Clause. The attorney stated that supporting the project would be permissible as long as the Salvation Army agreed to the following terms: No religious symbols could be visible from the entrance or displayed in areas that would be used by the community, the name of the center could not have any religious connotation, and the architecture could not suggest a place of worship. Also, the city should be allowed to inspect the site and review its financial records from time to time. With these precautions in place, the city could safely use public money to support the project.

The city offered these proposals to the Salvation Army office in Chicago, which would make the final decision about proceeding with the project. But the Salvation Army said it would never agree to these terms, so the Duluth council backed off of those terms and agreed to risk an Establishment Clause lawsuit in order to proceed with the project.

But, on March 14, 2007, the city was shocked to hear that the Salvation Army decided not to proceed with the proposed Kroc Center in Duluth. The Salvation Army said one of the reasons for the rejection was that it had gotten pushback on identifying the center as religious outreach, thanks in part to the Lake Superior Freethinkers.

Nonprofit status

On May 24, 2016, Lake Superior Freethinkers became a registered Minnesota corporation recognized as a nonprofit organization by the IRS. It is organized with a four-person executive team:

president, vice president, secretary and treasurer) and a nine-member Board of Directors.

Local billboard

A billboard was placed at West Third Street and Second Avenue during the holiday season of 2016. That area is used heavily by local commuters and reminded the community that the organization was alive and well, and available to anyone struggling with their faith or just overwhelmed with religious messages over the holiday season.

Adopt-A-Highway

Jon Eggleston and other members arranged for LSF to adopt a section of roadway. The group is responsible for keeping a two-mile stretch of Arnold Road clean. The new sign was put up in 2019.

Bus banner

The LSF placed a sign that read, "Questioning religion? You've got friends here," on a bus that rotated through all the routes of the Duluth Transit Authority. It was on display in September 2017, when thousands of students returned to Duluth after summer. The banner was initially placed on the right side of the bus, but was quickly moved to the left side so that it was visible to passersby and less focused on those who happened to be at the bus stop.

National Day of Reason

The National Day of Reason is a secular celebration established in 2003 by the American Humanist Association, observed annually on the first Thursday in May, the same day as the National Day of Prayer. This year, more than 70 people gathered to support secular government and policy based on reason, science and evidence. LSF Secretary Jim Lyttle was there and a dozen legislators spoke or dropped by to show support. The event was sponsored by Humanists of Minnesota with the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis and Or Emet: the Minnesota Congregation of Humanistic Judaism. It was endorsed by 12 freethought groups including the Lake Superior Freethinkers. Organizers hope that this will be the beginning of a statewide coalition of secular voters who can act as a counterpoint to the religious right.



Mark Your Calendar

For the 2022 and 2023 Annual FFRF National Conventions

For details see the FFRF website under "Outreach & Events"

October 28-30, 2022

**Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk
123 Losoya Street
San Antonio, TX 78205
Telephone: (210) 222-1234**

**\$205 single or double
\$215 triple
\$225 quadruple
(plus tax)**

October 13-15, 2023

**Monona Terrace Convention Center
One John Nolen Drive
Madison, WI 53703**

**Hilton Madison Monona Terrace
\$189 Standard guest room
\$204 Deluxe Queen Lakeview Room
and Corner King Rooms
(plus tax)**

JOIN US FOR HAPPY HOUR

**4:00-6:00 pm Thursday, August 4th at
Mexico Lindo, Fitgers Brewery Complex**

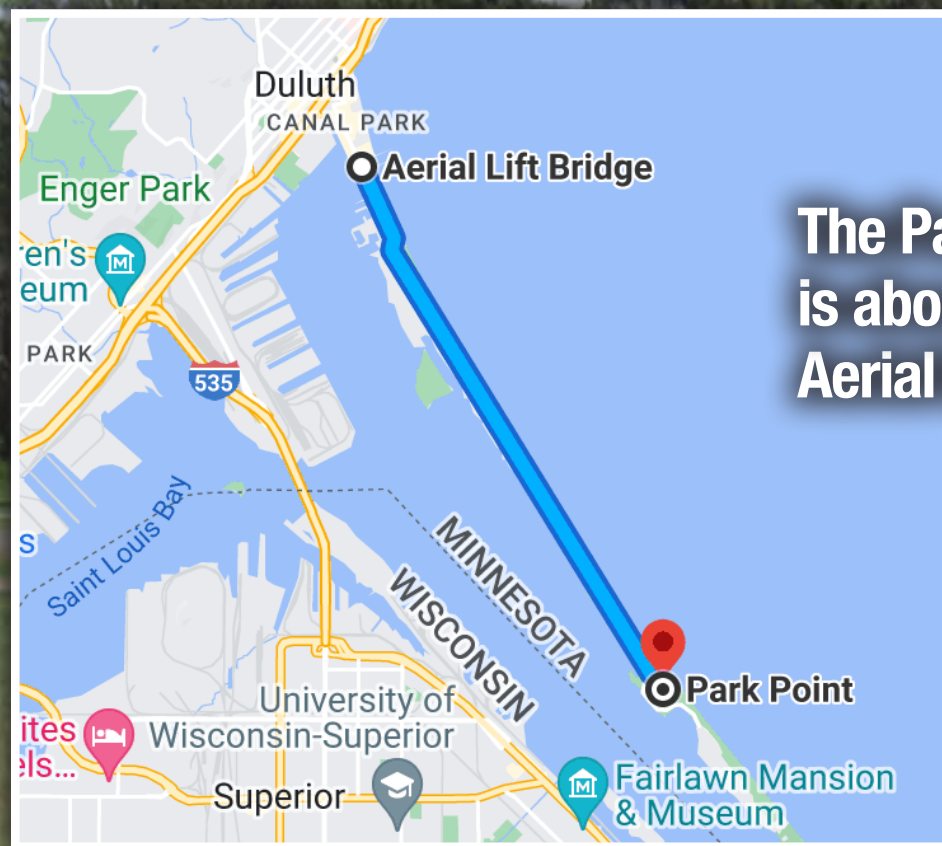
Mexico Lindo will validate your parking and we will validate
your skepticism about religion. See you there!



AUGUST SOCIAL DINNER



Join us August 17th at 5:30pm at Duluth's Park Point for our third outdoor Summer Social Dinner, and to celebrate LSF's 25th Anniversary!!
Bring your own food and beverage and perhaps something extra to share.



The Park Point recreation area is about 4 miles from Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge



NEXT PAVILION PARTY SATURDAY AUGUST 27TH

Pavilion Parties
continue on the fourth
Saturday of each
month at the home
of our “Flounder”,
Bill Van Druten.



Plan to arrive at 1pm.
Bring a food item you
have made, or maybe
an interesting libation
to share with other
attendees. We'll talk and
laugh at Dr. Van Druten's
home: 2931 Greysolon
Road in Duluth. Park
anywhere on Greysolon
Road but not on 30th
Avenue!