

FREELY SPEAKING

Space Coast Freethought Association

February 2009

Upcoming Events

Sunday, February 1

SCFA Monthly Meeting

Location: Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave. Melbourne.

Topic: Role of atheists in charities

Sunday, February 8

SCFA Adopt-A-Road

10:00am at Palm Bay Rd. & Stack in Amscot parking lot (near Stack entrance).

Thursday, February 12

Happy 200th Birthday to Charles Darwin!

Friday, February 27

Why People Believe Weird Things - Dr. Terry Oswalt

8pm Auditorium in Olin Engineering Complex, FIT. Also, meet for dinner before lecture at 6:30pm at Middle Eastern Aromas (shopping center on Babcock in front of FIT).

cos.fit.edu/pss/aapls.php

Sunday, March 1

SCFA Monthly Meeting

Location: Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave. Melbourne, small conference room by reference desk

Topic: Would there be churches if no one believed in god?

Want to keep informed of SCFA events?

Join atheists.meetup.com/569/

9 in '09 (www.au.org)

Americans United has a "9 in '09" project to press the new administration to repair Bush's damage:

1. Restrict Faith-Based Funding
2. Ban Faith-Based Job Bias
3. Select Good Judges
4. Reform Justice Department
5. Stop School Vouchers
6. Protect Military Personnel
7. Defend Sound Science
8. Resist Church Politicking
9. Oppose Sectarian Symbolism



This meeting's talking points

(Role of atheists in charities)



- Should atheists give to charities if there is no one commanding it?
- Should atheists give to charities with religious affiliations?
- Should atheists create their own charities?

Next meeting's talking points

(Would there be churches if no one believed in god?)

- What are the non-religious roles of churches and how do they affect society?
- Should atheists have their own churches?

Church-State Update

National

Judge rejects atheist challenge to inaugural prayer (1/15)

'U.S. District ... Walton did not dismiss the case, but denied Michael Newdow's request for a preliminary injunction, saying the "ceremonial speech" at the presidential inauguration is "in substance" no different from legislative prayers that the Supreme Court has permitted.' - Religion News Service

7 Sue Government Over U.S. Abortion Rule (1/15)

'Seven states [California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Connecticut] sued the federal government on Thursday over a new rule that expands protections for doctors and other health care workers who refuse to participate in abortions and other medical procedures because of religious or moral objections. ...They claim the federal rule, issued by the Bush administration last month and set to take effect on Tuesday, would trump state laws protecting women's access to birth control, reproductive health services and emergency contraception.' - Associated Press



Church-State Update

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

National Con't

Obama Reverses Rules on U.S. Abortion Aid (1/23)

'President Obama repealed rules on Friday that restricted federal money for international organizations that promote or provide abortions overseas.' – New York Times

House plan provides \$100 million in "faith-based" funding as part of federal economic recovery package (1/29)

'HR 1, the measure approved by the House, includes a \$100 million appropriation for the Compassion Capital" Fund (CCF), a key component of former President G.W. Bush's faith-based initiative. Americans United officials say CCF money was allocated by the Bush White House without adequate oversight or civil rights and civil liberties safeguards. Administration officials also misused the fund to help political candidates and directed cash to their Religious Right allies. (TV preacher Pat Robertson's Operation Blessing, for example, was given a grant.)' – New York Times

Joshua DuBois to Head Faith Office (1/29)

'President Obama has named Joshua DuBois, the 26-year-old who ran religious outreach for his presidential campaign, to head the White House's new office of faith-based programs.' - Washington Post

'[During the campaign,] Obama said: "I believe deeply in the separation of church and state, but I don't believe this partnership will endanger that idea — so long as we follow a few basic principles. First, if you get a federal grant, you can't use that grant money to proselytize to the people you help and you can't discriminate against them — or against the people you hire — on the basis of their religion. Second, federal dollars that go directly to churches, temples and mosques can only be used on secular programs. And we'll also ensure that taxpayer dollars only go to those programs that actually work." The Obama campaign released plans saying [the office] "will work to engage faith-based organizations and help them abide by the principles that federal funds cannot be used to proselytize, that they should not discriminate in providing their services, and they should be held to the same standards of accountability as other federal grant recipients." - Politico

Florida

Officials ordered to stop prayer at Santa Rosa County schools (1/13)

'A federal judge has ordered the Santa Rosa County School District to stop promoting religion and prayer in the classroom and at school events... U.S. District Court Judge Casey Rodgers' ... order prohibits employees from:

- Promoting prayer at school-sponsored events, including graduation.
- Planning or financing religious baccalaureate services.
- Promoting religious beliefs to students in class or during school-sponsored events and activities.
- Holding school-sponsored events at churches.' - pnj.com

Bible Giveaway Banned at [Collier County] School (1/17)

'A Southwest Florida man who in past years has been allowed to distribute free Bibles to high school students on Religious Freedom Day was turned down this year by the district's superintendent. Jerry Rutherford, president of World Changers, appeared before the Collier County School Board on Thursday to ask for a reversal of the decision but received the same response.' – Christian Post

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 Board of Directors

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