

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

September 2008

Upcoming Events

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.

September 25 - 28

Atheist Alliance International Convention

Long Beach, California

www.atheistalliance.org/conventions/2008/

October 3 - 4

Skeptics Society Conference

Pasadena, California

<http://origins.skeptic.com/index.php>

Sunday, October 5

SCFA Monthly Meeting

1:30 at Cocoa Public Library.

October 10 - 12

FFRF Convention

Chicago, Illinois

ffrf.org/events/2008/

Saturday, October 11

Progressive Fest

Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Ave.,
11am-4pm (SCFA will have a table there)

spacecoastprogressivealliance.org/

Saturday, October 18

Freethought Day at Disney

This year we are going to Epcot!

freethoughtdayatdisney.org

Sunday, November 2

SCFA Monthly Meeting

Location: TBD

Tuesday, November 4

General Elections

Get out and vote!

Want to keep informed of SCFA events?

Join atheists.meetup.com/569/

SCFA News

Online Discussion Group Has Moved

In an effort to consolidate some of our venues, the online discussion group has moved over to meetup.com. It works very similarly to our old yahoo group, and you can choose to receive emails of the discussion or view them on the meetup site. To write to the discussion group, send your email to atheists-569@meetup.com.

City Council and County Commission Invocations

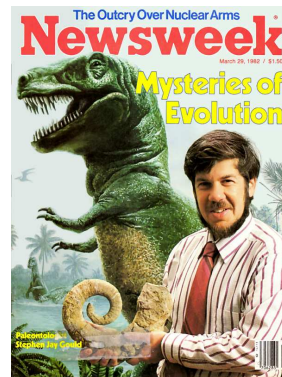
We've contacted American's United and they are looking into the situation.

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

Sept. 10, 1941, Stephen J. Gould was born.



"Well, evolution is a theory. It is also a fact. And facts and theories are different things, not rungs in a hierarchy of increasing certainty. Facts are the world's data. Theories are structures of ideas that explain and interpret facts. Facts don't go away when scientists debate rival theories to explain them. Einstein's theory of gravitation replaced Newton's in this century, but apples didn't suspend themselves in midair, pending the outcome."



Win a 7-day, 6-night trip for two to the Galapagos Islands and Ecuador.
Raffle tickets only \$50 each.
www.freethoughtflorida.com/cruise.html



Church-State Update

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

National

Fundamentalist Group Drops Public Funding Windfall After AU Protest (8/22)

"A fundamentalist Christian group that claims to help young people overcome drug and alcohol addiction through Bible study and prayer has given up a federal grant after Americans United (AU) protested the funding. Attorneys with AU wrote a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in June, noting that a \$50,000 grant to Teen Challenge of Kentucky raised serious constitutional issues. The money was allocated through the Compassion Capital Fund, a special program created as part of President George W. Bush's "faith-based" initiative. Teen Challenge requires participants to take part in prayer, worship, Bible study and other religious activities. Program participants must sign a "Civil Rights Waiver" in which each surrenders the right to "exercis[e] the religion of my choice." Applicants for the program are required to describe their Christian faith and agree to conduct themselves in a "Christ-like manner." The organization vows to offer "deliverance from addiction through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and practical application of Biblical principles." Public funding of such sectarian activities, AU asserted, would clearly violate the First Amendment. In response to Americans United's letter, an official with HHS wrote to say that Teen Challenge "voluntarily terminated" its participation in the program." - AU

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.



Quote: H.L. Mencken, born September 12, 1880

"People say we need religion when what they really mean is we need police."

"The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it."

"If we assume that man actually does resemble God, then we are forced into the impossible theory that God is a coward, and idiot, and a bounder."

National con't

"Contraception as abortion" provision left out of proposed new federal health regulations, but problems remain (9/4)

The Bush Administration is proposing changes to current federal health regulations that include a "conscience clause", which states that medical organizations who receive federal funding cannot "require any individual to perform or assist in the performance of any part of a health service program or research activity funded by the Department if such service or activity would be contrary to his religious beliefs or moral convictions." The previous draft included a definition of abortion that would include most methods of contraception including "the pill," which was dropped from the current proposal. However, the "conscience clause" would still allow staff to refuse to respect end-of-life decisions, treat homosexuals, or provide emergency contraception, vaccinations, psychiatric care, or any other treatment that they deemed to be against their beliefs.

Florida

Constitutional Amendments 7 and 9 Rejected by Florida Supreme Court (9/3)

Amendment 7 would have repealed a provision that bars state financial aid to churches and other religious organizations. Amendment 9 would have removed the requirement for the state to provide a uniform system of public schools. Together, they would have allowed the institution of school vouchers.

The ruling reversed a previous decision by the 2nd Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. Indications are that they did so because the amendments were misleading.