

# FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

August 2007

## Upcoming Events

### Sunday, September 2

#### SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30pm at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will present an overview of **Cult Genealogy**.

### Saturday, September 15

#### Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup

Join us at 8:00am at Futch Park in IHB, or attend any of the other cleanups around Brevard County. Remember to wear your favorite freethought shirt! [keepbrevardbeautiful.org/events\\_ocean.html](http://keepbrevardbeautiful.org/events_ocean.html)

### Saturday, September 15

#### SCFA Meetup and Social Event

5:30pm at the Brunswick Bowling Center, 4851 Dairy Ave., in the bar.

### September 28-30

#### Atheist Alliance Intl. Convention

Washington, D.C., [atheistalliance.org/conventions](http://atheistalliance.org/conventions)

### Wednesday, October 3

#### The God Delusion Debate

Richard Dawkins debates John Lennox  
Birmingham, Alabama, [www.richarddawkins.net](http://www.richarddawkins.net)

### Sunday, October 7

#### SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30pm at **DeGroodt** Library on Minton Rd. in Palm Bay. Our topic is **The War on Halloween**. Costumes are encouraged.

### October 12-14

#### Freedom From Religion Foundation Convention

Madison, Wisconsin, [www.ffrf.org/events/](http://www.ffrf.org/events/)

### October 20

#### Freethought Day at Disney - Magic Kingdom, FL

[www.spacecoastfreethought.org/disney/](http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/disney/)

### November 4

#### SCFA Monthly Meeting

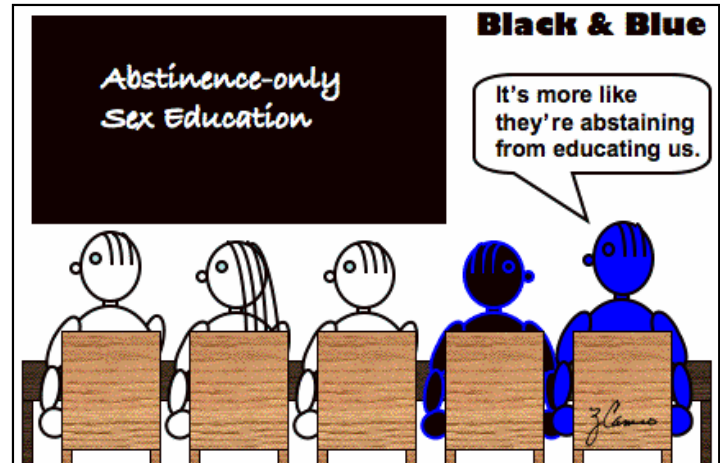
1:30pm at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave.

**Want to keep informed of SCFA events?** Join [groups.yahoo.com/group/scfa\\_announce/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scfa_announce/)

## SCFA News

### New SCFA video and cartoons

Visit our website to see the 2 minute video "Atheists Are Out There." We also have a new cartoon called "Black & Blue," which will be updated regularly.



### We Want Your Stories!

When did you first realize you were an atheist or agnostic? Tell us your story (a paragraph or two), and if we like it we'll post it on our website. Please include name (or anonymous) and city/state. Send stories to [spacecoastfreethought@yahoo.com](mailto:spacecoastfreethought@yahoo.com).

### American's United "First Freedom First"

Sign the petition at any SCFA meeting or the AU website, [www.au.org](http://www.au.org).

### Book Drive Underway

Remember to bring your used freethought books to any SCFA event for collection.

## This Month in Freethought History

### September 6, 1795, Frances Wright was born

Although she started her career as an abolitionist, she later worked to "destroy the slavery of the mind," aka religion. She began making public lectures to counter the views of other religious speakers at the time. She advocated, "Turn your churches into halls of science, exchange your teachers of faith for expounders of nature."

**National****Federal Judge Says Polling Places Can Be In Churches (8/6)**

"A federal judge in Florida has found that having a polling place at a Catholic church does not violate the First Amendment's establishment clause.... Rabinowitz has voted at Emmanuel Catholic Church since March 2001. On Election Day in 2006, he observed a pro-life banner located more than 100 feet from the entrance to the church, and he noticed religious icons, texts and photographs inside the building. Although Rabinowitz said he had not filed an objection previously, he told the court that he felt uncomfortable each time he voted at the church. He said that by using polling places where these items are present, the supervisor of elections endorsed the Catholic faith ... [The] American Humanist Association, which backed Rabinowitz's challenge, was considering appealing the decision."

- [firstamendmentcenter.org](http://firstamendmentcenter.org)

**Federal Judge Accused of Religious Bias (8/13)**

"Fort Lauderdale, Fla., attorney Loring Spolter is accusing U.S. District Judge William Zloch of bias in two employment discrimination cases, citing his deep religious beliefs, and wants the judge removed from the cases. In a 110-page motion for recusal filed last month, Spolter cited Zloch's hiring of several law clerks from Ave Maria Law School, a donation to the Roman Catholic school and his attendance at several junkets for judges sponsored by conservative organizations."

- [law.com](http://law.com)

**Purchase SCFA merchandise**

[www.spacecoastfreethought.org/store.html](http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/store.html)

We have mugs, t-shirts, license plate covers, a Jefferson throw pillow, and our featured item:



The SCFA Bumper Sticker!  
Only \$2.00.

**Quote: H.L. Mencken, born Sept. 12, 1880**

"People say we need religion when what they really mean is we need police."

**Senior Military Officers Appear to Endorse Christian Group (7/27)**

"[The] Pentagon's Office of Inspector General has issued a report concluding that seven senior officers violated military regulations by appearing in [a fundraising film produced by Christian Embassy, a ministry affiliated with Campus Crusade for Christ]. According to the report, released July 27, the officers were filmed during the duty day, in uniform and in identifiable Pentagon locations. Military regulations prohibit officers from endorsing a "non-Federal entity" while in uniform. "Their remarks conferred approval of and support to Christian Embassy," says the report, "and the remarks of some officers implied they spoke for a group of senior military leaders rather than just for themselves." The report is especially critical of former Pentagon Chaplain Col. Ralph Benson for granting Christian Embassy special Pentagon access — and mischaracterizing" the purpose of the filming by saying it was to document the chaplain's ministry rather than to promote Christian Embassy."

- [firstamendmentcenter.org](http://firstamendmentcenter.org)

**Pentagon-affiliated Entertainment Troupe Evangelizes Soldiers (8/8)**

"Operation Straight Up (OSU) [is] an evangelical entertainment troupe that actively proselytizes among active-duty members of the US military. As an official arm of the Defense Department's America Supports You program, OSU plans to mail copies of the controversial apocalyptic video game, Left Behind: Eternal Forces to soldiers serving in Iraq. OSU is also scheduled to embark on a "Military Crusade in Iraq" in the near future. "We feel the forces of heaven have encouraged us to perform multiple crusades that will sweep through this war torn region," OSU declares on its website about its planned trip to Iraq. "We'll hold the only religious crusade of its size in the dangerous land of Iraq."

- [alternet.org](http://alternet.org)

**Join our discussion list** online at  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/SpaceCoastFreethought/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SpaceCoastFreethought/)

**Join SCFA!** Annual membership is \$15 for one, \$25 for a family, and \$10 for seniors and students. Join using our web form at  
[www.spacecoastfreethought.org/donate.html](http://www.spacecoastfreethought.org/donate.html)

**Florida**As St. Lucie sex-ed plan advances, focus on condoms draws fire (8/12)

"A new sex education curriculum that puts a greater focus on AIDS may be ready for consideration by the St. Lucie County School Board this fall ... School officials still are reviewing the high school curriculum, called Get Real About AIDS, and deciding whether to modify any of the material before taking it to the board. No date has been set for board review, but the proposed curriculum has drawn fire from people who say it promotes the use of contraceptives over waiting until marriage and contains "graphic and sexually explicit" material, including instructions for the use of condoms."

– [palmbeachpost.com](http://palmbeachpost.com)

Okeechobee board nears ban on 'sex-based clubs' meeting at schools (8/15)

"The Okeechobee County School Board on Tuesday moved closer to banning what it calls "sex-based clubs" ... But [ACLU attorney Robert Rosenwald] said the board's intent is to attack students who have formed a club to promote tolerance of gays and lesbians, and who have sued the district for keeping the club off school grounds much of last school year ... Rosenwald represents former Okeechobee High School senior Yasmin Gonzalez and the Gay-Straight Alliance of Okeechobee High School, whose members say the school district violated [the Equal Access Act] last school year by not allowing the club to meet on school grounds. ... Attorneys for the district have argued that Principal Toni Wiersma was required by state law to prohibit the club from meeting at the school because it is "sex-based" and Florida statute requires schools to teach abstinence, 'while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage.'" On Tuesday, the school board voted unanimously and without discussion to advertise a policy change that would ban any club that is "sex-based or based upon any sexual grouping, orientation or activity of any kind."

– [palmbeachpost.com](http://palmbeachpost.com)

**Brevard**Brevard Public School board approves sex ed policy (8/15)

"The Brevard County School Board approved a recommendation from Superintendent Richard DiPatri in a 3-2 vote Tuesday night that will add a new guide to the district's sex education curriculum that covers condoms and other birth control. The new lessons will be provided to all students unless their parents sign an "opt-out" form. All outside groups will be banned from teaching sex education lessons. School board members Janice Kershaw and Amy Kneessy voted against the recommendation."

– *Florida Today*

**SCFA Board of Directors**

Dianna Narciso, president  
 Doug Cramer, vice president  
 Toni Sweeney, treasurer  
 Cameo Johnson-Cramer, secretary  
 Steven Brown  
 Mike Sweeney

The board of directors meets monthly to discuss the future of SCFA. We plan meeting agendas, develop and implement advertising strategies, decide on social opportunities for our members, and more.

**Space Coast Freethought Association**

(SCFA) is a nonprofit community of reason-based individuals organized to facilitate social interaction, promote the non-theistic, rationalist viewpoint as a valid contribution to public discourse, reinforce the First Amendment guarantee of separation between government and religion through education and activism, and work in coalition with like-minded organizations where joint action is needed to achieve these goals.

**Quote: Stephen Jay Gould, born Sept. 10, 1941**

"Well, evolution is a theory. It is also a fact. And facts and theories are different things, not rungs in a hierarchy of increasing certainty. Facts are the world's data. Theories are structures of ideas that explain and interpret facts. Facts don't go away when scientists debate rival theories to explain them. Einstein's theory of gravitation replaced Newton's in this century, but apples didn't suspend themselves in midair, pending the outcome. And humans evolved from ape-like ancestors whether they did so by Darwin's proposed mechanism or by some other yet to be discovered."