

Atlanta Freethought News

Dare to Think for Yourself

An AFS Publication • Volume 12 Number 7 • July 2006

The July AFS Meeting

The July 11 AFS meeting will feature AFS Treasurer **Ed Buckner**, speaking on "Our New Property."

The AFS meeting will be at 1:00 at the **Atlanta Freethought Center**, 1170 Grimes Bridge Road, Roswell, GA. (Feel free to arrive early for discussion and snacks.) To get there from Atlanta, take I-400 north past I-285 by 8 miles to Exit 7B, which is GA-140. Take GA-140 (Holcomb Bridge Road) west about 1 mile and turn left at Grimes Bridge Road. Go 0.2 miles to 1170 Grimes Bridge Road.

AFS Activities

The next **AFS Social** will be at Panahar Restaurant, 3375 Buford Hwy, Atlanta, on Friday, July 14, at 7:00 PM.

The **AFS Discussion Group** will meet at the Atlanta Freethought Center on Sunday, July 16, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM. At this meeting, we hope to watch the video of Ed Buckner's May 24 debate with Bill Federer (assuming that the video is available at that time).

The **Tuesday Lunch Bunch** meets every Tuesday at 12:30 at Panahar Restaurant, 3375 Buford Hwy in Atlanta.

Fellowship of Reason Meeting

The **Fellowship of Reason** meets on the first Sunday of every month at 12:30 PM at the Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 1025 Mount Vernon Hwy, in Atlanta. For details, see www.fellowshipofreason.com.

SOS Meets at AF Center

The **Secular Organizations for Sobriety** meets at the Atlanta Freethought Center every Tuesday evening at 8:00PM. SOS is the secular substitute for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Humanists of Georgia Meeting

The **Humanists of Georgia** will meet at the Atlanta Freethought Center on Sunday, July 23, at 12:30 PM. Dr. Ilhan Ermutlu will speak at the meeting on "The Human Brain - Its Role In The Origin and Evolution of Religion."

AFS Meetings and Activities

July 9: AFS General Meeting at AF Center, 1:00 PM.
July 14: AFS Social, Panahar Restaurant, 7:00 PM.
July 16: AFS Board Meeting at AF Center, 2:00 PM.
July 16: AFS Discussion Group at AF Center, 4:00 PM.

The July Atheist Meetup

Atlanta Atheists will have a "meetup" on Sunday, July 23, at 4:00 PM at Five Seasons Brewing, 5600 Roswell Road, in Atlanta. The phone there is 404-255-5911.

Scopes Trial Re-enactment

Karon Park is trying to organize a trip to Dayton, Tenn for July 15 or 16 to attend a re-enactment of the Scopes Trial. Several AFS members have already expressed an interest. Please contact Karon at kpark782@aol.com if you would like to attend the event.

Real Estate Help Needed

As you may know, the Atlanta Freethought Society is now looking to sell its two office condominiums in Roswell, GA. Do you have experience in selling property like this? Are you interested in helping us sell the property? If so, please contact any AFS officer.

Americans United Applauds FMA Defeat

The Senate derailment of the Federal Marriage Amendment on June 7 was a good thing, but the floor vote never should have taken place, according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

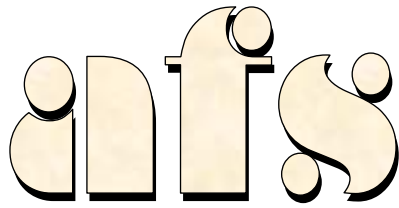
"This vote was election-year politics at its worst," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Americans United executive director. "I'm glad the amendment was derailed. This vote was nothing but ammo for attack ads."

Lynn noted that James Dobson's Focus on the Family Action is already running ads attacking 15 senators who fail to conform to Dobson's agenda. The ads show a sad-looking boy and feature the headline, "Why doesn't Senator [senator's last name here] believe every child needs a mother and a father?"

"This is pure demagoguery," said Lynn. "Dobson and his Religious Right cronies are playing the worst kind of hardball politics."

The so-called "Marriage Protection Amendment" would revise the U.S. Constitution to mandate that marriage "shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman." Americans United charged that the measure is a Religious Right-inspired effort to write the majority faiths' marriage doctrines and rituals into the Constitution. [From a June 7 press release by Americans United.]

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state." —Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, 1802



**Atlanta
Freethought
Society**

Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at the AFS Center, 1170 Grimes Bridge Road, Roswell, GA, unless otherwise noted. Programs start at 1:00 PM, but feel free to arrive at 12:00 for socializing. Visitors are always welcome.

July 9: **Ed Buckner** will speak on "Our New Property."

Aug 13: TBD

Sept 10: TBD

To join the AFS Forum e-mail list, send a blank message to AFSforum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To join the AFS Announcements list, send a blank email to afs-announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To join the Georgia Freethinkers Letter Writing Cooperative, send a blank email to flwc-ga-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

You can unsubscribe by sending an email to xxx-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com.

The Atlanta Freethought Society is a member-run organization dedicated to advancing freethought and protecting the rights and reputation of freethinkers, agnostics, atheists and humanists.

We welcome anyone who is interested in learning about living a good life free from religion through attending AFS speeches, debates, and discussions. We employ protests, letters to the editor, broadcast appearances, and any other reasonable and civil means available to achieve our mission.

We define *freethought* as "the forming of opinions about life in general and religion in particular on the basis of reason and the evidence of our senses, independently of tradition, authority, or established belief."

We actively support a strict separation of church and state as the best means to guarantee liberty for all, regardless of religious belief or lack of belief.

We seek to educate ourselves on many topics but especially on religion and non-religion. We do this through a series of thought-provoking speakers and programs, and by maintaining a web forum and an extensive library of freethought, religious, and related books, pamphlets, videotapes, and audiotapes.

We provide an organization where freethinkers and non-theists can develop friendships, talk freely, socialize and enjoy each other's company. We do not discriminate against anyone on such irrelevant grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, or physical disability. We welcome members and leaders of all political parties and preferences.

Because we are designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) educational organization, contributions to AFS are tax deductible.

Any who are like-minded are welcome to join us.

Atlanta Freethought News
an AFS publication

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Steve Yothment

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500, Roswell, GA 30075-3905

Membership in AFS is \$25/year for in-
dividuals, \$35 for households, and \$10
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taining members (individual) \$100 and
sustaining members (households) \$125.

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Visit our World Wide Web site at
www.atlantafreethought.org.

Send E-mail to
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Georgia Ten Commandments Law Takes Effect

Starting on July 1, a new Georgia law went into effect that says it's OK to post the Ten Commandments as part of a courthouse or justice center display of nine historic documents. The law is one of dozens approved during this year's General Assembly session. They cover subjects from a citizens' right to "stand their ground" to protect themselves and the age at which minors can marry without a parent's consent, to the minimum percentage of a school's budget that must be applied toward classroom instruction.

Lawmakers wrote the Ten Commandments bill (HB941) after the American Civil Liberties Union successfully sued the Barrow County Commission over a courthouse display in Winder. The ACLU argued that the display's placement on a wall plaque in a public building violated the separation of church and state. The county had to pay \$150,000, plus \$1 to the ACLU, and remove the plaque. The new law allows the display but only if it is accompanied by eight other documents.

With the new law in place, several counties are rumored to be planning displays, but Barrow is in no rush.

"I think there's some sentiment that we might want to do that, but it has not been brought back up for discussion," Barrow County Commission Chairman Doug Garrison said.

Dr. Jody Hice, pastor of Barrow County's Bethlehem First Baptist Church and president of the nonprofit group Ten Commandments Georgia, said he'll be encouraging his commissioners to put up a display. "I think that any way the Ten Commandments are on display is a good thing."

Rep. Terry England (R-Auburn), who represents most of Barrow County and co-sponsored the new law, said he believes "everybody's just a little bit gun-shy because of the \$150,000 they had to pay out."

"The consensus seems to be: Let

somebody else do it. Let it pass the muster, and we'll follow up," England said.

Gerry Weber, the legal director for ACLU Georgia, said his group might sue if it considers any individual displays unlawful, but saw no need to try to block the new law.

"It's more a statement of the General Assembly's beliefs than it is an affirmative statute that obligates the posting of the Ten Commandments," Weber said.

COMMANDMENT COMPANIONS

The documents — called the "Foundations of American Law and Government" — that must also be displayed in public buildings in Georgia with the Ten Commandments:

- The Mayflower Compact
- Declaration of Independence
- The Magna Carta
- 'The Star-Spangled Banner'
- Our National Motto: "In God We Trust"
- Preamble to the Georgia Constitution
- The U.S. Bill of Rights
- A Picture of Lady Justice

At least a dozen counties may be planning to post the collection of historic displays, according to the Rev. Mike Griffin, executive director of Ten Commandments Georgia.

"We're in the process of having our printers design a nine-piece set of documents that they'll be able to use and will meet the requirements," said Griffin, a GOP legislative candidate. "I know there's a good bit of interest in it."

The battle over Ten Commandment displays is part of a national debate regarding the U.S. Constitution and religion in American society. For years, Christian groups have been pressing to maintain the displays or put up new ones on government property, citing what they call the na-

tion's Judeo-Christian heritage.

The commandments, which Jews and Christians believe were given by God to Moses, include prohibitions on killing, stealing, lying, swearing, adultery and praying to false gods, as well as orders to honor parents and keep the Sabbath.

Georgia communities other than Barrow have attempted to place copies on public property.

In Douglas County, a group has made an informal pitch to put up a display outside the local courthouse but hasn't come to the county commission with any formal or detailed plan, said Wes Tallon, the county's director of communications and community relations.

He said the county commission would "like to do it."

"But I think because the new state law has yet to be tested in court — and they don't particularly want to be the test case — they may hold off," Tallon said.

Rep. Tommy Benton (R-Jefferson), another co-sponsor of the new law, said lawmakers worked hard to ensure that the displays would not be offensive to any group.

"The original display in Barrow County — I can see where that might have offended people who aren't of Christian faith," Benton said.

He said he still fields questions about inclusion of the Quran, the sacred book of Muslims, and other works. "But they weren't part of the founding of this country," Benton said. "And that makes a difference."

In Jackson County, where Benton lives, a display that includes the Ten Commandments has hung inside the courthouse for a few years, without challenge, he said.

"It's just on a wall as people walk out of the courthouse," Benton said. "You can look at 'em if you want to. If you don't want to, you don't have to."

[From a July 1 article by Nancy Badertsher in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.]

"It is strange to me that people can consign others to hell without a scruple. One only has to remember a toothache, not to wish it eternally on anyone." —Lucy Daugalis (daugalis@arcom.com.au)

A Few Comments on the Georgia Ten Commandments Law

by Steve Yothment

The lead article in the July 1 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* about the new Georgia Ten Commandments Law showed a picture of Gov. Sonny Perdue with a large Ten Commandments sign behind him. The caption read “Gov. Sonny Perdue takes a stand for the Ten Commandments during a Capitol steps news conference...”

Well, it appears to me that the new law will do very well to get politicians re-elected, which I think was the reason they enacted the law in the first place. But let’s look at the situation a bit more closely. First, let me point out a few *good* things about the law, from a freethinker’s perspective.

(You can view the law at this website: http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2005_06/fulltext/hb941.htm.)

1. The law only *allows* the display of the Ten Commandments, and does not require it.
2. The law is only a Georgia law. It can still be ruled unconstitutional on a federal level although a similar law *was* upheld by the federal court in *ACLU vs. Mercer County, KY*.
3. The law prohibits state funds from being used for the display.
4. The law requires that all nine documents, including the Ten Commandments, be of the same size: none of them can be more prominent than the other. So, we won’t see a large sign like the one behind Gov. Perdue on a courthouse wall.
5. Curiously, the law also requires the posting of a picture of Lady Justice, which is an apparent violation of the second Commandment, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven im-

age, or any likeness...” So, a real bible-believing Christian won’t want to post the display. (But you can bet they will still do it, since it gets the Ten Commandments on display.) Anyway, we can call them hypocrites after they do it!

6. As the AJC article points out, local governments are still nervous to post the Ten Commandments, even in the larger display, because of concerns about being sued by the ACLU.

On the negative side, it should be obvious that the law was only passed to satisfy Christian voters. The law allows the government to display many religious expressions (“In God We Trust,” “endowed by their creator,” “by the Grace of God,” etc.) as well as the Commandments, and that is what many Christians want.

The wording of the law claims that the purpose of the “Foundations of American Law and Government” display is “to educate and inform the public about the history and background of American law.” So, does it do this?

Consider the first Commandment: “I am the Lord thy God,... thou shalt have no other Gods before me.” How is this in any way a “Foundation of American Law and Government”? It is not. Our laws say nothing about which (if any) God to serve at all!

How about the national motto? How was “In God We Trust” (which only became our national motto in 1956) a “Foundation of American Law and Government”? Did our Founding Fathers take a time machine forward to 1956 so they could use this new national motto as a foundation for their

1776 government? I don’t think so!

How about the Preamble to the Georgia Constitution? (A Preamble did not appear in the Georgia Constitution until 1865. The current Preamble was written in 1877.) How was it a “Foundation for American Law and Government?” Again, the Founding Fathers had to travel into the future to have this as a foundation for their government, but this time, it was only 101 years! (The reason Christians like the Preamble is because it has the phrase “relying on the guidance and protection of Almighty God.”)

How about the Mayflower Compact? This was an agreement to remain “the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James... unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.” If that’s a Foundation for American Law and Government, then we are still subjects of England and there was no revolution! (Again, this document has some religious expressions like “by the Grace of God,” and that is why Christians want the government to display it.)

It is clear on its face that this new law was *not* enacted to “educate and inform the public about the history and background of American law.” Most of the displayed items do not depict the “Foundation of American Law and Government” at all!

With just a little scrutiny, it is obvious that the bill was passed to “allow” local governments to display hand-picked documents that have religious verbiage. After all, what better or easier way is there for Christians to promote the “Christian Nation” myth than to have the government do it for them.

“It is contended by many that ours is a Christian government, founded upon the Bible, and that all who look upon the book as false or foolish are destroying the foundation of our country. The truth is, our government is not founded upon the rights of gods, but upon the rights of men. Our Constitution was framed, not to declare and uphold the deity of Christ, but the sacredness of humanity. Ours is the first government made by the people and for the people. It is the only nation with which the gods have had nothing to do.” — Robert Ingersoll, from *Ingersoll the Magnificent*, by Joseph Lewis, pg. 73.

“Our civilization is not Christian. It does not come from the skies. It is not a result of “inspiration.” It is the child of invention, of discovery, of applied knowledge — that is to say, of science. When man becomes great and grand enough to admit that all have equal rights; when thought is untrammelled; when worship shall consist in doing useful things; when religion means the discharge of obligations to our fellow man, then, and not until then, will the world be civilized.”

— Robert Ingersoll, from *Ingersoll the Magnificent*, by Joseph Lewis, pg. 73.

Evolution's Lonely Battle in a Georgia Classroom

By Michael Winerip

Occasionally, an educational battle will dominate national headlines. More commonly, the battling goes on locally, behind closed doors, handled so discreetly that even a teacher working a few classrooms away might not know. This was the case for Pat New, 62, a respected, veteran middle school science teacher, who, a year ago, quietly stood up for her right to teach evolution in the rural northern Georgia community of Dahlonega, and prevailed.

She would not discuss the conflict while still teaching, because Ms. New wouldn't let anything disrupt her classroom. But she has decided to retire, a year earlier than planned. "This evolution thing was a lot of stress," she said. And a few weeks ago, on the very last day of her 29-year career, at 3:15, when Lumpkin County Middle School had emptied for the summer, and she had taken down her longest poster from Room D11A — the 15-billion-year timeline ranging from the Big Bang to the evolution of man—she recounted one teacher's discreet battle.

She isn't sure how many questioned her teaching of evolution—perhaps a dozen parents, teachers and administrators and several students in her seventh-grade life science class. They sent e-mail messages and letters, stopped her in the hall, called board members, demanded meetings, requested copies of the PBS videos that she showed in class.

One parent asked how money could be wasted on a subject like evolution: "As budget cuts continuously chip away at our children's future of a good, quality college-ready education," she wrote, "I would think there would be more educational, more worthwhile and certainly more factual learning that could be taught." She requested that her son be permitted to "bide his time elsewhere" when evolution was taught.

Ms. New explained that evolution is so central to biology the boy would be biding elsewhere all year long. Practi-

cally every chapter in her Prentice Hall textbooks—"Bacteria to Plants," "Cells and Heredity," "Animals"—used evolution to trace the development of life starting with bacteria, green algae and gymnosperms.

The books were purchased by her district, and she sent her supervisors copies, marking evolution references with dozens of Post-its, but it didn't seem to register. On April 25, 2005, during a meeting about parent complaints with her principal, Rick Conner, she recalled: "He took a Bible off the bookshelf behind him and said, 'Patty I believe in everything in this book, do you?' I told him, 'I really feel uncomfortable about your asking that question.' He wouldn't let it go." The next day, she said, in the lunchroom, "he reached across the table, took my hand and said: 'I accept evolution in most things but if they ever say God wasn't involved I couldn't accept that. I want you to say that, Pat.'"

Asked to comment during an interview here, Mr. Conner would say only, "I don't want to talk about it."

Four days after her encounter with the principal, Ms. New was summoned to a meeting with the superintendent, Dewey Moye, as well as the principal and two parents upset about her teaching evolution. "We have to let parents ask questions," Mr. Moye told her. "It's a public school. In a democracy people can ask questions."

Ms. New said the parents, "badgered, got loud and sarcastic and there was no support from administrators."

Babs Greene, another administrator, "asked if I was almost finished teaching evolution," Ms. New recalled. "I explained to her again that it is a unifying concept in life science. It is in every unit I teach. There was a big sigh."

"I thought I was going crazy," said Ms. New, who has won several outstanding teacher awards and is one of only two teachers at her school with national board certification. The other

is her husband, Ward.

"It takes a lot to stand up and be willing to have people angry at you," she said. But Ms. New did. She repeatedly urged her supervisors to read Georgia's science standards, particularly S7L5, which calls for teaching evolution.

On May 5, 2005, she filled out a complaint to initiate a grievance under state law, writing that she was being "threatened and harassed" though "I am following approved curriculum." She also wrote, "If we could get together within 24 hours and settle this and I feel I have support to teach the standards, then I would tear it up."

Suddenly the superintendent was focused on standards. Mr. Moye called the state department's middle school science supervisor and asked about evolution. "Obviously the State Department of Education supports evolution," Mr. Moye said in an interview.

Obviously? So why call? "I wanted to be sure," he said. "Let's make sure what these standards are."

He added: "I feel strongly about the Georgia standards. I think it's very important. Obviously we'll teach standards; that's the law. We will do everything in accordance with the Department of Education."

And parents' rights? "I explained to parents that we're following the state standards," Mr. Moye said. "I said, 'You can believe what you want, but we have to teach the standards.' If they're upset, they can take it up on the state level."

The superintendent, principal and Ms. Greene all praised Ms. New's ability. "She is an excellent teacher," Mr. Moye said, adding, "Maybe she felt like the school system didn't support her. We certainly support her."

Ms. New said that from then on, including the entire 2005-06 school year, she had no problem teaching evolution. "What saved me was I didn't have to argue evolution with these people. All I had to say was, 'I'm

Evolution's Lonely Battle (*continued*)

following state standards.”

Gerry Wheeler, director of the National Science Teachers Association, said membership surveys indicated that a third of teachers were challenged on evolution, mainly by parents and students. A survey of state science standards by the Fordham Institute, a conservative policy research organization that supports teaching evolution, rated 20 states, including Georgia, with “sound” evolution standards in 2005, down from 24 states in 2000.

The Georgia standards that saved Ms. New almost did not happen. In January 2004, when they were about to be adopted, Kathy Cox, Georgia’s

education superintendent, announced that she would remove evolution from the standards because it was too divisive an issue. That set off a huge protest that included former President Jimmy Carter and Governor Sonny Perdue, a Republican. Within days, Ms. Cox reversed herself.

No one was more gratified than Dr. F. James Rutherford, who worked as a consultant developing the Georgia standards. In 1985, Dr. Rutherford, a Harvard-trained science educator, began a project for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, aimed at laying out what every student should know about science, grade by grade. That year Halley’s

Comet appeared and he called the effort Project 2061, with hopes that by the comet’s next visit, in 2061, the children of 1985 would have had a lifetime shaped by superior science education.

It took longer than he thought, but Project 2061 became the foundation for the Georgia standards adopted in 2004, and by many other states. Dr. Rutherford, now 82, had not heard of Ms. New, but when told of her quiet victory, he said: “Wonderful. That was the idea.”

[From a June 28 article in the *New York Times* by Michael Winerip. Reprinted here by permission.]

ACLU Sues Over Church Tax Break

AFS member Bill Jager is one of the plaintiffs

The American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska and two Anchorage residents filed suit against the state on June 12 over a legislative bill that maintains a property tax exemption that benefits the Anchorage Baptist Temple.

ACLU of Alaska executive director Michael Macleod-Ball contends the measure is unconstitutional because it favors religion.

“And especially, in this case, favoritism toward one particular religious institution over all other religious institutions,” he said.

The provision broadens what was a tax exemption for clergy housing to cover religious teachers’ housing.

The Anchorage Baptist Temple appears to be the only religious organization in the state that currently benefits from the exemption, said Steve Van Sant, state assessor. City officials say they are still assessing its potential impacts.

Glenn Clary, a pastor with the Baptist church, who is also treasurer of the Alaska Republican Party, lobbied hard for passage of the bill in Juneau.

One of the largest churches in Anchorage, the temple owns 24 properties of which six are housing for religious teachers who are not members of the clergy, according to Clary.

He said the six properties represent about \$23,000 annually in property taxes.

While teacher housing at the church has historically been treated as tax-exempt, city officials recently decided the church should pay taxes on those properties because the people who live there are not clergy members.

The city’s chief financial officer, Jeff Sinz, said the new legislation could apply to more than just those six properties, however.

“We don’t know yet and there are likely to be effects on religious organizations other than the Anchorage Baptist Temple as well. I’d say it would be premature to try to quantify what is at stake here because we really don’t know,” he said.

The ACLU of Alaska is joined in the lawsuit by commercial real estate broker Ray Metcalfe and Keith Coonrod, a retired U.S. Army veteran, who said

they object to an exemption that is not available for nonreligious organizations.

Sinz said teacher housing at nonreligious schools does not have a similar tax exemption, although the formerly church-affiliated Alaska Pacific University was mistakenly granted a property tax exemption for several years after it became a secular institution.

The provision was first brought forward in the Legislature by Senate President Ben Stevens, R-Anchorage. When it failed to move out of committee, Senate Finance Committee co-Chairwoman Lyda Green, R-Wasilla, tacked it onto a House measure dealing with property tax deferral. The bill passed the Legislature and was signed into law this May.

The lawsuit, filed in Superior Court in Anchorage, requests an order striking down the law and an injunction barring it from taking effect in August. The state has 40 days to respond to the complaint.

[From a June 13 Associated Press article by Anne Sutton.]

“Nothing is grander than to break the chains from the bodies of man — nothing nobler than to destroy the phantoms of the soul.” – Robert Ingersoll, from “Some Miscellaneous Gems,” page 50, *Ingersoll the Magnificent*, by Joseph Lewis, 1983

June 2006 AFS Board Meeting Minutes

Present: Steve Yothment (Pres.), Judy Thompson (VPI), Freya Harris (VPE), Ed Buckner (Treasurer), Diane Buckner, Bill Burton, Jack McKinney, Jim Middleton, Lew Southern, George Page
Date/Time: June 16, 2006; 2:19 PM (late due to stuffing envelopes before the meeting)

Minutes by: George Page

Call to Order: Steve Yothment called the meeting to order. A quorum was established.

Minutes: The May 21 board meeting minutes were accepted.

Financial Report: The treasurer submitted the latest interim financial report. The next full report will be submitted after the end of June. Our total balance is just over \$12k.

The report stated that an appraiser, Larry Everson, was to have submitted a consultation report to the treasurer at an approximate maximum cost of \$1,000. At the time of the meeting, the report had not been submitted to Ed.

Ed notified our current tenant in Suite 400, Dr. Du, that we are asking \$75,000 for the property. The tenant asked for paint and carpet and asked for an access panel on his side similar to the one in Suite 500 and Ed told the board that we would probably have to give him the access panel if the deal were to go through.

Space Renovation/Relocation: Judy made a motion that AFS not spend any more money on the CSPBC property until our offer is accepted. Diane seconded the motion. In the discussion Ed noted that we have promised payment for the appraisal and for surveyors. This motion puts the appraisal and the survey on hold until our offer is accepted by the current owners. The motion carried.

Lew presented the inspection report and covered the notes regarding work that needed to be completed on the CSPBC. The report estimated that there is \$2,500 to \$3,000 worth of work needed including adding an access panel for the AC and re-roofing the add-on section. Some of the work mentioned is not going to be required immediately.

We should get a roll-off dumpster to clear debris and junk from under the building. The floors are in good shape, but the carpet is not. Lew proposed that we move four or five of the pews on each side and erect cubicle walls. We will have storage for books. The foundation is quite sound but we should add a few metal studs. We can add those as needed with minimal investment. The wood in the windows is solid but we will need to replace a few panes. Lew suggested that we should leave the windows that are in place and add storm windows and he said he will take care of that.

The air conditioning was not checked due to lack of access. The blowers work, but Lew couldn't get the compressor to kick in. Odds are that the AC will work or it may need minimal work.

Bill asked about the historical status of the building and Ed responded that there are no records he could find that give it historical status so there are no restrictions at this point. This doesn't mean that we are free and clear on exterior renovation or to add buildings. Lew commented that he is positive we wouldn't be able to raze the building.

The comment was made that if we sell our current property for \$140k and if we can buy the CSPBC for \$125k, the difference can be put into renovations and we will come out approximately

\$5-10k ahead. Lew commented that we will be saving \$3,000/yr. in condo association fees as well.

It was noted that there were cars parked on the property when some of the board were on the new site and it was suggested that we might be able to charge a fee to allow parking or make arrangements with the businesses whose employees park there.

Jack asked about the potential sell prices on the condos and what closing costs we might be liable for. If we sell to Dr. Du, we told him he will need to pay for a real estate agent if he wants one. Any other closing fees would be negotiated with the potential buyers. We have given Dr. Du a lease extension through August 31 of this year.

Judy mentioned that we should include a note in the newsletter that we are in need of assistance for anyone who can help in selling the two suites we currently own.

Judy also mentioned the need to discuss mail delivery at the new location. Ed brought up the possibility of having a post office box. He suggested getting one near the new location. Another option would be to have a locked delivery box right on the property. The consensus seemed to be leaning toward acquiring a PO Box with an Atlanta address. We will find out which is cheaper before we decide which to use. The street address of CSPBC is:

4746 North Church Lane
Smyrna, GA 30080 - 7251

Judy volunteered to research lockable mail receptacles. Another option that was mentioned was putting a mail slot in the door of the new location.

Bill suggested that we load photos of the property on the AFS web site.

Fund Drive Letter: Steve printed the letter and enclosures and the board processed the package prior to this board meeting. We stuffed the envelopes and Steve took the envelopes to be mailed.

Future Meetings: Ed suggested we use the July meeting for a question and answer session on the subject of the pending move. He suggested we make a short presentation with a few board members doing a show & tell session. Someone suggested that we hold the July meeting at the new location but it was dismissed because we are not sure if the AC works and Lew mentioned that we should clean up and clear the property before bringing the membership to the location.

If anyone has any suggestions for a speaker or a subject to be discussed at future AFS meeting, please contact Judy Thompson.

Other Business: Jack brought handicapped bathroom notes and gave them to Lew. He also brought the Faith & Values section of the Atlanta Journal Constitution to the meeting and asked why we couldn't have a listing for our monthly meetings in that section. He noted that the CJ Jung Society listed their meetings. George is to add the AJC to the list of publications/media outlets that he already sends notices to for our monthly meetings.

The board discussed the needs for setting up a table at Lake Hyattia for the Fourth of July gathering.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:26 PM.

The next meeting of the AFS board of directors is scheduled for Sunday, July 16, at 2:00 PM.

Atlanta Freethought Society Books:

Prices shown are list prices with AFS member's price in parentheses.

Tales of the Rational: Skeptical Essays About Nature and Science

Massimo Pigliucci **\$24 (17)**

Tales of the Rational puts in perspective some of the most fascinating scientific and pseudo-scientific claims of the 20th and 21st centuries; discusses philosophical issues concerning the way we can know and understand reality, as well as the complexities of the relationship between science and religion; includes essays on creationism and theism, as well as critical accounts of debates with two of the major figures of "scientific" creationism and Christian apologetics. Pigliucci does not spare science from a critical examination, discussing the advances as well as the failures of our search for the origin of life, extraterrestrial life, and that all-encompassing mathematical theory of complexity known as chaos theory.

An Uppity Old Atheist Woman's Dictionary

Carol Faulkenberry, illus. by *Amanda Faulkenberry* **\$10 (9)**

A late-20th-century reprise of *The Devil's Dictionary* by Ambrose Bierce (biting satire combined with sharp, politically incorrect humor and witty, irreverent insights into the human condition). From the dawn of time until now, the hardest job on earth has been simply being a woman. Here are some of the opinions and insights of a properly raised Southern girl who gradually learned that eyes are to see with, ears are to hear with, a brain is to think with, and a mouth is to speak the truth with—even if one doesn't have a penis—and that bullshit is bullshit, even if the bull dispensing it is a preacher or a politician. The late and much missed Carol Faulkenberry at her best.

Quotations that Support the Separation of State and Church, Second Ed. (1995) *Ed Buckner and Michael Buckner* **\$17 (11)**

Lengthy, well-researched, documented quotes from America's founding fathers and others that clearly illustrate the church-state separation principle. 8.5" x 11", comb-bound, indexed.

Why I Am Not A Christian *Keith M. Parsons* **\$9 (8)**

Concise and comprehensive, thoughtful, well-documented argument against Christianity from philosopher/debater Parsons; based on his famous 1998 debate with William Lane Craig in Dallas. All you need to know to understand why it makes sense not to be a Christian. Includes bibliography.

Baubles of Blasphemy *Edwin F. Kagin* **\$20 (15)**

Poetry and essays that skewer the Religious Right effectively and hilariously, along with selections that will make you laugh out loud at yourself, at Edwin Kagin, at life—and others that will make you think, worry, arm for the coming American Religious Civil War (ARCW), splutter, cry, and laugh some more. Read what America's leading atheists, free-thinkers, humanists (secular and otherwise) and even preachers and lawyers have said about the book on its back cover—the blurbs alone are worth the price of the book.

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If paying by check—which we'd prefer—please note what you're buying on the memo line, and make payable to "AFS." Thanks!

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Household memberships: A household is defined as two members sharing one newsletter, and is available for \$35 per year. Since some of our households have additional members, there will be a \$5 per year charge for each additional voting household member.

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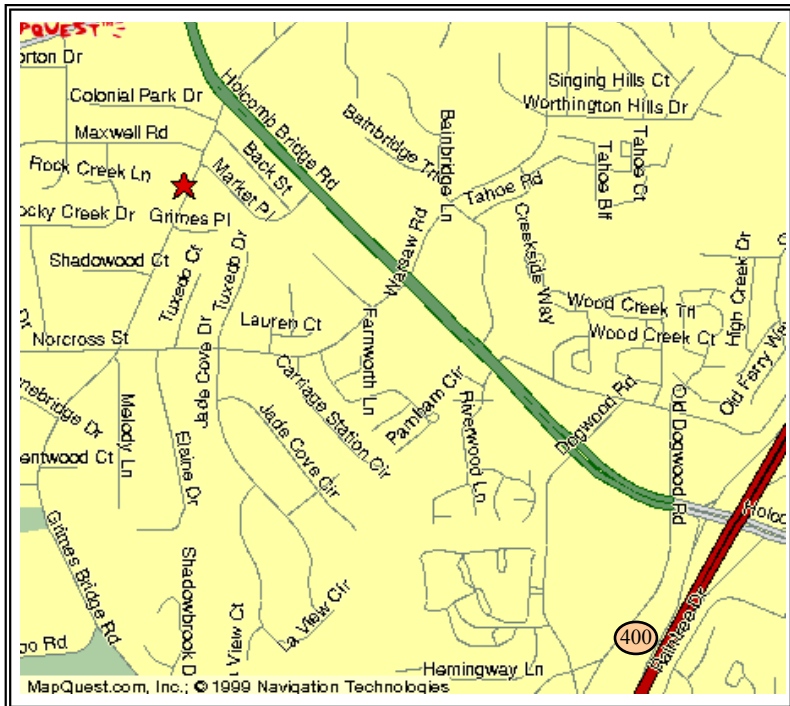
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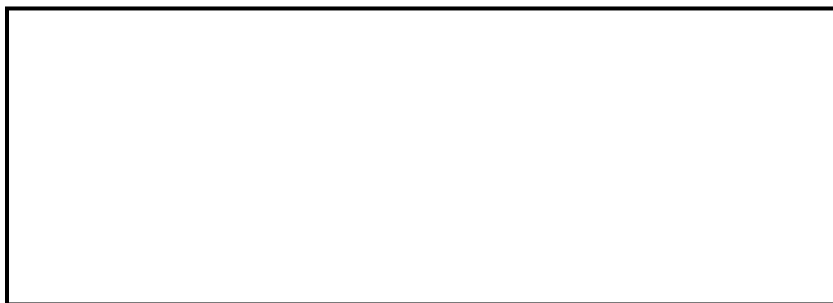


**The July 9 AFS Meeting:
1:00 at the AF Center
1170 Grimes Bridge Road
Roswell, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:
Ed Buckner
on "Our New Property"**



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