

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

January 2008

Upcoming Events

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.

Sunday, February 10

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

Tuesday, February 19

Florida Board of Education vote on Florida Science Standards

flascience.org/wp/

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

This Month in Freethought History

Martin Luther King, Jr., born Jan. 15, 1929



"Softmindedness often invades religion. This is why religion has sometimes rejected new truth with a dogmatic passion. Through edicts and bulls, inquisitions and excommunications, the church has attempted to prorogue truth

and place an impenetrable stone wall in the path of the truth-seeker. "

SCFA News

Palm Bay City Council Invocations

It has come to SCFA's attention that the Palm Bay City Council has been starting their meetings with a religious (usually Christian) prayer. SCFA has contacted American's United about this issue, and we are currently awaiting their guidance on the matter.

Website changes

Expect some changes on our website in the near future. We're updating it to make it more informative, more interactive, and more user-friendly.

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.

American's United "First Freedom First"

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



Printed on recycled paper.

Church-State Update

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

National

"In God We Trust" moves to front of dollar coins due to complaints (12/26)

'The national motto "In God We Trust" will move from the edge of new dollar coins honoring U.S. presidents to the front or back of the currency. A provision in the \$555 billion domestic spending bill for 2008, which President Bush signed into law on Dec. 26, calls for the change to take place "as soon as is practicable." Greg Hernandez, a spokesman for the U.S. Mint, said the change will occur in 2009 ... [C]ritics complained about the placement and thought the words belonged on the front or back of the coins instead. "There have been people who either have e-mailed their comments to our Web site, called us or contacted their representatives," Hernandez said.'

- pewforum.org

"Democrats Lose Fight on Family Planning Aid (12/17)

'Unable to override a promised veto, Democrats have backed down on their insistence that the 2008 foreign aid budget reverse President Bush's ban on providing aid to family planning groups abroad that offer abortions. A measure to ease restrictions on international aid was stripped this weekend from a \$500 billion-plus government-wide spending bill, which includes some \$35 billion for the State Department and foreign aid programs... Democrats blamed the White House for threatening to block the bill if it included the measure, and Republicans who agreed to back the president. "This dogmatic adherence to an illogical position diminishes our influence around the world and prevents us from working effectively to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and unintended pregnancies and reduce abortions," said Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., chairwoman of the House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee. Since taking office in 2001, Bush has prohibited any assistance to organizations overseas that perform or promote abortion.'

- ap.org

National

U. S. House of Representatives votes to "Recognize the Importance of Christmas and the Christian Faith" (12/11)

'H.R. 847, passed by a vote of 372-9, states that the House of Representatives "(1) recognizes the Christian faith as one of the great religions of the world; (2) expresses continued support for Christians in the US and worldwide; (3) acknowledges the international religious and historical importance of Christmas and the Christian faith; (4) acknowledges and supports the role played by Christians and Christianity in the founding of the United States and in the formation of the western civilization; (5) rejects bigotry and persecution directed against Christians, both in the United States and worldwide; and (6) expresses its deepest respect to American Christians and Christians throughout the world.'"

- govtrack.us

AU Asks IRS To Investigate Falwell's Liberty University For Endorsement Of Mike Huckabee (12/4)

'Jerry Falwell Jr. violated federal tax law by using school resources to endorse Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, Americans United told the IRS. AU noted that Falwell hosted the candidate at Liberty University and then sent an email message on Liberty University letterhead endorsing Huckabee. In a "Liberty News Alert" Falwell wrote, "Recently, Governor Mike Huckabee called to brief me on the progress of his campaign for the presidency. I invited the Governor to speak to the Liberty University students in Convocation on November 28. He graciously accepted. I was so impressed with the Governor's sincerity and his positions on the issues that are important to conservative Christians that I personally endorsed Governor Huckabee before he left Lynchburg.... My father strongly supported Governor Huckabee when no one thought that he had any chance to succeed in the presidential race. I believe with all my heart that, if my father had witnessed Governor Huckabee's surge in the polls and his ascension to first place in the Iowa polls, he would have endorsed Governor Huckabee without hesitation." The alert was accompanied by an article from a university-run online publication implying that Huckabee is God's candidate.'

- au.org

Church-State Update, con't

Florida

Gay marriage ban headed for statewide vote this November (12/18)

'A proposed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage is headed directly to the November ballot — setting the stage for a vigorous battle between gay rights advocates and opponents...Florida law already forbids gay marriage, but Stemberger says writing a ban into the state constitution is the only way to ensure a permanent prohibition. People who oppose the measure, however, believe it is a covert political tool designed to bring ultra-conservatives to the polls in a presidential election year.'

– *sun-sentinel.com*

Evolution in Florida New Science Standards Update (1/3)

There are two public hearings in January (last one: 1/7 in Fort Lauderdale), then the Florida Board of Education will vote on February 19.

– *myfoxorlando.com*

Previous Events

Sunday, December 2

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We came up with a strategy to help destroy Christmas. (OK, we just watch a short video about the War on Christmas and how it only seems to exist in Bill O'Reilly's mind.)

Sunday, December 9

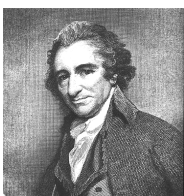
SCFA Adopt-A-Road

Only 2 folks showed up.

Saturday, December 15

SCFA Solstice Party

We had a lot of food and drink (have you noticed we do that a lot?) and a white elephant gift exchange. I hope the person who got the Peeps Easter lights really enjoys them!



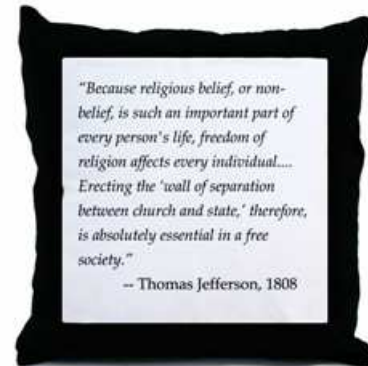
Quote: Thomas Paine, born January 29, 1737

"I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his own opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies another this right makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it."

Purchase SCFA merchandise

www.spacecoastfreethought.org/store.html

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



18"x18" Jefferson throw pillow
Only \$17.99.

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
spacecoastfreethought.org/donate.html

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.

If you have any input for the SCFA board of directors, please contact us at
info@spacecoastfreethought.org or use the contact form at our website, spacecoastfreethought.org.

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: W.C. Fields, born Jan. 29, 1880



"Prayers never bring anything. . . . They may bring solace to the sap, the bigot, the ignorant, the aboriginal, and the lazy--but to the enlightened it is the same as asking Santa Claus to bring you something for Xmas."

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.

Atheist New Year Resolutions

"Self-Reflection and Introspection:

It's easy to be skeptical and critical of others' ideas, but harder to exercise the same scrutiny of things we already believe. If we engage in self-reflection and introspection, we can skeptically examine the ideas we have accepted uncritically for so long. If our own ideas can't stand up to the same criticism which we apply to others' ideas, we're behaving hypocritically. The better we understand ourselves and why we believe things, the better we might understand others as well." - Austin Cline, *atheism.about.com/od/aboutatheism/p/GodlessNewYear.htm*

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.