

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

December 2007

Upcoming Events

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).

Saturday, December 22

Winter Solstice, 1:08am EST

Celebrate the original reason for the season. scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/WinterSolstice.html

Sunday, January 6

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will discuss what we can do to further the cause of separation between church and state.

Sunday, January 13

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

Tuesday, January 29

Presidential Primary and Special Elections

The national primaries plus a Brevard Florida House seat is up for reelection. brevardelections.org/

Sunday, February 3

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will celebrate Darwin's birthday.

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



John Morley, born Dec. 24, 1838

An author and statesman, his trademark was to spell "God" with a small "g."
"Where it is a duty to worship the sun, it is pretty sure to be a crime to examine the laws of heat."



Printed on recycled paper.

Church-State Update

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

National

Uproar ensues from VA memo on flag-folding ceremonies (11/1)

The Veterans Affairs Department moved this week to clarify a directive limiting the use of a religious recitation at flag-folding ceremonies. At issue is the "13-fold recital" sometimes read by members of an honor guard as an American flag is folded at a veteran's graveside. The complaint focused not on the content of the recital but on an error in the text which identified Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as gods. The complaint prompted the VA to focus on the recital and determine that it shouldn't be used unless specifically requested by family members. "The key is that the family has to request this and we would acquiesce to any family's particular religious views and/or traditions."

- firstamendmentcenter.org

House passes first-ever bill banning job discrimination against gays (11/8)

The House of Representatives passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Thirty-five Republicans joined 200 Democrats in voting for the measure, which prohibits most employers from discriminating on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation. The bill contains broad exceptions for churches and most other religious employers, as well as small businesses and the military. The White House had previously indicated President Bush would veto an earlier version of ENDA. It was not clear whether Bush would also veto the current version.

- www.abpnews.com

Supreme Court won't hear appeal from faith-based group (11/26)

The Supreme Court today declined to get involved in a dispute between Michigan officials and a faith-based program for troubled youths. The Michigan Family Independence Agency imposed a moratorium on Teen Ranch Inc. from participating in a government-financed program for abused, neglected and delinquent children, saying the ranch coerced the 11- to 17-year-olds into religious activities.

- firstamendmentcenter.org

Justices won't take up dispute over Texas Bible monument (11/27)

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review lower court rulings that a monument outside a courthouse featuring the Bible should be removed and that Harris County must pay the legal fees for the woman who sued over the monument. Harris County Attorney Mike Stafford had asked the high court to vacate a ruling by a U.S. District Judge, who sided with a woman who claimed a monument featuring the King James Version of the Bible was offensive.

- firstamendmentcenter.org

Florida

Polk School Board Leans Toward Inclusion of Intelligent Design (11/20)

A majority of Polk County School Board members say they support teaching intelligent design in addition to evolution in public schools. Board members Tim Harris, Margaret Lofton and Hazel Sellers said they oppose proposed science standards for Florida schools that lists evolution and biological diversity as one of the "big ideas" that students need to know for a well-grounded science education. Board member Kay Fields said last week she wants intelligent design taught in science classes in addition to evolution. The board's majority opinion is at odds with many in Florida's scientific community who strongly support the new, more rigorous science standards, and say intelligent design lacks scientific credibility.

- theledger.com

College: Pet Insurance Yes, Gay Partner Insurance No (11/27)

After rejecting a proposal earlier this year to provide health benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of its employees Palm Beach Community College has decided to offer workers insurance for their pets. Partner benefits would not cost the college any additional money. It pays only the premiums for employees. Under the current scheme workers pay the added premium for spouses or children. The domestic partner proposal would have mirrored that - making gay and lesbian employees responsible for paying the added premium costs.

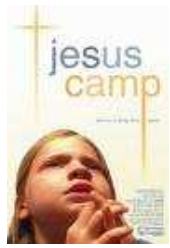
- 365gay.com

Previous Events

Sunday, November 4

SCFA Monthly Meeting

This month we watched the movie *Jesus Camp*, a frightening look at evangelical Christians and some of their efforts to convert young children into soldiers of God. One scary part is when the director of the camp talks about how Islam is creating soldiers to kill us with automatic weapons and bombs, so she needed to counter their efforts using similar tactics. The only difference was her religion was true. On the lighter side, we also learned that you could be washed free of your sins with Nestle bottle water.



Tuesday, November 6

Election Day

For election results visit brevardelections.org/g127.htm.

Saturday, November 10

SCFA Garage Sale

We raised over \$200 and got rid of a lot of clutter.

Sunday, November 11

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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.



Quote: *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert, born December 12, 1821

"And I can't admit of an old boy God who takes walks in his garden with a cane in his hand, who lodges his friends in the belly of whales, dies uttering a cry, and rises again after three days; things absurd in themselves, and completely opposed, moreover, to all physical laws, which proves to us, by the way, that priests have always wallowed in squalid ignorance, and tried to drag whole nations down after them."

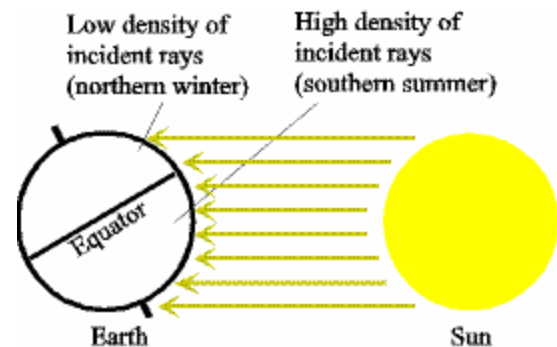
Purchase SCFA merchandise

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.



Relationship between sun and moon during the winter solstice.

- religioustolerance.org.

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.

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

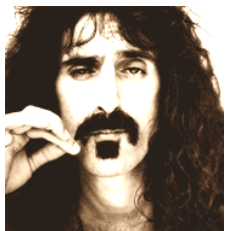
www.floridatoday.com/forms/services/letters.htm

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: Frank Zappa, born December 21, 1940



"Anybody who wants religion is welcome to it, as far as I'm concerned--I support your right to enjoy it. However, I would appreciate it if you exhibited more respect for the rights of those people who do not wish to share your dogma, rapture, or necrodestination."

Virtual wall

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

Book drive

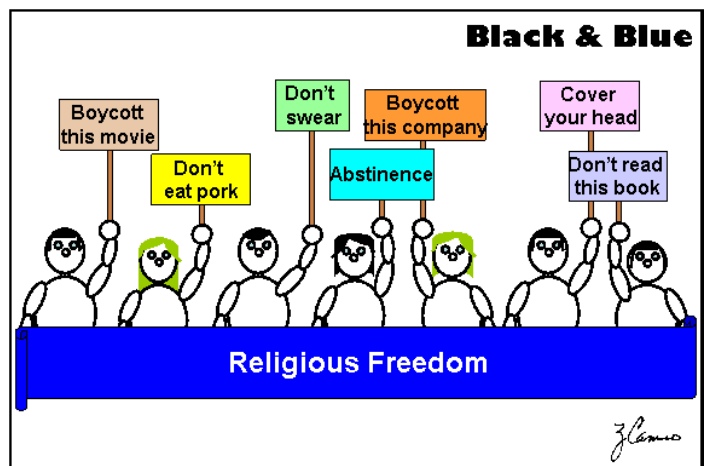
Bring your used freethought books to any SCFA event for collection.

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.