

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

February 2008

Upcoming Events

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/

Sunday, March 2

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 in the park on Fee Ave. (just east of Babcock.) Join us outside for our Eostre Egg Hunt.

Sunday, March 9

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

Sunday, April 6

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will discuss the Legal Basis for Church/State Separation.

Sunday, April 13

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

Sunday, May 1

SCFA Monthly Meeting & National Day of Reason Dinner

This month's meeting will be held during the National Day of Reason Dinner.

Sunday, May 8

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

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

SCFA News

New SCFA President & Vice-President

Doug Cramer is our new SCFA President. Doug used to be the Vice-President, and that responsibility now goes to Bob Long. Congratulations and good luck to both of them.

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 monitoring the city council to gather more information on their practices.

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.

This Month in Freethought History



Charles Darwin, born February 12, 1809

"It appears to me (whether rightly or wrongly) that direct arguments against christianity and theism produce hardly any effect on the public; and freedom of thought is best promoted by the gradual illumination of men's minds which follows from the advance of science."



Printed on recycled paper.

Church-State Update

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

National

Americans United Urges IRS To Investigate Two Religious Right Groups For Biased Voter Guides (1/31)

"In complaints filed ... with the IRS, Americans United charged that voter guides produced by the American Family Association and WallBuilders are clearly designed to promote Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee. The guides, posted on the groups' Web sites, list the Republican candidates and their alleged stands on a range of issues, such as support for a human life amendment, "traditional marriage," "business freedom" and "moral education" and opposition to "gay pride." Only Huckabee is assigned a "yes" stance on all of the issues. Said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, "These guides are not voter education, they're partisan propaganda. AU's Lynn said the organizations seem to have given the candidates no opportunity to respond to these issues and instead assigned stances based on the organizations' own "research" and subjective analysis."

- au.org

Bush Calls For Faith-Based Initiative To Be Made Permanent (1/29)

"Bush ... called on Congress to make his faith-based proposals permanent. Congress has refused to adopt key parts of the plan because it would roll back civil rights laws barring religion-based hiring discrimination and open the door to publicly funded preaching. Bush has implemented some provisions of the faith-based initiative through executive orders that the next president may overturn. Said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director, "Bush's 'faith-based' initiative ... undercut civil rights laws and jeopardized important religious liberty safeguards... "The faith-based initiative did nothing to help the disadvantaged," Lynn continued, "and it was often used to advance partisan politics."

- au.org



Submit Your Darwin Day eCards to Richard Dawkins

From richarddawkins.net: "February 12th is Darwin Day, and we thought it might be fun to ask you to create web 'e-cards' to celebrate the day. We will then post our favorites to the site for everyone to use. If you'd like to send in a submission, please email it to darwincards@richarddawkins.net"

National

Bush Calls For Grants That Would Finance Private Schooling (1/29)

"President Bush's call for a \$300 million program called Pell Grants for Kids is the latest effort by his administration to channel tax dollars to low-income parents to help them send their children to private or religious schools. His proposal, in his State of the Union address Monday night, was denounced by some top Democratic lawmakers and teachers' union officials as a national "voucher" program that would only drain resources from urban public schools that in many cases are in need of money."
- pewforum.org

Americans United Cautions Southern Baptist Convention About Partisan Politicking (1/24)

"Americans United for Separation of Church and State has cautioned the top official of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) that using his denominational news agency to oppose Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani raises federal tax law issues. Americans United acted after learning of a Jan. 21 analysis distributed by Baptist Press, the SBC's official news agency. The analysis stated in part, "Page said he agrees with James Dobson of Focus on the Family that a united front against Giuliani is needed and that 'evangelicals can realistically defeat him.' Even a ticket with Giuliani on top and Huckabee for vice president 'would be problematic for Dr. Dobson and myself,' Page said."

- au.org



Darwin Day Celebration

To learn more about Charles Darwin, evolution, and "Darwin Day," visit the Darwin Day Celebration website, sponsored by the Institute for Humanist Studies, www.darwinday.org.

Church-State Update, con't

National

Senator Reiterates Call for Televangelists Records (1/18)

"With still little cooperation from ministries that have been asked to turn over their financial statements for investigation, Sen. Charles Grassley plans to send out another round of letters requesting that they comply. Only two – Joyce Meyer Ministries and Kenneth Copeland Ministries – of the six ministries under investigation have turned over their documents last month and only Meyer has pledged full cooperation. The probe began in November after ministry watchdogs alleged opulent spending and possible abuse of their nonprofit status. Besides Meyer and Copeland, Grassley sent letters to Paula and Randy White, Creflo Dollar, Eddie Long and Benny Hinn – all of whom are popular televangelists whose ministries each collect tens of millions of dollars in donations each year. Grassley requested cooperation from the ministries, asking that they provide financial records as well as responses to a wide range of questions regarding their personal and organizational finances."

– *au.org*

Florida

Evolution in Florida New Science Standards Update

Last public hearing: 2/11, 10am-3:30pm at Orlando Airport Hyatt.

Florida Board of Education vote: 2/19.

Previous Events

Sunday, January 6

SCFA Monthly Meeting

We were supposed to discuss what we could do to further the cause of separation between church and state. Instead we got a little sidetracked, sorry.

Sunday, January 13

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

Dirty, dirty road.



Quote: Galileo Galilei, born February 15, 1564

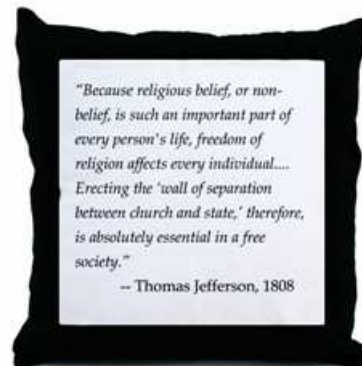
"It is surely harmful to souls to make it a heresy to believe what is proved."

"To assert that the earth revolves around the sun is as erroneous as to claim that Jesus was not born of a virgin." Hey, you can't argue with that logic!
[Cardinal Bellarmino, speaking against Galileo]

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

Doug Cramer, president
Bob Long, 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.

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.



The "Darwin Fish" has evolved!
(from evolvefish.com)



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.

Quote: Frederick Douglass, born Feb. 14, 1818



"Those who profess to favor freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

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.