

## The March AFS Meeting

The AFS program on Sunday, March 10, will feature famous zoologist and freethought speaker **Bob Truett**, speaking on "It's Only a Theory." Bob says that his talk will be "rather unorthodox, somewhat astonishing, and [will] involve a lot of audience participation."



He is inviting "a real expert to assist him—Bugs Bunny!" Children as young as six years old are specifically invited and should enjoy the show. But evolutionary biologists should also expect to learn something new.

Bob Truett directed several major zoos before he retired, most recently the Birmingham Zoo. He has spoken to AFS several times before. He is well respected for his knowledge of animals and he's loved for his sometimes-corny humor.

This AFS program will be part of our continuing effort to educate ourselves and the public about

science and freethought—and to have fun doing it.

As was true with February's program, we hope to provide programs often that are appropriate for young people, so parents are encouraged to bring children to the meeting. We're pleased to have another regionally—even nationally—well-known and well-regarded speaker leading an exploration of science. We're proud to bring our members and other interested people in the Atlanta area the chance to see and hear programs like this one.

### Calendar

3/10 AFS Board Meeting, 11:00 a.m.

3/10 Potluck Lunch, 12 Noon

3/10 AFS General Meeting, 1:00 p.m.

3/23 Medshare, 15-20 people 1-4 p.m.

Ameribistro on Flat Shoals Pkwy after

*All events at AF Hall unless noted.*

## Volunteering at MedShare

Once again, Atlanta Freethought Society will be volunteering at Medshare on 3240 Clifton Springs

Rd. Decatur, GA 30034, 770-

323-5858. This

volunteer event

will occur on

March 23rd

between 1-4 p.m.

before our social

get-together at

Ameribistro on

Flat Shoals Parkway. Does anyone want to help do a good deed? It involves sorting and packing medical supplies that are donated by local hospitals.

According to Healthcare Without Harm, U.S. hospitals generate more than two million tons of medical waste each year. Much of that waste is unused medical supplies and equipment. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization estimates that more than 10 million children under the age of five die in the developing world due to inadequate medical care.

So what can be done?

MedShare is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving healthcare and the environment through

the efficient recovery and redistribution of the surplus of medical supplies and equipment to those most in need. They collect surplus medical supplies and equipment from hospitals, distributors and manufacturers, and then redistribute it to qualified healthcare facilities in the developing world. They also outfit medical missions and safety net clinics in both the U.S. and abroad.

Their shipments of medical supplies and equipment have decreased our carbon footprint and brought healing and the promise of better lives to 88 countries and countless patients.

<http://www.medshare.org/>

### The March Potluck Lunch

Before the regular March 10th meeting, we will have a Potluck Lunch, starting at noon. Join AFS members and guests for some good food and great socializing. Please bring food according to the first letter of your last name:

**A-G: Bring a dessert**

**H-P: Bring a side dish**

**Q-Z: Bring a main dish**

*AFS will provide drinks, plates and silverware.*



## Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Smyrna, GA, unless otherwise noted. Programs start at 1:00 PM, but feel free to arrive at 12:00 for socializing. Visitors are always welcome.

**March 10: Bob Truett**, famous zoologist and freethinker, will speak on "It's Only a Theory."

**April 14: Dr. Jeffrey Perry** will speak on Theodore Allen's new book *The Invention of the White Race*.

**May 12: Perry Mitchell** of Compassion and Choices of Georgia will speak on "Are You Good to Go?"

**June 9:** AFS Board Member **Paul Broman** will speak on his encounter with the Church of Scientology.

## AFS Email List

The AFS Announcements email list provides subscribers with reminders and updates on AFS activities. Send an email to [AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com](mailto:AFS-Announce-subscribe@yahoo-groups.com) to subscribe. The AFS Forum email list is a place for discussions of freethought, atheism, agnosticism, church-state separation and religion. To subscribe to this list, send an email to [AFSForum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:AFSForum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

For information on other AFS email groups, visit the AFS website at <http://www.atlantafreethought.org>.

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*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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### Atlanta Freethought News

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# American Atheists launch 'Go Godless Instead' Billboards in Texas

<http://atheists.org/american-atheists-launch-go-godless-instead-billboards-texas>

American Atheists announced a billboard campaign in Austin and Dallas, Texas, which features four designs with quotes from Newt Gingrich, Sarah Palin, Rick

out, and join us in celebrating 50 years of fighting for the separation of church & state and the civil rights of atheists."



Santorum, and Dallas Pastor Robert Jeffress about the place of faith



in government and their views on homosexuality. One billboard features former GOP vice presidential nominee Palin and her statement, "We should create law based on the God of the Bible," and calls upon Americans to "Go godless instead," with an invitation to attend American Atheists' 50th Anniversary celebration and national convention March 29-31, in Austin.



Also launched were two billboards, including one in Spanish, which highlight the history of child abuse within the Roman Catholic Church and another which is critical of religion more generally.



"We're very proud of these billboards," said American Atheists President Dave Silverman. "Prominent figures in the public sphere continue to make abhorrent statements, all justified by their religion. The time in American history where overt bigotry against atheists is acceptable is finally coming to an end, and good riddance! We invite reasonable people to stand up, come



## American Atheists 50th Anniversary National Convention

**March 28-31, 2013 • Austin, Texas**

Featuring: A.C. Grayling, Congressman Pete Stark, Katherine Stewart, Jay Jay French, Cara Santa Maria, Dave Silverman, Matt Dillahunty, Teresa MacBain, Seth Andrews, Hemant Mehta, and many more!

The convention includes our 1st Annual Art Show and Silent Auction! Download your application at <http://atheists.org/artshow> before all the spaces are gone!

Download your application at <http://atheists.org/convention2013>

Get the latest updates on Twitter: [#AACON13](https://twitter.com/AACON13)

## Sixth Circuit censors criticism of religion in Freedom From Religion Foundation case



An appeals court ruled 2 Feb. 2013 that a Michigan mayor can censor nonreligious speech, while continuing to endorse a nativity scene in the city atrium.

A 3-judge panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled against the Freedom From Religion Foundation's fight against city hall censorship at Christmastime.

"The Sixth Circuit incorrectly characterized this case as a religious-symbol-on-government-property case, when in reality this case is about free speech," noted FFRF Senior Staff Attorney Rebecca Markert.

Mayor James Fouts of Warren, Mich., routinely placed a nativity scene in the Warren Civic Center, a primary municipal building also containing the public library. FFRF and one of its members, Douglas Marshall of Warren, wrote letters protesting the display. On Dec. 8, 2010, Fouts wrote FFRF that "all religions are welcome to celebrate their religious seasons with a display in city hall." Marshall tried in vain repeatedly to obtain permission to place an FFRF winter solstice sign in the city hall atrium.

FFRF's winter solstice sign, specifically coined to counter religious displays on government property, reads:

"At this season of the Winter Solstice, let reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds."

In December 2012, Fouts called FFRF's sign "highly offensive," and compared FFRF's request to place its sign saying "there are no gods," to putting up a "sandwich board saying that there is no Santa Claus." Fouts stated: "I cannot and will not sanction the desecration of religion in the Warren City hall atrium."

"We are not a Christian nation. Under our secular constitution, city governments should be forbidden to endorse one religion over another, or religion over nonreligion, much less sitting in judgment of what is or isn't a 'desecration' of religion," said FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor.

FFRF filed the lawsuit after the mayor invited other individuals and organizations to place items in the atrium of city hall, and after the mayor denied FFRF's request based solely on its Winter Solstice message — a fact completely ig-

nored by the 3-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit.

The panel found the holiday display to be government speech, but fails to reconcile this decision with its recently-decided Satawa ruling in May 2012, which allowed a private individual to erect a large nativity scene on the median of a highway in Michigan, calling it a public forum. Douglas Marshall placed a banner last December on the median, although it was tampered with, then stolen.

Judge Sutton, who wrote the opinion, is considered one of the most conservative judges on the Sixth Circuit.

All three judges were appointed either by Bush I or Bush II. A New York Times analysis of appeals court appointees last fall showed that 63% of the appointments on it were made by Republican presidents.

FFRF asked the court to enjoin the mayor from barring the FFRF sign, and find that the city had violated the rights of FFRF and its member.

Sutton wrote that "a government may provide benefits to faith-based entities if the benefits are available to secular and religious entities alike," clearly contradicted by Fouts' action, or "may invoke the divine through words and symbols if they have religious and historical meanings or faith-based and solemnizing effects, and in the process offer at most incidental benefits to any one faith or to faith in general."

The decision makes no note of Fouts' declaration of the atrium as a public forum for religion, but decides the case based on the Lynch v. Donnelly decision (reindeer by a nativity display supposedly removes the religious message). Sutton also quotes Justice William O. Douglas declaring, "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being" in a 1952 case. But Sutton failed to add that in the very next sentence, Douglas added: "We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses. We make room for as wide a variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary." *Zorach v. Clauson*, 343 U.S. at 313-314.

Justice Douglas explained his statement in *McGowan v. Maryland*, 366 U.S. 420, 563 (1961):

"[I]f a religious leaven is to be worked into the affairs of our people, it is to be done by individuals and groups, not by the Government. This necessarily means, first, that the dogma, creed, scruples, or practices of no religious group or sect are to be preferred over those of any others..."

The First Amendment commands government to have no interest in theology or ritual; it admonishes government to be interested in allowing religious freedom to flourish — whether the result is to produce Catholics, Jews, or Protestants, or to turn the people toward the path of Buddha, or to end in a predominantly Moslem nation, or to produce in the long run atheists or agnostics. On matters of this kind government must be neutral."

In 2004, FFRF won a solid victory in the Sixth Circuit in *Doe v. Porter*, a case successfully challenging devotional religious instruction in Dayton, Tennessee elementary schools, conducted by bible students.

"We extend our our warmest gratitude to plaintiff Douglas Marshall, and to our pro bono counsel Danielle Hessel," said FFRF Co-President Dan Barker. FFRF intends to seek review by the entire Sixth Circuit panel.

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/16662-sixth-circuit-censors-criticism-of-religion-in-ffrf-case>

# CAMP QUEST

## Camp Quest News

Camp Quest families, friends, & staff,

First an update: We have 8 camper applications in now. Four are from Georgia (2 new). Five of the eight are new. I have been corresponding with several parents of potential new campers.

In an email on January 27, I expressed concern that we will have to turn away campers this

summer for the first time because of reaching the dormitory capacity allowed us at Tremont. Because of our camper numbers and growth in Georgia and Alabama, I requested support from many of you to find a facility in Georgia or Alabama at which we could start a second session of CQSM.

Lacking response, I continued to search on the internet and have identified a possibility. This is a 4 H camp in Columbiana, Alabama (see attached brochure). It seems to be well-located, southeast of Birmingham, and somewhat central to Tuscaloosa, Gadsden, Montgomery, Huntsville, and Atlanta. It is not out of range of Columbus GA, Columbus MS, Meridian, and even Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis, Mobile, Pensacola, & Tallahassee. They have cottages, two dormitories which have about 50 beds each, food service, canoeing on a lake, swimming pool, a climbing wall, a low ropes course, archery, and more.

They have their own 4 H camp through the end of June, but starting in July they rent out facilities, often to church groups. They are booked for this summer, but summer 2014 would be open if we were willing to commit early. I plan to drive down, perhaps next month, and perhaps with Rita and any others who would go with me or meet us there, for a preliminary survey. If the facilities are satisfactory and available when we need them (early July), we could make a commitment then for 2014. The cost would be comparable to Tremont.

If our bid for facilities in 2014 were successful, then how might we proceed with planning and staffing? We have a number of campers from GA & AL who are coming of CIT age. With adult supervision, I see them as the key to establishing the CQ atmosphere. But

many campers return to CQSM to be with their friends, and I would not want to take that away from them, nor impose additional expense on their families for a second camp. So we would need to raise funds through donations to subsidize them the first year.

Before the start in 2014, we might rent a cottage over a weekend, gather potential CITs and staff, and walk through the summer program on site so potential problems could be identified in advance, and to meet the 4 H staff.

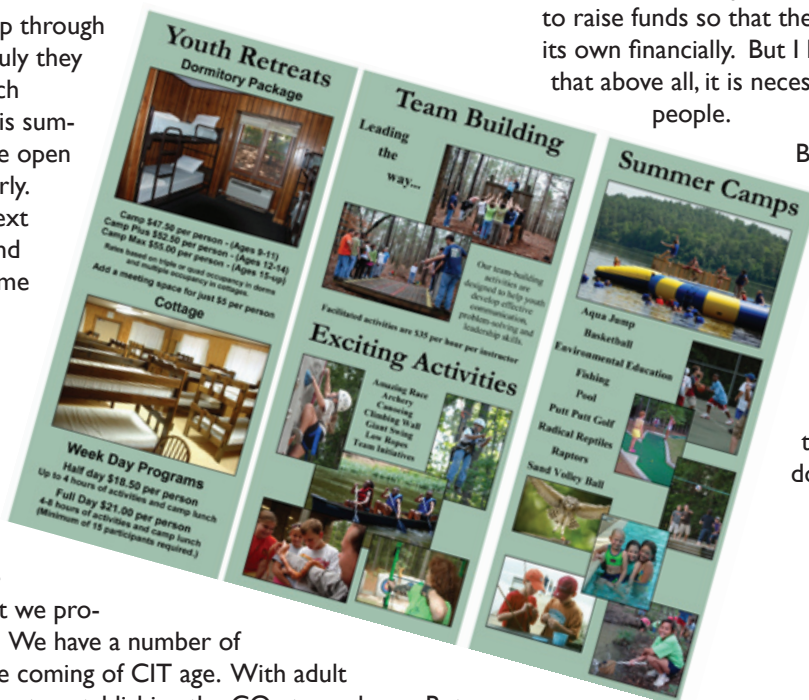
In the longer term, we would get a local charter, initially under CQSM, and identify local people to handle future operations.

Eventually this camp would apply to CQ, Inc for recognition as an independent camp.

Commitment to this would be a gamble. Initially we would have to risk a deposit, and credibility with the 4 H camp if we fail. And we would have to raise funds so that the new camp could stand on its own financially. But I have found by experience that above all, it is necessary to find the right local people.

But what about CQSM 2013? The girls' dorm will hold a few more than we had in 2012. We could accept a few more willing to sleep in the tents behind the activity center. And we will need to prepare for the future CITs. Can we do it? Alabama or bust?

**Jonas Holdeman**  
CQSM Director



# Other Meetings of Interest in Metro Atlanta

**The Fellowship of Reason** meets on the first Sunday of every month at 10:30 AM at AF Hall. They also have meetings for book discussion, philosophy, a classic film course, and other events. See <http://www.fellowshipofreason.com>.

**The Fayette Freethought Society** hosts lunches, dinners, book discussions, civic activities and more. See details at <http://www.meetup.com/Fayette-Freethought-Society/>

**The Peachtree City Humanists** meet often for discussions at Starbucks, lunch, dinner at She's Bistro, and more. See <http://www.meetup.com/Peachtree-City-Humanists-PTCH/>.

**GUST (Gwinnett: Understanding Secular Truths)** meet often for discussions, etc. For more information, see <http://gust.domek.org/>.

**The Atlanta Skeptics** is having a live podcast event at Manuel's Tavern on Saturday, March 16, bringing you not one, not two, but three Atlanta podcasters, all smashed up into one big pot of simmering live skepticism. For one night only, they have the power. There may be tears but it will be a fun ride!

**Derek Colanduno** co-hosts **Skepticality**, one of the longest running skeptical podcasts

**Monster Talks' Blake Smith** regales listeners with stories of things that go bump in the night.

**John Snider of American Freethought** fame, encourages us to think for ourselves.

Dinner and social hour begin at 6:00pm. Come hang out with the podcasters while they prove that they aren't just disembodied voices floating around the aether.

But wait! There is more! Details to follow but they will conducting an auction of skeptical items! Will it be Blake's underwear? John's fedora? Who knows!

This event kicks off fundraising for **Skepticamp 2013**. For those of you new to Skeptics, Skepticamp is a two day grassroots conference run by you, for you. Presentations are given by members in a format similar to TED talks. See more about it at <http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaSkeptics/>.

**The Black Nonbelievers of Atlanta** meet often for discussions, social events, etc. For more info see <http://blacknonbelievers.org/>.

**The SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety)** meets on Tuesdays at 7:30PM in Roswell. For more information, send an email to [donnajgore@yahoo.com](mailto:donnajgore@yahoo.com).

**The Atlanta Science Tavern** will present Single-molecule Biophysics: A Hands-on Approach to Your Molecules by Laura Finzi, Professor, Department of Physics, Emory University, who will introduce three

single-molecule techniques that are used in the lab: atomic force microscopy (AFM) for visualization of single molecules, tethered particle microscopy (TPM) for real time observation of the dynamics of single molecules and magnetic tweezers (MTs) for single-molecule manipulation. Then, participants will look at how these techniques may be applied to the study and characterization of the mechanisms, such as genetic switches, that underlie regulation of gene transcription. See more at <http://www.meetup.com/AtlantaScienceTavern/>

There will be a **meetup for Atlanta atheists** on Sunday, March 10, at 6:00PM at Thinking Man Tavern, 537 W. Howard Ave, in Decatur. (<http://www.meetup.com/Atlanta-Atheists/>)

Another **meetup for Atlanta atheists** is scheduled for Sun., March 24, at 4:00 PM at Five Seasons Brewery, 5600 Roswell Rd, in Sandy Springs. (<http://www.meetup.com/>)

**IIG Atlanta** will have a general meeting Saturday, March 16 at 4:30 p.m. at Manuel's Tavern (602 N Highland Avenue Northeast, Atlanta, GA 30307). We're a new, ambitious group affiliated with IIG-West and exist to promote critical thinking about the paranormal, supernatural and unexplained. We also offer \$50,000 for anyone who can demonstrate evidence of the occult or paranormal under properly controlled conditions. We look forward to meeting you! Questions? Visit [IIGAtlanta.com](http://IIGAtlanta.com) or contact Shaune Beattie by gmail: [shaune.beattie@gmail.com](mailto:shaune.beattie@gmail.com). <http://www.meetup.com/IIG-Atlanta/>.



# Become a Member!

**(Or renew your membership with this form or online at [www.AtlantaFreethought.org](http://www.AtlantaFreethought.org)!)**

If you've enjoyed what you've read, we enthusiastically invite you to join the Atlanta Freethought Society. Every month you will get our acclaimed monthly newsletter, the Atlanta Freethought News, voting rights in the organization—and enjoyment of the superb speakers we have coming up, as well as the social and activist events that we sponsor!

**Individual memberships:** One person can become a member for \$50 per year.

**Sustaining memberships:** One person can become a sustaining member for \$100 per year.

**Life memberships:** Avoid the hassle of renewing every year. A life membership lasts a lifetime.

**Paper newsletter:** We encourage members to receive the newsletter by email. This avoids the printing and mailing expenses. But if you really want the paper version of the newsletter, just let us know and we will send it to you at no additional charge. (You can also pick up a paper newsletter at any AFS meeting.)

Thank you for your support! We look forward to your being with us in the coming months!

Annual dues are:

## Membership Dues# of mems Total

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## Atlanta Freethought Society

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*"Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect"*

—James Madison, 1774

**We still have these great books for sale:**

### Why I Am Not A Christian—\$8

Lucid, comprehensive, engaging answer to Christian apologists by Keith Parsons. Respectful but devastating to all Christian claims. A wonderful follow-up to Bertrand Russell's great essay with the same title.

### An Uppity Old Atheist

### Woman's Dictionary—\$8

By the late, great Carol Faulkenberry (illustrated by Amanda Faulkenberry); like Ambrose Bierce's Devil's Dictionary—but better: more biting, funnier. Guaranteed to make you laugh out loud and to challenge at least one idea you hold.

### Quotations That Support the Separation of State and Church (2nd edition)—\$11

Compiled by Edward M. Buckner and Michael E. Buckner; ammunition against Christian-nation mythologists. Quotes from America's revolutionaries, constitution framers, Presidents, court decisions. Sources carefully documented; extensive index. Comb-bound—lies flat for easy copying.

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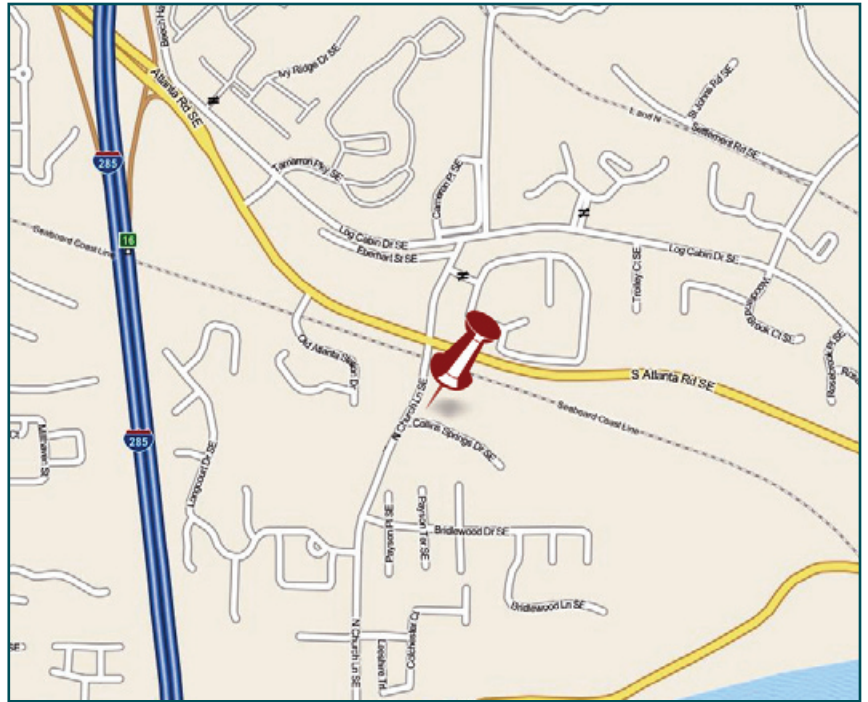
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*Dare To Think For Yourself!*

**The March 10 Meeting:  
1:00 at AF Hall,  
4775 N. Church Lane SE  
Smyrna, GA**

**This Month's Speaker:  
Bob Truett**



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