

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

August 2008

Upcoming Events

Sunday, August 3

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Melbourne Public Library on Fee Ave. We will be showing a **The Four Horsemen** (round table discussion with Richard Dawkins, Daniel C. Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens.)

Sunday, September 7

SCFA Monthly Meeting -

LOCATION CHANGE: 10am-noon, House of Joe, 1220 W. New Haven (just east of the mall).

We will discuss many of the new freethought books.



Sunday, October 5

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Cocoa Public Library.

October 10 - 12

FFRF Convention - Chicago

Saturday, October 18

Freethought Day at Disney

This year we are going to Epcot!
spacecoastfreethought.org/disney/

Want to keep informed of SCFA events?

Join atheists.meetup.com/569/

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.

SCFA News

Location Change

SCFA will be adopting a more traditional "meetup" style. Instead of formal presentation in the library, we will have informal meetings at various restaurants and coffee houses in town. This should help facilitate discussion and promote a sense of community with our fellow freethinkers. Of course every meeting we will still keep you updated on local church/state-related news. If you have any suggestions for where or when to have our meetings, please let us know.

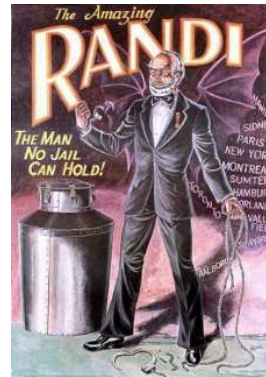
City Council and County Commission Invocations

We've contacted American's United and they are looking into the situation.

Sign the virtual wall

We now have ~300 signatures on our wall, including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. See what they have to say at: spacecoastfreethought.org/brick.html.

This Month in Freethought History



August 7, 1928, James Randi was born.

Magician, author, and skeptic, the Amazing Randi debunks the paranormal for a living. You can read about his recent debunkings at: www.randi.org.

"No amount of belief makes something a fact."

"If Uri Geller bends spoons with divine powers, then he's doing it the hard way."



Freethought Merchandise

This month's item:

James Randi Doll
www.randi.org/joom/jref-store/8.html



Church-State Update

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

National

Government wants atheist soldier's lawsuit dismissed (7/10)

"An atheist soldier who claims the military violates religious freedoms should have complained through the chain of command instead of civilian courts, the government said in arguing that his lawsuit should be dismissed...Hall alleges that while serving in Iraq, Army Reserve Maj. Freddy J. Welborn violated his religious rights when Hall tried to hold a meeting with other atheists and freethinkers. The lawsuit alleges Welborn prevented the meeting and threatened to take action against Hall. Pedro Irigonegaray, a Topeka attorney representing Hall and the foundation, said the soldier couldn't complain to commanders because of fear of reprisal."— *AP*

Army Base Coerces Soldier Trainees To Attend Church Services (7/23)

"Americans United for Separation of Church and State ... asked the U.S. Department of Defense to investigate an Army base's practice of coercing soldiers to attend church services during their training. Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri offers "Free Day Away" as one of only two opportunities for soldiers to leave the base during eight weeks of vigorous Army training...[T]rainees are picked up by a bus sent from the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Lebanon, Mo., to participate in a day full of recreational activities, followed by dinner and a required church service. Trainees are given the impression the event is sponsored by the Army and they must attend. If they do not attend, they have to remain on the base and continue with training, while those who attend the event have a break for the day."— *au.org*

Part of Florida's Pledge of Allegiance law struck down (7/23)

"The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta agreed last week with a federal judge [2006 ruling] in West

National con't

Palm Beach that a Florida law requiring all "civilians" in a school to stand for the pledge of allegiance is unconstitutional. In reversing another part of Judge Ryskamp's finding, the federal court said that it is constitutional for schools to punish students who refuse to say the pledge. Except the schools can't punish students who have parental permission not to say the pledge." — *Palm Beach Post*

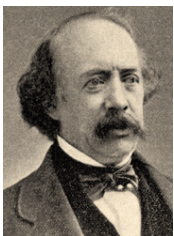
Bush Administration drafts new requirements on federal health requirements (7/15)

"The Bush administration wants to require all recipients of aid under federal health programs to certify that they will not refuse to hire nurses and other providers who object to abortion and even certain types of birth control... Mary Jane Gallagher, president of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, which represents providers, said, "The proposed definition of abortion [any of the various procedures...that results in the termination of the life of a human being in utero between conception and natural birth, whether before or after implantation.] is so broad that it would cover many types of birth control, including oral contraceptives and emergency contraception." — *NY Times*

Florida

University of Florida ordered to recognize Christian fraternity

"A federal appeals court has ordered University of Florida officials to recognize a Christian fraternity... According to the lawsuit, the fraternity has been denied official recognition because only men are allowed to join, which the university considers sex discrimination. The fraternity also hasn't been allowed to join the off-campus system of fraternities and sororities because its rules bar religious discrimination. Beta Upsilon Chi requires its members to be Christians." — *AP*



Quote: Horace Seaver, born August 25, 1810

"Might can never make that right which is not right in itself... We have the same natural right to entertain, to express, and to disseminate our Infidel opinions, that our Christian neighbor has to promulgate and advocate his. And if all our neighbors should be of one opinion, and we alone should differ with them, the case ... is not at all altered. They would have the power, but they would have no more right to injure us than we should have to injure them."