

# FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

November 2008

## Upcoming Events

### Sunday, November 2

#### SCFA Monthly Meeting

Location: Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave. Melbourne. We will be discussing the upcoming elections.

### Tuesday, November 4

#### General Elections

Get out and vote!

### Sunday, November 9

#### SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

### Sunday, December 7

#### SCFA Monthly Meeting

Location: Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave. Melbourne. We will be having a multi-cultural holiday celebration.

### Sunday, December 14

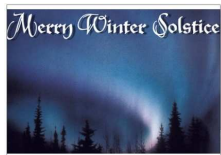
#### SCFA Adopt-A-Road

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

## Want to keep informed of SCFA events?

Join [atheists.meetup.com/569/](http://atheists.meetup.com/569/)

## Winter Solstice Shopping - December 21



[shop.cafepress.com/solstice](http://shop.cafepress.com/solstice)



[atheists.org/catalogue/shop](http://atheists.org/catalogue/shop)

## SCFA News

### Voter's Guide Online

The SCFA voter's guide is currently being updated with information on the November elections. Check it out often for the most current updates on the church/state separation positions of the candidates in both local and national elections.

[spacecoastfreethought.org/voterguide.html](http://spacecoastfreethought.org/voterguide.html)

### 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](http://spacecoastfreethought.org/brick.html).

**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](http://spacecoastfreethought.org/donate.html)

## This Month in Freethought History



### Carl Sagan, born Nov. 9, 1934

"The suppression of uncomfortable ideas may be common in religion or in politics, but it is not the path to knowledge, and there's no place for it in the endeavor of science. We do not know beforehand where fundamental insights will arise from about our mysterious and lovely solar system. The history of our study of our solar system shows us clearly that accepted and conventional ideas are often wrong, and that fundamental insights can arise from the most unexpected sources."

## Winter Solstice Shopping - December 21



[ffrf.org/shop/solstice](http://ffrf.org/shop/solstice)



## Church-State Update

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

### National

#### 11th Circuit Court upholds Georgia county's pre-meeting prayers(10/28)

'A federal appeals court yesterday upheld a suburban Atlanta county's practice of allowing clergy to open meetings with Christian prayers, saying the federal judiciary should not wade into the practice of editing prayer. The three-judge panel's 2-1 decision rejected a challenge by the [ACLU] that sought to ban Cobb County officials from starting county commission meetings with invitational prayers from invited clergy. County officials said clergy from all faiths are allowed to deliver the prayers, but ACLU lawyers contended the invocations are "overtly Christian prayers" that send a message that the religion is sponsored by the county. The ruling, written by 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Bill Pryor, concluded that courts should avoid parsing the content of prayers as long as they're not used to advance a particular religion or disparage another faith. "Whether invocations of 'Lord of Lords' or 'the God of Abraham, Issac, and Mohammed' are 'sectarian' is best left to theologians, not courts of law," read the 42-page opinion in *Pelphrey v. Cobb County*. In a dissent, U.S. District Judge Donald Middelbrooks said he, too, was uneasy at the prospect of the judiciary editing prayer. But he said allowing county commissions to sponsor prayer presents a "similar, although less direct, danger." "When state sponsored prayer is a perfunctory and sterile exercise marking the beginning of a commission agenda, religion becomes the casualty," he wrote.' - [firstamendmentcenter.org](http://firstamendmentcenter.org)

### SCFA Board of Directors

Doug Cramer, president  
 Bob Long, vice-president  
 Cameo Johnson-Cramer, secretary  
 Steven Brown  
 Mike Sweeney



### Quote: Mark Twain, November 30, 1835

"Concentration of power in a political machine is bad; and an Established Church is only a political machine; it was invented for that; it is nursed, cradled, preserved for that; it is an enemy to human liberty, and does no good which it could not better do in a split-up and scattered condition." -- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

### National continued

#### Kansas atheist soldier dropping lawsuit (10/10)

'1 of 2 atheist soldiers at Fort Riley who has sued the Department of Defense over alleged religious freedom violations is dropping his case. The head of the Military Religious Freedom foundations says attorneys for Pfc. Jeremy Hall will file papers Friday in federal court in Kansas to end Hall's case, citing his plans to leave the Army next spring. Hall and the foundation filed a lawsuit in September 2007. Hall claims a higher-ranking officer prevented him from holding a meeting while deployed in Iraq. A second lawsuit was filed by another Fort Riley soldier last month. That soldier claims his rights were violated by being forced to listen to Christian prayers at mandatory formations.' - [nebraska.tv](http://nebraska.tv)

#### FFRF files suit over National Day of Prayer (10/6)

'The Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) has filed suit against President Bush over the federal law designating a National Day of Prayer...The FFRF maintains the law violates the First Amendment's prohibition against an official establishment of religion...The recent suit charges that the National Day of Prayer Task Force has ties to James Dobson's Focus on the Family, a nonprofit evangelical organization. Shirley Dobson is James Dobson's wife. The task force also rents office space in the Focus on the Family headquarters.' - [pewforum.org](http://pewforum.org)

### 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.