



# DULUTHINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS

**Join us Sunday February 1st at 10am at the Hillside Community Center,  
12 East 4th Street (at the side door), in person and via Zoom.**



## WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY DO WITHOUT EVIDENCE

**A presentation by UMD's David Woodward | See Page 2**

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L A K E  
S U P E R I O R  
**F R E E**  
T H I N K E R S

Volume 29, Issue 2

**LAKE SUPERIOR FREETHINKERS**

is a registered 501(c)(3)  
Minnesota nonprofit.  
Receipts are available  
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**NEWSLETTER**

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FEBRUARY 2026

**Join us Sunday February 1st for a presentation by UMD's David Woodward.**

# **WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY DO WITHOUT EVIDENCE**

**O**ne of my interests concerns the question: "Why do people believe weird things?" Debunking extraordinary/supernatural claims about the human past (Ancient Aliens, Mormon claims of Native American history, hyper diffusion) is often easy and boring. I'd like to learn why people are drawn to those claims and how they maintain those beliefs in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary or a lack of supporting evidence. This is related to logical fallacies such as red herrings, call to authority, ad hominem arguments and the like. Many people are socialized into relying on faith based knowledge (received vs observed) and an often undeserved respect for authority (Clergy).



**DAVID WOODWARD** has spent the past 30 years working in the fields of public history, historic preservation, museology, and archaeology in both the public and private realms. He has conducted research abroad in Ireland, Ghana, Jamaica, Poland, Guatemala, Mexico and domestically in the Midwest. David also holds appointments in African and African American Studies. He currently serves as the Director of the Museum Studies Certificate Program and is a senior lecturer in the History Department. His research interests include: Oral History, Folklore and Folk Culture, Legacies of Slavery in the Atlantic world, Native American and European contact period in the U.S., Landscape Archaeology, Material Culture studies, and cultural/historical interpretation.

# March Speaker: Dr. Michael Osterholm

Dr. Osterholm is Regents Professor, McKnight Presidential Endowed Chair in Public Health, the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Division of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, a professor in the Technological Leadership Institute, College of Science and Engineering, and an adjunct professor in the Medical School, all at the University of Minnesota. He is also a member of the National Academy



of Medicine (NAM) and the Council of Foreign Relations. In June 2005 Dr. Osterholm was appointed by Michael Leavitt, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to the newly established National Science Advisory Board on Biosecurity. In July 2008, he was named to the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center, Aos Academy of Excellence in Health Research. In October 2008, he was appointed to the World Economic Forum Working Group on Pandemics.

## Expertise

An internationally recognized expert in infectious disease epidemiology. Disease Surveillance, Epidemiology, Health Communications, Health Communications: Social Media, Infectious Disease, Infectious Disease: Foodborne, Infectious Disease: HIV / AIDS, Infectious Disease: Influenza, Infectious Disease: STDs, Policy / Politics, Public Health Preparedness, Vaccines.

## Awards and Recognition

In addition to being awarded a university Regents Professorship in 2015, Dr. Osterholm is also a McKnight Presidential Endowed Chair in Public Health. In addition, Dr. Osterholm has received numerous honors for his work, including an honorary doctorate from Luther College; the Pump Handle Award, CSTE; the Charles C. Shepard Science Award, CDC; the Harvey W. Wiley Medal, FDA; the Squibb Award, IDSA; Distinguished University Teaching Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, UMN; and the Wade Hampton Frost Leadership Award, American Public Health Association. He also has been the recipient of six major research awards from the NIH and the CDC.

# Happy Hour

Join us from 4:00-6:00 pm  
Thursday, February 5th at Mexico  
Lindo, Fitger's Brewery Complex



***The fun begins at 4:00 pm!***

The restaurant will validate your covered parking and we will validate your skepticism about religion. Bring a friend.



# FEBRUARY SOCIAL DINNER

**Join us Wednesday February 18th at 5:30pm for LSF's Social Dinner at Grandma's in Canal Park.**

