

# FREELY SPEAKING

FREE MINDS  
FREE PEOPLE

Vol. 3, No. 8

April 2006

Eight pages

## SKIRMISHES

### A renewed effort

• Rep. John Hostettler, (R-Indiana), is trying for the fifth straight time to get Congress to change a federal law that allows attorney's fees to be paid by the government when a court finds a person's civil liberties have been violated. Hostettler's bill would bar such payments when the deprivation of rights involves the First Amendment's ban on establishment of religion.

Called the "Public Expression of Religion Act" (PERA), H.R. 2679 is being supported by the American Legion this year.

Hostettler's latest attempted end run around the Constitution has collected 40 cosponsors in the House. There is no companion legislation in the Senate at this time.

One can only hope.

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## Celebrate the National Day of Reason

Join the members of the  
**Space Coast Freethought Association**  
for an evening of good food and conversation at our  
**Second Annual National Day of Reason Banquet**

We will meet at:

Back Bay Seafood Restaurant  
4910 Stack Blvd.  
Melbourne  
at 6:30 p.m. on May 4th

Anyone planning to attend should notify George Ricker by email at [gricker@cfl.rr.com](mailto:gricker@cfl.rr.com) to confirm. We need to let the restaurant know how many are attending. Please use the subject heading "National Day of Reason Banquet"

## Nothing to say No reason to say it

By *Dianna Narciso*

I have absolutely nothing to say to you this month. I am empty. Hollow. Completely, totally, void of anything remotely interesting or worthy of discussion. This is probably perfectly normal.

Nothing I have to say could be trusted anyway. I am, after all, an atheist. Most Americans think I don't share their view of the American ideal and they certainly wouldn't want their child marrying me. (Luckily, or you may say—slyly, I didn't know I was an atheist when I got married so my in-laws didn't know they should object.)

This all came out recently in articles on the American Mosaic Project which showed that America hates atheists, but it's getting to like homosexuals. I'm happy for the homosexuals, of course.

And I suppose it's not really all bad news for atheists. We are better tolerated than we used to be. But we seem to be, what's the word I'm looking for...the

See *NOTHING* on page 2

## HAPPENINGS

The **Space Coast Freethought Association** holds its April meeting from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. on April 2 at Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave., Melbourne. This meeting will be in the large conference room - on the right, immediately after you enter the library.

Cathy Stanton will be our guest speaker. Her topic is "Women's fight for the vote and the price we paid." Our meetings are free and open to the public. Come and join the conversation about the need for a wall of separation between government and religion and the importance of freedom FROM religion.

Our next **Adopt-A-Road** cleanup will begin at 10 a.m. on April 9. We meet in the parking lot of the Atlanta Bread Company Restaurant, located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Palm Bay Road and Stack Boulevard.

The **Space Coast Freethought Association** continues its Saturday Socials with a potluck dinner and book discussion at the Narciso residence at 7 p.m. on April 15th. For more information contact Dianna by email at [catspah@cfl.rr.com](mailto:catspah@cfl.rr.com)

See *HAPPENINGS* on page 3

# NOTHING (from page 1)

line. We are the line drawn in the sand. As long as you believe in something supernatural, you are part of American society. But you can't cross that line with most people.

So, they're giving in, little by little, admitting that they don't have all the god/angel/ghost answers. So, maybe the Wiccans aren't worshipping the right god but at least they admit that there is something else "out there" that we hope is keeping them moral. The atheists, well, they don't have anyone but themselves to guide their behavior and we know how bad that is.

I'd say that it was that article that depressed me, but it didn't. I already knew that.

I think what did it for me was a woman on an email list who said something like, "We live in a democracy so majority rules." And I tried to explain to her that we didn't and she said, "But we vote for president and the one with the most votes wins, so if that isn't democracy, what is?"

I just couldn't do it anymore. I was so thoroughly disgusted with the victors and their methods that I gave up.

I give up.

I can't teach stupid people why it's a good idea to protect the rights of minority views. And people just keep getting stupider. Or maybe I'm

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## Space Coast Freethought Association, Inc.

The Space Coast Freethought Association is a Florida nonprofit corporation, based in Brevard County. To join the online discussion group go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SpaceCoastFreethought/>

Our mailing address is:  
Space Coast Freethought Association, Inc.  
PO Box 60448  
Palm Bay, FL 32906-0448

For more information, contact President Dianna Narciso by email at [catspah@cfl.rr.com](mailto:catspah@cfl.rr.com). or visit our website at: <http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/>

just getting smarter. Or I'm not hanging out with the right sorts of people, I don't know. But either way, I just give up.

But that shouldn't have anything to do with you and why I have nothing to say to you, because you aren't the stupid people.

It's really because you're not the stupid people, and you already know all of the stuff I'm going to say anyway.

Stuff like: "It's really bad and we have to do something about it." But there just aren't enough of us around to make an impact.

The powers that be just sort of shrug us off. I feel like a flea—or like I imagine a flea would feel if, say, it bit a dog on purpose to tell it something. And the dog just scratches it off like it's nothing and goes about its business.

So, a new tactic is in order. I'm not promising anything. I'm not saying next week I won't go back to the email lists and try to educate stupid people again. I've always been willing to go back to what I gave up. But the idea is not to. The idea is to start concentrating on us. What can I do for you?

I'm thinking you want something, but maybe you don't know what it is. (I probably think that because that's the way I feel and projecting is all I can do because I'm really just sitting here throwing thoughts at a computer screen.)

So, anyway, now you know. I quit.

And I'm going somewhere else but I don't exactly know where and I don't know what's to become of me but hopefully it will be a better sort of person.

So, like I said, I have absolutely nothing to say this month.

But maybe next month I'll have it all figured out and I'll have something important to say that you can trust.

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## CONNECTIONS:

some web addresses that may be of interest to freethinkers

<http://www.atheistview.com/>

"Atheist View" is the web site of SCFA President Dianna Narciso. The site contains information about how to order Dianna's book, *Like Rolling Uphill: Realizing the honesty of Atheism*, and lots more besides. There are reports on various efforts she has been involved in, copies of many of her letters to the editor, her own essays, her blog and so on.

<http://www.godlessinamerica.com/>

"Godless in America" is the newly launched web site of SCFA Vice President George Ricker (who also edits this newsletter). The site is intended to promote his new book *Godless in America: conversations with an atheist* and, as he puts it, "to continue the conversation." The site is still under construction. George promises many more additions to it in the days and weeks ahead.

<http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/forum/>

"Freethought Activism in the U.S." is a new online forum sponsored by the SCFA and administered by Doug Cramer. The forum is open to all who want to participate. You don't need to be a member to take part, and you can be anywhere that you have access to an online connection.

*Freely Speaking* is the newsletter of the **Space Coast Freethought Association, Inc.** It is published monthly and distributed free as a pdf file. Print copies are available to members on request.

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*Freely Speaking* invites articles which promote freethought and church-state separation and announcements relating to groups and activities which do the same. Email submissions to [gricker@cfl.rr.com](mailto:gricker@cfl.rr.com) with the subject heading "newsletter submissions." Inquiries about *Freely Speaking* should be directed to George Ricker by email or by mail to: SCFA, PO Box 60448, Palm Bay, FL 32906-0448 - att: newsletter.

# Humor in Religion



## Lot's wife

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt—when little Jason interrupted.

"My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

## Higher power

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?"

One child blurted out, "Aces!"

## It's Lent



On their honeymoon, the blonde bride slipped into a sexy nightie and, with great anticipation, crawled into bed, only to find that her new Catholic husband had settled down on the couch.

When she asked him why he was apparently not going to make love to her, he replied, "It's Lent."

In tears, she remarked, "Well, that is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard! Who did you lend it to, and for how long?"

## SKIRMISHES (from page 1) —————

### • A mission from 'God'???

Rep. Katherine Harris, (R-Florida), told hundreds of attendees at a "Reclaiming America for Christ" conference in Broward County in March that she was "doing God's work" in continuing her campaign for the U.S. senate seat now held by Democrat Bill Nelson.

It had been widely anticipated Harris would withdraw from the race, but apparently she has decided to wage a "faith-based" political campaign against Nelson.

Anyone want to give odds on this getting really nasty?

**SPACE COAST FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION**  
**A non-prophet organization**

Space Coast Freethought Association  
welcomes its newest member:

**Ernie Southern**

## Join us!!!

*Become a dues-paying member of the  
Space Coast Freethought Association.*

*Annual memberships are \$15 for individuals,  
\$25 for couples and  
\$10 for seniors (65+) and students.*

*Applications are available at our meetings,  
online and by mail on request. Join the fight  
against religious extremism and for  
separation between government and religion.*

## SCFA store open at CafePress

How would you like to buy a tee-shirt or a button with the Space Coast Freethought Association's logo on it?

Check out the new "Space Coast Freethought Association" store at [cafepress.com](http://cafepress.com). You'll find the site at: <http://www.cafepress.com/scfreethought>

## SCFA Board of Directors (officers)

Dianna Narciso (President) ...George Ricker (Vice Pres.)  
Cameo Cramer (Secretary) ...Toni Sweeney (Treasurer)  
Doug Cramer ...Mike Sweeney...Charles Trantham

## HAPPENINGS (from page 1)

**The Humanist Club at Barefoot Bay** holds its next meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. on April 8th at the South Mainland Library, 7921 Ron Beatty Boulevard, Barefoot Bay. Contact George Oertel at 772-664-0170 for more information.

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY *by Cameo Johnson-Cramer*

## April

### ~150 years ago

#### Clarence Darrow is born - April 18, 1857

Darrow is best known for defending John Scopes, who was tried for teaching evolution. He started out as a corporate lawyer, but gave up this lucrative career to defend labor unions. He also defended many famous murderers because of his anti-death penalty beliefs. In addition to being a lawyer, he wrote many freethought articles and books.

*"I do not consider it an insult, but rather a compliment to be called an agnostic. I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure-that is all that agnosticism means."*

### ~200 years ago -

#### George Jacob Holyoake is born - April 13, 1817

A math teacher and lecturer, Holyoake is credited with coining the term "secularist." He wrote more than 160 pamphlets and books, founded several freethought journals, and was president of the British Secular Union.

*"Free thought means fearless thought. It is not deterred by legal penalties, nor by spiritual consequences. Dissent from the Bible does not alarm the true investigator, who takes truth for authority not authority for truth." - The Origin and Nature of Secularism, Ch. 3 (1896)*

### ~250 years ago

#### Thomas Jefferson is born - April 13, 1743

Jefferson was the third president of the US, author of the Declaration of Independence, deist, and strong supporter of church/state separation. It was while he was president that Jefferson issued his famous letter to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, explaining that the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment builds "a wall of separation between church and state." He refused to issue any days of prayer or thanksgiving, believing civil powers alone were conferred on public officials.

*"Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."*

### ~400 years ago

#### Galileo is convicted of heresy - April 12, 1633

Galileo was found guilty of holding the heretical belief that the earth revolves around the sun. This was actually his second offence. In 1616 he had been forbidden from holding or defending his beliefs. In the 1633 trial, Galileo contended that he did not "hold" these heretical beliefs, he was merely "discussing" them. He lost.

The penalties for his crimes were: his book was banned, for three years he had to recite the Seven Penitential Psalms once a week, and was placed under house arrest (mansion arrest actually.) 300 years later, the church admitted they were wrong.

*"It is surely harmful to souls to make it a heresy to believe what is proved."*

### ~2500 years ago

#### Buddha is born - April 8, 563 BCE

According to the *Tripitaka*, Gautama Buddha was born Prince Siddhartha on the Nepal-India border. He was raised in luxury, married, and had a son. At the age of 29, he decided to leave the palace, where he first encountered suffering. He met a monk, and was intrigued by how the monk could be so serene amidst all the suffering. So he started traveling and studying various techniques to gain enlightenment, but was unsatisfied. At the age of 35, after fighting off an evil spirit who tempted him with worldly comforts and desires, he finally achieved enlightenment. He then started teaching his own philosophy.  
[www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)

*"Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it.*

*Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many.*

*Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books.*

*Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders.*

*Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations.*

*But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it."*

# R\*E\*S\*P\*E\*C\*T—cartooning religion

By George A. Ricker

In case you missed it—maybe you were living in a cave somewhere without any means of communication with the outside world—we’ve been having a bit of a flap about a handful of cartoons that were published in a Danish newspaper last fall. The cartoons contained some caricatures of Muhammad and tried, with mixed success, to poke a little fun at the religion of Islam. Since a sense of humor is a very individual thing, whether or not you found them funny would be a matter of personal taste.

That’s not what I want to talk about anyway. I also don’t want to talk about the motives of the people who published the cartoons, although there has been lots of speculation about that in various places. Nor do I want to speculate about the motives of the Danish Imam who saw to it the cartoons were publicized widely in the nations of the Middle East and the rest of the world—along with some fakes that were possibly more offensive than those that had appeared in the Danish newspaper.

As far as I’m concerned all of those are side issues. What I am interested in is the extreme, violent reaction to the cartoons. I understand many Muslims were offended. I understand Islam has a tradition that says one should not make images of the Prophet. I understand all of that. And I respect their right to have such traditions. I even respect their right to be upset about the cartoons. Certainly, no reasonable person should complain if someone speaks up about what they consider an affront to their religion.

I understand and respect all of that.

But the question I put to you is, “So what?”

Muslims certainly have every right to object and to protest when their favorite sacred cow gets gored. But they have no right to demand that the rest of the world kowtow to their icons. They have no right to destroy property or take lives. They have no right to demand that others pay homage to the dictates of their religion and to underscore that demand with the veiled threat of still more violence. That’s not just true for the followers of Islam. It’s true for the followers of all religions.

As free people we reserve the right to lampoon, ridicule, satirize, castigate, dissect, analyze, criticize and generally poke fun at all icons and all ideas. Those of a religious nature are no exception.

That doesn’t mean I think we should go out of our way to offend people. But it does mean that being offended

grants no one the right to act as a thug or a barbarian. Legal protests and complaints are the hallmark of civilized conduct. Allowing a fit of temper to cause one to engage in wanton destruction or to commit violence against other people betrays a lack of maturity and an absence of moral standards.

Voltaire (Francis Marie Arouet) wrote famously, “I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend, to the death, your right to say it.”

I have always thought the statement—and this is one of several renditions, each slightly different—summarized the proper attitude one should show to another’s rights of conscience. We must respect the right of others to free minds. We may not suppress or condemn others for the exercise of their own intellectual capacities.

But that is as far as it goes. The respect we owe another’s right to hold different ideas does not extend to the ideas themselves. Once those ideas are submitted for our consideration, then we are entitled to show them no respect at all. We may treat them with honest reflection, with consideration or with contempt. The respect we extend to other ideas will depend partly on the inherent worth of those ideas and partly on our own mental architecture, but its exercise is strictly voluntary.

One might easily reverse Voltaire’s statement while preserving the meaning and render it, “I may honor your right to say what you have to say, but I shall demand, to the death, my right to disagree with it and to poke fun at it if I so choose.”

For too long religion has been treated as a “special” category of human existence. But religious ideas are entitled to no particular consideration just because they are religious. Think of all the absurd ideas that have been held by various religions throughout human history. Should we treat women as inferior beings because someone claims it is a “religious matter?” What about stoning disrespectful children or people who commit adultery to death? Both of those are “religious” ideas? Should we bite our tongues if someone decides to put them into practice because, after all, we must show respect for religious traditions?

Religious people have every right to speak out on the issues. They do not have the right to expect anyone to respect what they have to say regardless of how sincerely those opinions are held. And when the religious presume to tell the members of secular societies how

See **RESPECT** on page 6

# **BOOKNOTES:**

## *Natural Atheism* by David Eller

David Eller begins this way, “I was born an Atheist. All humans are born Atheists. No baby born into the world arrives with specific religious beliefs or knowledge. Such beliefs and knowledge must be acquired, which means that they must first exist before and apart from the new life and that they must be presented to and impressed on the new suggestible mind—one that has no critical apparatus and no alternative views of its own. Human infants are like sponges, soaking up (not completely uncritically, but eagerly and effectively) whatever is there to be soaked up from their social environment. Small children in particular instinctively imitate the models that they observe in their childhood, but I was not compelled to attend or practice any particular religion, and as I grew up I never saw any reason to ‘convert’ to any particular religion. I have thus been an Atheist all my life. I am a natural Atheist.”

David Eller is a professor of cultural anthropology and, though written with clarity and conviction, his book definitely reflects that academic background. Eller packs a lot of information into the 352 pages of his book. He also inspires with an appeal for those who are

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### **RESPECT** (from page 5)

they should act and to critique their performance, they should expect their own ideas and performance to receive scrutiny as well.

There can be no honest dialogue about religion and its role in our world if the religious are going to wrap themselves in the mantle of righteous indignation every time someone pokes a bit of fun in the direction of their beliefs—whether it's done with skill or not. Besides, there's so much about most religions that is offensive, it's absurd to think their absurdities should be off limits.

We can play the game with the net up or down. Unfortunately many among the religious want the net down when they are putting the ball in play but want it back up for everyone else.

Respect isn't really what they want because that would suggest their ideas and icons should be evaluated on the same basis as all other ideas and icons. The religious don't want equal treatment for religions at all. They want special treatment.

That's not respect. It's called “stacking the deck.”

© 2006 by George A. Ricker

so inclined to go forth and spread the “good news” about atheism. Along the way he manages to offer a short course in logic, a rebuttal of the chief arguments offered by theists and a strong declaration on behalf of the need for absolute separation between government and religion.

Eller's book is well researched and very readable, though a bit of heavy lifting may be required in a few spots. All in all I found it a worthwhile addition to my growing library of atheist apologetics. The book is published by American Atheist Press and is available at most online bookstores. If local retailers don't have the book, they will probably be happy to order it for you.

I do have one small nit to pick and it has to do with the capitalization of the word “atheist” in the text. This is the convention at American Atheist Press so I don't fault Eller because I'm not at all sure he is responsible. But “atheism” is not a proper noun. When it is included in the name of an organization like “American Atheists” or is the first word in a sentence, then it should be capitalized. At all other times, it, like the word “theist,” should be lower case. GR

## **Did you know?**

As much as 85 percent of Sweden's population may not believe in any god. Adherents.com cites Phil Zuckerman's chapter, “Atheism: Contemporary Rates and Patterns,” from the book *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, edited by Michael Martin, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge UK, 2005), to reveal Sweden as the nation with possibly the highest percentage of atheists in the world. The study notes that not all those who say they do not believe in gods identify themselves as atheists.

According to Zuckerman, from 46 to 85 percent of Sweden's population falls into that category. It is followed by Vietnam with 81 percent, Denmark with 43 to 80 percent, Norway with 31 to 72 percent and Japan with 64 to 65 percent. Nearly two-thirds of Japan's population falls into the category of atheists, agnostics, or nonbelievers in a god.

The same study indicates from 3 to 9 percent of the United States' population falls into that category, which means from 8.7 million to 26.8 million.

China appears to have the largest population of nonbelievers with from 103.9 million to 181.8 million or from 8 to 14 percent of the population. However, Zuckerman notes the numbers for China, North Korea and Cuba may be unreliable.

# Bronze-Age vs. Biology

By Nathan Miller

Academics nationwide have borne witness in recent months to a vociferous attack on the biological sciences such as has not been seen since the Scopes Monkey Trial in the 1920's. Curricula in several states are under criticism from teachers, parents and students who want to see their particular sectarian narratives reflected in their biology texts. Proponents of this movement want to see what they call "Intelligent Design" taught alongside evolutionary biology in science classes. This approach is a slightly less overpowering one than was taken almost a century ago, and it's certainly been designed to sound a lot more reasonable, but one must ask what merit there is to the case for such a curriculum change. A brief description of how science works demonstrates that ID is lacking in that area.

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*... it's intellectually dishonest to pretend that there is a controversy in the scientific community between biology and bronze-age myths. An equivalent case could involve teaching meteorology students about a competing "alternative" theory that the swallowing of pomegranate seeds in the Underworld is the real cause of winter temperatures, as is taught in a famous Greek myth. I'm all for the teaching of scientific alternatives to evolution, just as soon as we have one.*

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Science is an iterative discipline. The process begins with raw data that's been collected, which scientists attempt to account for by assembling mathematical correlations to represent the observed numbers. These models are used to propose hypotheses to predict new findings from previous results. If the model can be used to adequately approximate empirical findings, then the theory or model has survived another day, and lives on until it is falsified and must be scrapped or corrected later on. A model scientist mercilessly attempts to disprove her own theories.

Intelligent Design, on the other hand, begins with a non-falsifiable *a priori* assertion, usually taken from an ancient text of the proponents' choosing, and tries to fit observed data to match the story line. Proponents of ID posit that life is just too complex not to have had someone fixing it as it developed on earth, a man behind the curtain, as it were. This is not to say that all ID fans

reject evolutionary biology outright; many only assert that a designer lent a helping hand. Most are well-meaning, if a bit superstitiously motivated. Essentially, advocates for this assertion borrow models from evolutionary biology and simply insert a designer character to produce a creation narrative, rather than a mathematical correlation.

To better understand the difference between ID and biology, or any science for that matter, one could ask what industrial or real-world applications of this science are present. Evolutionary biology is the basis for our modern understanding of disease control and eradication because it allows us to model changes in micro-organisms' allele frequencies over time and respond when bacteria and viruses develop resistance to treatments. Where are the pharmaceutical breakthroughs due to "creationary" biology?

The mantra for supporters of adding ID to biology curricula or replacing modern biology altogether is to "teach the controversy." This is a terrific idea, but the problem is that the real controversies in the field are debates over mechanisms and catalysts in evolutionary biology. There are many meritorious competing theoretical models within this vast field, and I think it would be a great idea to expose students to some of them. However, it's intellectually dishonest to pretend that there is a controversy in the scientific community between biology and bronze-age myths. An equivalent case could involve teaching meteorology students about a competing "alternative" theory that the swallowing of pomegranate seeds in the Underworld is the real cause of winter temperatures, as is taught in a famous Greek myth. I'm all for the teaching of scientific alternatives to evolution, just as soon as we have one.

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*Editor's note: this column is also to run in the Florida Tech University newspaper, The Crimson, on March 30th. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author.*

**Congratulations!**  
**You have found a  
non-prophet zone**

<http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/>

# **SPEAKING OUT: SCFA members in print (more on p. 7)**

*Hometown News*—March 9, 2006

## **Reader finds it easy to be atheist**

Regarding the Christian Bible, a recent writer claims that the Web site [www.skepticsannotatedbible.com](http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com) is inaccurate because it did not agree with his source: "New American Bible: St. Joseph Edition."

The writer also admitted that he only spent 45 minutes reviewing the site, and further admitted he has not even read his own Bible, having only read a "small fraction of it." Yet he had to write his letter attempting to trash [www.skepticsannotatedbible.com](http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com). (Skeptics Annotated Bible).

The author of [www.skepticsannotatedbible.com](http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com) clearly states that he uses the King James version of the Bible because it is still the most familiar, and some Christians consider it to be the only "authentic" version, and it has not been subjected to cosmetic editing, as have some of the more modern versions.

I have seen many Christians do as the recent writer attempted. They try to make it look like they have done their research and then claim the skeptic to be wrong.

This is another example of how religion leads to narrow-mindedness and dogmatic views.

Ironically, the writer also claimed to be a skeptic and also religious? If truly a skeptic, then you would allow yourself to actually read and study the Bible and ask honest questions of it. I have been doing this for several years now.

My findings thus far is that the Bible is full of errors, Jesus never really existed, and Christianity is nothing more than a religious myth.

Something else I find interesting is that most of my atheist friends have read the Bible, while none of my Christian friends have.

Once you remove the blinding mask of faith, it seems the more you read the Bible, the easier it is to become atheist.

Charlie Trantham  
Titusville

*Editor's note: this ran as an unsigned rant in the Hometown News.*

*Polk Online News Chief*—March 14, 2006

## **Writer contests accuracy of Bible**

A recent writer, in a letter titled "Why should we not believe the Bible" (Feb. 24), says "it's amazing how accurate it (the Bible) is."

Go to [www.skepticsannotatedbible.com](http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com) and click on the section titled "Science and History" and you will find 244 examples of scientific evidence that contradicts the Bible. You can also find 1,345 examples of falsehoods in the Bible under the sections titled "Contradictions" and "Absurdity." Another section titled "Prophecy" lists 192 false prophecies, broken promises and misquotes in the Bible. They also have sections listing other things in the Bible, such as "Injustice," "Intolerance," "Cruelty" and "Violence."

"It (the Bible) is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it; and some clever fables; and some blood-drenched history; and a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies," wrote Mark Twain in "Letters from the Earth."

Thomas Jefferson called the Bible "rubbish" and said "the authors of the gospels were unlettered and ignorant men."

I find it amazing that some people still believe the Bible to be true. Either they have not read the Bible, or they have read it and ignore all the falsehoods, or they have read the falsehoods and are ignorant to them, or they know that it is false but use their faith to blind them from seeing it.

Charles Eugene, Titusville

*"My own view on religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race."*

**-- Bertrand Russell, "Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?" (1930)**