

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

November 2007

Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 4

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30pm at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will show Jesus Camp, a movie about teaching children how to be dedicated Christian soldiers and "take back America for Christ."

Tuesday, November 6

Don't forget to vote

Here's a link to the sample ballots.

brevardelections.org/g127sbal.htm

Here's a link to the candidates.

brevardelections.org/2007cand.htm

Saturday, November 10

SCFA Garage Sale

Contact us if you have any items to donate.

Sunday, November 11

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

10:00am at Palm Bay Rd. & Stack shopping center.

Saturday, November 17

SCFA Game Night

7:00pm at Steve's house in Palm Bay. Ask for directions. We will also discuss the book Demon Haunted World by Carl Sagan.

Sunday, December 2

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will have a strategic planning meeting for the (alleged) War on Christmas.

Sunday, December 9

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

10:00am at Palm Bay Rd. & Stack shopping center.

Saturday, December 15

SCFA Solstice Party

7:00pm in Palm Bay (RSVP for directions). Join us for food and a white elephant gift exchange (gifts must be used, wrapped, and resell for less than \$5).

Want to keep informed of SCFA events? Join groups.yahoo.com/group/scfa_announce/

SCFA News

Advertising campaign

We're getting ready to start our new advertising campaign. We want to let our community know we're here to help if they there are any church/state violations or if they just want to meet fellow free-thinkers. But advertising takes money, and that's where our members come in. We're looking to raise \$250 to start our campaign to let people know they can come to us if they have a church/state separation problem. The campaign is aimed at parents and will run in the local *Space Coast Parent* magazine. SCFA will also contribute \$250. If you can help, please send donations to our P.O. Box listed below or through our website (click "Join/Donate" on left.)

Sign the virtual wall

We now have ~200 signatures on our wall. Fellow church/state supporters from across the country and Canada have signed our wall. See what they have to say at: spacecoastfreethought.org/brick.html.

We want your stories!

When did you first realize you were an atheist or agnostic? Tell us your story. Please include name (or anonymous) and city/state. Send stories to spacecoastfreethought@yahoo.com.

American's United "First Freedom First"

Sign the petition at any SCFA meeting or the AU website, www.au.org.

This Month in Freethought History



Carl Sagan, born Nov. 9, 1934

It is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.



Printed on recycled paper.

Church-State Update

*A Report on Church-State Legal Issues
Affecting Brevard County Citizens*

National

Federal money redirected from religious group in La. schools (11/2)

'Federal dollars redirected from a group Congress perceived as wanting to teach creationism in Ouachita Parish schools will instead be used on science and technology. Parish schools will receive \$30,000 in federal grants to use in science labs, in addition to \$66,000 to upgrade computers. The money comes from a \$100,000 earmark that U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-La., initially proposed to go to the Louisiana Family Forum. The forum is a biblical-advocacy group that some believe wanted to push creationism in schools. According to the Baton Rouge Advocate, the group was to use the money to "develop a plan to promote better science" in Ouachita Parish. Organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, National Center for Science Education and People for the American Way lobbied for the removal of the forum's earmark.'

- firstamendmentcenter.org

Florida

Gov. Charlie Crist has placed a mezuzah (boxed Jewish scroll) on the door leading into his Capitol office. (10/16)

'Crist's action has drawn the ire of the ACLU, which said it is wrong for the governor to put up any religious symbol in such a public place. "A religious symbol is a religious symbol, whether it's

Christian, Jewish or Muslim," said Howard Simon, executive director of the Florida chapter of the ACLU. "People have the right to put religious symbols on their own property; government's job is to stay neutral. I think what the governor has done is mistakenly given the imprimatur of state government endorsement to a Jewish religious symbol." Crist said in response that he is "celebrating the diversity that is Florida: many religions, many people, many opportunities." ...ACLU's Simon drew a distinction between someone putting up something inside their legislative office and on the door frame leading into the governor's office.'

- miamiherald.com

Orlando Police Chaplain starts 40-night prayer vigil against crime. (10/9)

'Starting Wednesday evening (10/10) and continuing for 40 nights, Wade and his fellow chaplains will join volunteers standing in Parramore Heritage Park, in the heart of one of Orlando's most troubled areas, and pray for the end of crime. ..."There is a fight in the supernatural that is affecting us here in the physical world," he said. "This is a clarion call to people of faith. Let us join together. Let's ask God to change the hearts and minds of men." The event is called Operation Armor All, and it was planned long before Wade's friend Officer Alfred L. Gordon was shot to death in a robbery last week.'

- orlandosentinel.com

Oscelola County Commissioners under fire for evoking Jesus. (10/19)

'A three-page letter from Americans United cited many examples of Christian religious prayer from board meetings over the last 2½ years, including such comments as "For it's in Christ's name that I pray" and "We pray all of these things in Christ's name." The watchdog group says it has received complaints. The letter urges the Osceola County commission to "consider ceasing the prayers altogether," arguing that the practice of prayer in meetings is unconstitutional. ... Despite the complaints, Commissioner Paul Owen said he will continue to openly pray in Jesus' name. "I'm not trying to be contentious. It's just my faith. I feel like, in America, I should have the right to express my faith."

- wftv.com

Purchase SCFA merchandise

www.spacecoastfreethought.org/store.html

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



"Hug me, I'm an atheist!" bear
Only \$14.99.

Previous Events

Sunday, October 7

SCFA Monthly Meeting

This month Doug led the discussion on the "War on Halloween," the movement to rename or remove the holiday because of its occult or pagan influences. We find it curious that some of those who object to removing religious symbols from Christmas are quite happy to remove archaic religious symbols that nobody really believes anymore from Halloween. However, we found most people to be unaware of this war, since we still saw plenty of evidence of people celebrating Halloween. Thanks to all who attended, especially those in costume!



Sunday, October 14

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

Picked up lots of trash, but nothing too gross.

Sunday, October 21

Orlando Atheist Meetup

We attended our neighboring atheist group to hear a talk by Lori Lipman Brown. She discussed her experiences as a lobbyist in D.C. (treated very well and with respect) as well as her time on Bill O'Reilly (gets lots of hate mail afterwards.) To learn more about her efforts, visit www.secular.org.

Join our discussion list online at 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



Winter Solstice Party

Saturday, December 15,
7:00pm
RSVP for directions.

The halo is made by sunlight shining through millions of ice crystals. -- NASA.

Saturday, October 20

Freethought Day at Disney - Magic Kingdom, FL

20+ freethinkers wearing lime green makes for some pretty photos. But it is like herding cats; it was very difficult to get everyone together at the same time!



The event was also attended by Lori Lipman Brown, the Secular America, director of the Coalition for



SCFA Board of Directors

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

Quote: Anne Nicol Gaylor , born November 25, 1926



Ms. Gaylor is the founder of FFRF (Freedom From Religion Foundation)
"There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds." "Nothing fails like prayer."

Volunteering & Activism

What you can do to help strengthen the wall of separation between religion and government and put a positive face on atheism.

Report problems

Let us know if there is a church/state separation problem in Brevard County. We can help you determine the best course of action. We are also an associate member of American's United and would be happy to help you work with them if necessary.

Watch for problems

Watch school board and city council meetings. Either attend in person or watch on cable television. If you regularly watch a particular meeting, let us know so we don't duplicate effort.

TV schedule: www.brevardcounty.us/scgtv/schedule.cfm

School Board archive: www.brevard.k12.fl.us/fp-includes/events/archive.html

Write letters to the editor

Respond to a negative letter or article, or write one about whatever's on your mind. Let the rationalist point of view be heard and let people know we exist. Remember to:

- Keep to one point - don't ramble
- Keep it polite - people often respond better
- Keep it accurate - quote statistics and sources
- Keep it positive - don't just say what's wrong, offer solutions

Florida Today

www.floridatoday.com/forms/services/letters.htm

They will contact you to confirm your letter.

Distribute literature

Most public libraries allow brochures. Just check with the libraries, who will need to approve the brochure firsts. If you would like to adopt a library, let us know and we'll either send you our brochures or you can print them off yourself. If you know of another place that allows brochures, please let us know.

Quote: Marie Curie, born November 7, 1867



"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

Virtual wall

Sign our virtual wall of separation, spacecoastfreethought.org/brick.html

Book drive

Bring your used freethought books to any SCFA event for collection.

Adopt-a-Road

Help us clean up Palm Bay Rd. We meet most months in front of the old Atlanta Bread Co. on the second Sunday of the month. Let people know freethinkers care about their community. Schedule: spacecoastfreethought.org/adoptaroad.html

Tell people you're a freethinker

Wear shirts and buttons that espouse your views. Put a bumper sticker on your car. Put your favorite freethought quote or website in your email signature. Tell your friends and family. Let people know that freethinkers are all around them.



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.